

Leena Subra



A Portrait of the Political Agent in  
Jean-Paul Sartre

Views on Playing, Acting,  
Temporality and Subjectivity

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## ABSTRACT

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Yhteenveto: Poliittisen toimijan muotokuva Jean-Paul Sartrella. Näkymiä pelaamiseen, toimintaan, ajallisuuteen ja subjektiivisuuteen.

Diss.

The study discusses the political in Jean-Paul Sartre's work, focusing principally on the conceptual constructions through which the agent acting in a political action situation can be interpreted from the texts. Sartre's conception of the political agent is discussed against the background of the operational concepts and the limit-situation as an ideal type action situation construed as conceptual devices in the work for showing both Sartre's fashion of using and of construing concepts. In addition certain metaphors such as theater, play and mask are used for highlighting the political reading of the texts.

The theme of the agent, in one form or another, runs through Sartre's entire work. It is a theme which largely gathers together the different conceptual devices and different perspectives he takes in his work. In this study, through concepts and figures interpreted from the texts, especially from *Critique de la raison dialectique*, it is shown that Sartre's construction of the agent forms a challenging attempt of a revised view into the classical concept of subject. It is also shown that his agent is both a political and a moral actor which cannot be reduced to a subject or to a person, but can be described as an actor, as a player of the political condition, and as a user of political action strategies through the concepts of limit, change and non-identity.

Sartre's central point of view of action is that of the agent acting in an interior space of action in a construed world. This forwards a view within which the perspective of production forms a framework for the argumentation where the main themes through which the portrait of the agent can be drawn are temporality, interiority, exteriority and subjectivity.

The agent of the *Critique* as a non-identifiable actor acting in a temporally and dimensionally produced action situation is produced in the process of internalization and externalization of the historical and inherently political condition of being condemned to freedom. In the study it is shown that it is this agent through whom the political comes to the world and who is condemned also to politics. It is also shown that this agent forms a perspective of interpretation as well to Sartre's plays as to the central concepts of his morals.

Keywords: Jean-Paul Sartre, political theory, political action, agent, temporality, subjectivity, morals, text interpretation

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My interest in Jean-Paul Sartre has a long history which dates back to summer 1979 when, during one of my early stays in Paris, I came across the *Critique de la raison dialectique*. I bought it despite the advice of the shopkeeper who assured me that it was an impossible book to read, and started my journey with Sartre. It is a journey which has from time to time been sidetracked but which I have never entirely abandoned. Hence this work is the result of studies carried out over quite a number of years during which the impossible has become possible as is witnessed by this present book.

I would like to thank Doctor Leo Fretz, Doctor Esa Saarinen, Professor Sakari Hänninen and Kia Lindroos for reading and commenting on my study as well as all those who at different stages of my work have given me much welcomed ideas and criticism. Most of all I wish to thank Professor Kari Palonen for his interest in my work as well as for his invaluable help both with theoretical and practical questions.

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## ABBREVIATIONS FOR SARTRE'S WORK

Carnets	Carnets de la drôle de guerre. Septembre 1939 - Mars 1940
CM	Cahiers pour une morale
CRD I	Critique de la raison dialectique I
CRD II	Critique de la raison dialectique II
DL	Détermination et liberté
EN	L'être et le néant
Entretiens 1974	Entretiens avec Jean-Paul Sartre août-septembre 1974
Epol	Entretiens sur la politique
L'espoir	L'espoir, maintenant... I-III
HC	Huis Clos
IF	L'idiot de la famille (TEL)
LC 1940-63	Lettres au Castor et à quelques autres
MR	Matérialisme et Révolution
QJ	Reflexions sur la Question Juive
SA	Les séquestrés d'Altona
SG	Saint Genet
SIT	Situations I-X
TE	La transcendance de l'ego
TS	Un théâtre de situations
VE	Vérité et existence

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Jean-Paul Sartre said in an interview in 1969 that he wished to write what he called a political testament in which he would describe through his own experience how one comes to politics:

“Thus what I will write one day is a political testament. The title is perhaps a bad one, since a testament implies the idea of giving advice; here it will simply be the end of a life. What I would like to show is how a man comes to politics; how he is caught by them, and how he is remade other by them; because you must remember that I was not made for politics, and yet I was remade by politics so that I eventually had to enter them. It is this which is curious. I will recount what I did politically, what mistakes I committed, and what resulted from it. In doing so, I will try to [d]efine what constitutes politics today, in our own phase of history.” (Sartre 1969, p. 66)<sup>1</sup>

From a perspective of nearly thirty years after this comment it is not difficult to see that in the field of political study Sartre’s work has not been greatly used as one would use a “legacy”. The few existing connections between Sartre studies and political theory have been established mainly by scholars exploring the margins of politics while amongst the majority of scholars of political theory Sartre is generally either passed over with a superficial remark on one of his most well known concepts or left in silence. In my view this is quite regrettable because a closer study of Sartre shows a number of issues and concepts which in the form Sartre discussed them can offer views on quite many questions discussed in the field of political theory.

In this work it is my intention to try to identify concepts and conceptual constructions which could form a bridge from which the possibility of establishing such connections would become possible and Sartre’s work could be seen as a part of a larger context of discussion than is usually the case. On the one hand I

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1 This interview, *Itinerary of a Thought*, was first published in English in *New Left Review*. For the French version see *Sartre par Sartre* (SIT IX, p. 99-134).

shall attempt to do this through distancing Sartre's work from the traditional context of Sartre studies, on the other through construing perspectives which could offer a starting point for relating Sartre's views to this larger context. It is against this background that the central themes of this study such as production, temporality, subjectivity and the question of interiority and exteriority - themes which are seldom discussed in the frame of Sartre studies - are put forward. All these themes form a view of how Sartre construes the agent as an actor in an action situation described in political terms and in a world which displays itself as a political condition of the agent. Furthermore, they form a view of how this condition and the limits which construe it are played and how the agent is construed as an actor using political action strategies.

However, I shall not proceed to study this by comparing Sartre to others who discuss related questions as it is my view that relating Sartre's discussion to other discussions within specific themes becomes possible only after an extensive rereading of his views, a rereading which can offer a specific perspective on the political in his work. Hence I propose to proceed to a reading which would establish Sartre's texts, principally the *Critique de la raison dialectique* (1960)<sup>2</sup> as political texts, as texts which offer conceptual devices which are useful in the context of the study of political theory. In a sense what I suggest here is that Sartre's relevance to political theory can be actualized through such a reading which could offer a frame for discovering the relevant questions and settings in Sartre in contrast to a reading which would merely discuss Sartre from an exegetic perspective.

As it is not my intention to enter deep into a discussion relating Sartre to others but to enter into Sartre's texts from a perspective of reconstruing certain themes present in them from a politically relevant perspective, the references to others discussing the same or related themes will be left to quite an extent in the margin. The stress on the Sartrean perspective is required here because his contribution to the discussion of the themes taken up in this present study is original to such an extent that a detailed discussion is necessary in order to come to the threshold of the more general questions present in them. Yet, even though my reading will to a large extent remain immanent to Sartre's texts certain perspectives not present in Sartre, or present only quite marginally, will be evoked when construing an entrance into the texts. These will be discussed in the first chapters. The later chapters will concentrate on discussing more specific questions related to Sartre and to the concepts I consider as most politically relevant in his texts.

In addition to indicating places for the bridges relating Sartre to this larger context of discussion this work is intended to be a contribution to specific Sartre studies. The combining of these two tasks follows to a great extent from the nature of Sartre's texts and from the view that I have on his "usefulness" to political theory. Sartre's political relevance does not, in the first place, lie in his interest and contribution to the specific questions of the time of writing the texts or even in a possible reactualization of these questions but principally in his con-

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2 A second edition of the *Critique*, edited by Arlette Elkaim-Sartre, was published in 1985. In this work all references will be given to the original edition but summary correspondences between the pages of the two editions are given in an appendix. The English translations of Sartre's texts will not be used.

ceptual apparatus and in the way he uses it in his discussion. It lies as well in certain themes which - especially in the *Critique* - are buried under the discussion on the questions relevant to Sartre at the time of writing but which can be re-constructed through a close reading and a reinterpretation of the text. Therefore this present study takes first of all the perspective of a conceptual study, that of discussing Sartre's concepts in relation to certain themes which, hopefully, will be of interest to "Sartrologues" as well.

Hence I shall proceed to a profiled reading of Sartre instead of an overall discussion and delimit the themes in relation to which I shall discuss Sartre's concepts from a perspective which evokes issues which are not the ones Sartre himself considered as central ones, but which can indicate places for the mentioned bridges. Sartre's profiling of his own interests forms a certain layer of discussion in his works but I suggest here to read through this layer and focus on issues which have a wider perspective to offer than for example that of the discussions with the Marxists which formed a starting point for the *Critique*. On the other hand, as relating Sartre to a wider perspective of conceptual history falls out of the scope of this present study the themes discussed are chosen in view of presenting lines of argumentation which offer both the possibility of discussing Sartre's conceptual constructions and the places where the bridges can be established. Hence the themes discussed here establish only a limited view of the vast number of questions that Sartre over the years discussed in his work.

Several themes of interest, themes which bear on political theory, such as the question of psychoanalysis and the question of the agent as a singular actor, for example, or the phenomenology of the body, are left out as the main focus of this work is on presenting a view of the lines of argumentation which in the first place construe the Sartrean agent as a political actor. The themes discussed are thus chosen both with a view to advancing a perspective on the reconstruction of this argumentation and to showing their importance when reading Sartre from the perspective of today. Hence, from the point of view adopted here, the themes left out present themselves as sidetracks which, even though of importance and interest, cannot be discussed within the limits of this work. Yet, as they do also offer a possibility of opening perspectives for relating Sartre to a wider context of political study and for a better understanding of certain questions they are worth mentioning here.

In the following I shall take a perspective on Sartre's texts through a setting where metaphors and figures such as theater, actor, mask, play and limit-situation and the operational concepts construed on the basis of Sartre's texts are used for reading his texts politically as well as for reading them as political texts. By this I wish to show that through a certain formulation of the questions posed a text can be rendered political, and do not expect to find the political already formulated in the text. Sartre's texts lend themselves well to this kind of reading as the political can be shown to be inherently present in his conceptual constructions and in their use.

The view taken here of the political from a perspective of painting the portrait of the agent in Sartre as a political actor is a view which expresses the importance of the question of the agent to Sartre throughout his work. As it is a theme which, in one form or another, runs through Sartre's entire work, it is also

a theme which largely gathers the different conceptual devices and different perspectives he used in his work. To my understanding there is no other theme which would to such an extent entail views on the different positions Sartre took in his work and evoke as many of the central concepts Sartre used as that of the agent. It is the "human reality" (*la réalité humaine*), seen in the different descriptions Sartre gives that is the center of his thinking. If in the most generally known view of Sartre this "human reality" emerges as the one through which freedom and choice come to this world, as the one who is condemned to freedom, in this present study it will be shown how it is the Sartrean agent through whom the political comes to the world, and how she/he is the one condemned to politics.

The specific themes which will be discussed in this work are all themes which aim both at construing and problematicizing the portrait of the Sartrean agent in a perspective where the guiding thread is that of an agent acting in an acting situation where the political enters the scene. This action situation will be described through the concept of limit-situation as an ideal type of action situation - ideal in a Weberian sense outside any normative connotations - which describes the "place" of the politicization of the agent, of action as well as of the action situation.

In addition, the questions asked in this present study seek to find, besides the lines of argumentation construing the agent and the action situation, also the concepts and conceptual constructions through which Sartre problematicizes and puts in question certain traditional or classical concepts and forms of thinking. This will not, as already indicated, be discussed from the perspective of conceptual history but rather in a "properly" Sartrean manner, through engaging in a conversation with Sartre's texts and through reading the specifically Sartrean contribution to the question.

Were it necessary to place Sartre within different currents of thinking we might think of placing him somewhere in between the modern and the post-modern. This is a place which offers a Sartre reader the advantage of being at a certain distance from both and of having the possibility of looking for another, perhaps an alternative but in any case a relativizing view of questions evoked in this context. In a way the challenge that Sartre's notoriously difficult texts make to the reader is a challenge comparable to the one Sartre can make to those involved in theorizing the agent's role in political action, to those discussing themes such as temporality and time, contingency, history, the "archaeology", the "genealogy" or the construction of the agent and of the "world" as well as to those interested in questions related to politics and morals. It is in this sense that the "critique of dialectical reason" is a critique which is extended to quite a few other questions besides those indicated by the name. The challenge Sartre sets is demanding but it is, in my view, worth taking, especially in a situation where the present perspectives seem to display a certain risk of narrowing down and where alternative conceptual devices and formulations of problems are welcome.

\* \* \*

The project of writing a political will expressed in the quotation above was one of the many projects in Sartre's life as a play writer, novelist, essayist, biographer

and philosopher that he never finished. He did not even leave a manuscript discussing the consequences of the “political turn” in his life which according to a generally accepted view took place during and after the second World War. Before this he was, as is usually claimed, apolitical, with no special interest in political events or in discussing political questions in his texts. We can consider this description of the prewar Sartre correct to quite an extent. However, from his texts of this time, for example his *Carnets de la drôle de guerre*<sup>3</sup>, a diary kept during the war years (1939-40) while mobilized, we can read politically oriented comments and descriptions which indicate more than merely a growing interest in political events and questions. If we consider, as I do, Sartre’s *Critique* as his major work with regard to politics, we cannot fail to see that some of the themes he was to discuss years later were present as topics already in the *Carnets*.

Notwithstanding, it was not until “assuming his situation” (de Beauvoir 1960, p. 442, see also Sartre, *Un film* (1972) p. 44-45, 47 and *Entretiens 1974* p. 304-09, 527ff., esp. 559) through an engagement with political activity first on the margin of the resistance movement and later through organizing a party (RDR - Rassemblement démocratique révolutionnaire, 1948<sup>4</sup>) and his various ways of being the critical *compagnon de route* to the communists that he, through the writing of a large number of pages on current political events and on theoretical questions comes to the *Critique* as the major expression of his political thought. Yet even in this work, his intention was not to write a political treatise but an anthropology, an extensive view of what can be said about a human being “today”. Just the same, this permits us to have direct access to one of the most central politically oriented concerns of Sartre, namely, as indicated above, the human being as an agent.

The *Critique* was written nearly forty years ago and one of its prominent features is that of being closely related to the discussion of the time of its writing. Hence a first reading of the text, especially of the essay *Existentialisme et marxisme* (1957) which, under the heading of *Questions de méthode*, opens the book tends to give the reader an impression of somewhat outdated questions and discussion which no longer can provide views of problems discussed today. Even in the light of a somewhat more deep going reading this is partly true. If we read the work following the “story” Sartre wrote into it and relate it to its historical context directly through his own, explicitly expressed concerns we are perhaps left with less than one would expect from one of the most prominent philosophers of this century. This way of reading the text, as I shall later show, is principally the way it was read in the original reception (see chapter 4). Yet even then a contextually stressed reading proved to be insufficient - many of the important themes Sartre advanced in his texts were overlooked as the discussion moved around the questions of Sartre versus the Marxists and the Sartre of the *L’être et le néant* (1943) compared to the Sartre of the *Critique*.

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3 In the following references to this text will be given to the new edition (1995) including the first *Carnet*.

4 In this context see Sartre, Rousset, Rosenthal *Entretiens sur la politique* (1949) and *Entretiens 1974* p. 557-58.



Still, several lines of discussion were formed out of this reading, lines which have over the years formed what I in this present work call the traditional interpretation of Sartre. In these interpretations a more careful reading of the *Critique* has brought out a number of views more detached from the immediate context of the work which often offer detailed and thorough descriptions of Sartre's central concepts. However, even these readings largely remain within the framework Sartre explicitly construed for his work. With a few exceptions it is not until the late 80's that interpretations which take a point of departure and a framing markedly different from Sartre's have begun to emerge.

As indicated above, the interest among scholars in general in Sartre today is not widespread - a fact to which, in my view, have contributed both the insufficient reading of his texts and his successors' often negative views of him.<sup>5</sup> However, the new perspectives taken on Sartre in recent years show that there are quite a number of questions which have been both neglected and highly underestimated in Sartre's work, especially in the *Critique*.

In the frame of the perspectives described above my intention in this study is to bring to the fore some of these questions through a reading which neither follows the traditional interpretations nor the rather common current in recent years of relating Sartre to his successors.<sup>6</sup> What I suggest to proceed to here in more detail could be described by Alain Renaut's words which indicate the beginning of a "free dialogue" with Sartre (1996, p. 30). This refers to a dialogue which offers the possibility of distancing oneself both from the context of the *Critique* and from the views that are commonly held as those explaining Sartre's position as an exponent of the existentialist current of thinking of the 40's, who later, as some say, to his disadvantage, got involved with Marxist currents.

The view advanced in this present study of Sartre as a political thinker and as a theoretician whose discussion is relevant today and contains perspectives, questions and conceptual constructions which within politically oriented study offer grounds for both an understanding of some of the central themes discussed in the second half of this century and devices for further discussion and study of these questions does not partake of a view given of Sartre within a certain current of discussion. This discussion describes Sartre as the end of an era, as the "last great philosopher" (Renaut 1993, see also Russ 1994, p. 234 and Rouger 1986, p. 251ff.) and suggests a view of Sartre as a creator of systems. No doubt this portrait can be painted of Sartre, too, but his relevance to political study is revealed in a portrait drawn of a political thinker from the perspective of a profiled, thematized approach which can reach the inherent political aspects of his texts and bring to light the questions and the concepts which point beyond both his "systems" and his explicit concerns arising from the context of writing. This discussion of Sartre has only just begun.

In his book *Qui perd gagne. Essai sur Sartre* (1993) Philip Knee discusses Sartre's significance starting with a quotation from Gilles Deleuze who contests Sartre's being a beginning or an end to anything:

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5 On this see for example Kruks 1990, p. 11 and Howells 1992, p. 326-27.

6 See for example Kruks 1990, Hendley 1991, Howells 1992, Knee 1993, Vogt 1995.

“C’est stupide de se demander si Sartre est le début ou la fin de quelque chose. Comme toutes les choses et les gens créateurs, il est au milieu, il pousse par le milieu.” (Deleuze, Dialogues. Cited from Knee 1993, p.1)

Apart from refusing a certain perspective of canonizing Sartre Knee also points out possibilities of reading Sartre without labelling him either *dépassé* or “discovering” him as an inexplicably unknown postmodernist (ibid., p. 2, see also p. 5) a question which has been expressed for example by Haarscher in terms of “[u]ltime victoire du vieux renard? Sartre vérité de la post-modernité [...]?” (sa. p. 164).<sup>7</sup>

Knee also anticipates a future rediscovery of Sartre where the influence and importance of Sartre’s work would be confirmed (ibid., p. 2, see also p. 4). This may be to some extent wishful thinking but it also reflects the actual situation and attitudes toward Sartre: in addition to the readers of Sartre who are attached to the views engendered by the original reception of his work, especially where the first volume of the *Critique*<sup>8</sup> is concerned, there is also a number of those who are distancing themselves from the problem settings of this reading. However, politically profiled readings of Sartre are still scarce even though a slight shift from reading the *Critique* as a purely philosophical or as a sociological work to recognizing it as political theory seems to have taken place. Yet, recognizing, or even considering the *Critique* as a work of political theory does not necessarily entail a political reading of the work. “Political theory” can form in this context a perspective within which the discussion tends to remain an explication of the immediate levels of the text and hence does not necessarily reach the inherent political aspects of the discussion and of the conceptual constructions present in the work - or in Sartre’s other works, either.

On the basis of the views presented here it is, no doubt, obvious that this present study will exclusively concentrate on the latter, the inherent political aspects which can be interpreted from Sartre’s work instead of giving a view either of the “practical ensembles” he describes in the *Critique* and which a general reading of his political theory usually takes as a cornerstone for interpretation, or of his so called occasional writings which often discuss political events and questions. Seen from my perspective, neither of these views would permit an approach which would profile Sartre’s originality as a political thinker. This originality can be read through an approach which permits a detailed discussion

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7 Even though Knee keeps from including Sartre among the postmodernists he sees, in my view rightly, that Sartre’s texts have certain parallels, a certain “intellectual sensibility” toward it. I would, however, stress more than Knee does the possibility of a certain dead end that seems to be in sight when reading Sartre starting directly from a postmodern context. The parallels from which this kind of discussion can be opened are not very prominent ones and comparisons between Sartre and Foucault or Derrida for example, especially if conducted in tones which stressedly suggest the presence of a number of postmodern elements in Sartre’s work, risk - in spite of the existence of these parallels - to slight the genuinely original aspects of Sartre’s thought, especially with regard to the concept of subject to which I shall return below (chapters 6.1.5.4 and 6.1.5.5). Also, I have not remained convinced that, from a political perspective, relating Sartre to these writers offers a more fruitful perspective than relating him for example to Rousseau (Knee ibid.), to Kant (Simont 1990a) or to Nietzsche (Louette 1996a and b).

8 The unfinished manuscript of the second volume of the *Critique*, edited by Arlette Elkaim-Sartre, was published posthumously in 1985.

of the concepts he construes and uses as it is, as I shall argue, through Sartre's often quite sophisticated conceptual constructions that we can take a deeper look into the political in his work and, as I hope, contribute to establishing his importance as a political thinker.

In the light of all this it could be legitimate to say that my primary view of the *Critique* in this study is that of reading it from the perspective of today. The distance in time has built a bridge from which we can capture views that surpass the context of the work and Sartre's framing of it, or, so to say, Sartre has become what could be called a "classic" which to a certain extent legitimizes the new perspectives taken on his work. In this sense we can take a view of his texts as a contribution to certain classical questions - in the context of this work in the first place that of the agent and of subject but also for example that which can be evoked in the context of morals.

The question of subject and subjectivity has occasionally arisen in the context of more recent Sartre research<sup>9</sup> and it has been linked to the discussion on the theme since the end of the 80's, after the conceptions of subject such as those of Foucault and Derrida are seen "to have lacked the radical finality with which their celebration endowed them twenty years earlier." (Howells 1992, p. 318) Nonetheless, Sartre's views have not been given as much attention as they would, in my view, require.

In his article *Sartre et Heidegger* (1996) Renaut suggests that reading Sartre today forms a defence of subjectivity.<sup>10</sup> He claims that Sartre discussed the question since his early writings (ibid., p. 29-30) and that in Sartre it is the concept of the individual which is in the central focus to such an extent that the subject dies into the individual (ibid., p. 40). As we shall see below, my view differs considerably from that of Renaut, but his contribution to a discussion that may be about to become a little more than just sporadic comments points to a question which in this present study is seen as one of the themes through which Sartre's significance today can be indicated.

However, there has been surprisingly little discussion of the concept of subject and of the question of the agent in the context of Sartre study and practically no further attention has been paid to the fact that Sartre to quite an extent systematically avoids the use of the term subject and replaces it with different constructions such as "practical agent" or "practical organism" in the *Critique*. This is surprising especially because, as he himself points out in an interview on structuralism from 1966 (Sartre 1966, p. 93, see also Sartre 1969, p. 45), he has

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9 See for example Koch 1988, Zimmermann 1988, Dornberg 1989, 1991, Kruks 1990. See also Howells 1992 on the "genuine contribution" Sartre's texts can offer to the debate over the "revision of the subject" which is "once again at the center of contemporary inquiry" (p. 319-20).

10 Renaut's position could be questioned already through an early comment of Sartre's from the *Cahiers pour une morale* (1983 (1947-48)): "Je ne suis pas d'abord pour mettre ensuite en rapport mais je surgis comme mise en rapport de l'Être. Ainsi ce dévoilement n'est ni subjectif ni objectif: il est surgissement absolu de la subjectivité. Je ne puis jamais trouver la subjectivité si je la cherche car elle n'est *rien*: tout ce que je peux voir et toucher c'est l'Être dans sa transcendance absolue - et je ne peux nulle part saisir l'Être comme il est puisqu'il n'y a de l'Être que par mise en rapport, je suis partout comme rapport." (CM p. 513)

discussed the question already as early as in his *Trascendance de l'ego* (1936) and it has been one of his permanent concerns ever since. However, as the discussion is not conducted in explicit terms bringing forth the question but starts from a reformulation of the concept as a conceptual device within his texts the problem is not expressed in an easily detectable manner.

The publication of the edited, translated and reconstructed texts of Sartre's lecture on subjectivity from 1961 at the Istituto Gramsci in an Italian version (1972) and especially in a French version (1993) has given a useful help-device for a reconstruction of the question (see Kail 1993). I shall use this text to shed light on the concept of subjectivity which I shall use together with the concepts of temporality and production and with the specific figures construing the setting for Sartre's discussion in the *Critique* to construe my view of the Sartrean political agent.

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As already indicated the first part of this present study will discuss the general setting of my argument. It will also bring to the fore the central conceptual devices used for analyzing and interpreting the texts as well as the perspectives taken on them. In this part I shall argue that given the nature of Sartre's texts and the questions he discussed a close reading with a profiled interpretation is required in order to reach such perspectives in the texts that surpass the surface, the structure and the systematizing logic of Sartre's discussion. I shall also argue that it is possible to construe conceptual devices from his texts which give a view of the political in Sartre even though politics or the political has not been explicitly brought up or discussed by Sartre himself and also that the *Critique*, from the point of view of this present study, is a political text in the first place.

The second part of my study will discuss the *Critique*, to some extent *L'être et le néant* and visit certain other texts of Sartre's in order to uncover the conceptual constructions indicating the political that can be interpreted from them within the perspective discussed in the first part. This part also contains a detailed analysis of several concepts and conceptual constructions in these texts as well as the construction of the agent as a political actor and a player of the political condition. Finally, this part will also take a view of the agent and of action through a description of political action strategies which can be interpreted from Sartre's texts.

## 2 READING STRATEGIES AND A FRAMEWORK FOR A POLITICAL READING OF SARTRE

“Mais la politique, qu’est-ce que c’est? Pour moi, cela n’est pas *une attitude* que l’individu peut prendre ou abandonner selon les circonstances, mais une *dimension* de la personne. Dans nos sociétés, qu’on “fasse” ou non de la politique, on naît politisé [...]” (SIT VIII, p. 132)

### 2.1 To Begin

In the introduction to his *Sartre. L’incarnation imaginaire* (1996) François Noudelmann asks a question concerning the reading of Sartre: how to read Sartre without being trapped in the Sartrean discourse and without heading for an exegetic reading or falling into vulgarization. As a solution to this problem he offers the possibility of understanding the texts:

“Sartre se voulait un penseur qui se renie au fur et à mesure qu’il avance dans le cheminement d’une pensée rétive à toute systématisation [...]”<sup>1</sup> Comment échapper au discours sartrien sur Sartre? [...] N’existe-t-il pas d’autres voies que celle de l’exégèse ou de la vulgarisation? Comprendre l’œuvre peut-être; au sens etymologique, la saisir, l’envahir, réperer ses contradictions, non pour les dénoncer mais pour déceler les tensions internes, trouver les limites et définir leur nature.” (ibid., p. 9)

For Noudelmann there are two directions toward which this “understanding” of Sartre’s texts seems to have been taken: the pre-war one stemming from Husserl and Heidegger and the post-war one referring to Marx. However, according to

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It is interesting to note here that in an interview with Michel Sicard conducted in 1977-78 Sartre himself expresses a view contrary to this and considers his work as a certain kind of system (Sartre and Sicard 1979, p. 21).

him both of these retrospective ways of reading Sartre maintain the “fiction progressist” (ibid., p. 10) of an advancing, continuing, positive thinking which hides Sartre’s originality: “[C]e regard rétrospectif [...] masque le tissu et la continuité originale de la pensée [de Sartre]” (ibid.). The problem of reading Sartre today cannot be solved through recourse to the traditional ways of reading him.

This is a concern that I share with Noudelmann. Reading Sartre today requires an approach which permits the bringing forth of a view of his originality as a thinker and, from my point of view, especially on his originality in both construing and using concepts. This concern does not know limits between disciplines but is common as well to literally, philosophically and politically oriented studies for the same problem is encountered in each of them. Earlier readings and their contexts form a tradition of interpretation to which a majority of Sartre scholars adhere and which has established not only the generally accepted interpretations of Sartre’s concepts but also the landmarks for reading, the points of reference, the contextual and conceptual divisions as well as the “typically Sartrean” problems. In this situation a scholar who wishes to draw her/his own lines and coordinates into the Sartrean landscape envisages a twofold problem: that of finding a way of breaking with the traditional interpretations without losing sight of all that has been achieved and that of establishing new guidelines and criteria for reading the texts.

The solving of this problem requires, in the first place, distancing oneself from the existing interpretations as well as from Sartre’s texts. However, it is not only a question of distancing oneself from these interpretations through a (re)-interpretation of the texts and through taking perspectives that start from questions that are posed from outside, or rather, in the margin of traditional interpretations, it also requires changing the ambience in which the texts are read. The ambience, construed from the context of interpretation - the questions asked, the reference points used and the postulations made - receives its special features from the style of the approach. Each scholar brings into the text her/his own - to use Sartrean terminology - singular presence which creates a part of the ambience. Amongst the commentaries written on Sartre one can find a number of different ambiances from taking sides (few writers have been so vehemently attacked and so wholeheartedly defended as Sartre) to detached technical analyses, from dramatization to irony, even to mockery.<sup>2</sup>

The ambience chosen for this study is that of playing, playing on a field, on a stage, that of an attempt to abandon “l’esprit de sérieux” which stands in the way of both freedom and responsibility (see EN p. 77, 669, 721). This ambience derives from the “freedom of the reader” which Sartre put forward in his *Qu’est-ce que la littérature* (1948, p. 96-99) as the possibility and obligation of the reader to recreate the text read. Sartre says in an interview on the occasion of his seventieth birthday: “je souhaite qu’on fasse du travail en reprenant celui que j’ai fait et en le dépassant” (SIT X, p. 156). This is a comment he makes when wondering whether his texts will still be read a hundred years from now, a comment which does not

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2 The only example that I know of which uses mockery to forward a positive view of Sartre is Robert C. Solomon’s booklet *Introducing the Existentialists. Imaginary interviews with Sartre, Heidegger and Camus* (1981).

suggest a perspective of “correcting” his views (“Je n’ai jamais rien appris d’un de mes commentateurs.”, *ibid.*, p. 188) nor that of continuing his work but that of using it as a springboard for thinking and writing.

This kind of ambience brings about delimitations which shape the work. Hence, for example, my reading does not move in the first place within the view of what can be said “about” Sartre, but starts from the question of what can be said using Sartre’s conceptual apparatus and the questions he discusses, and aims at exploring some of the possibilities that can be opened from his texts. It is here that I, as Philip Knee does (1993, p. 1), wish to leave aside the “classical” questions concerning Sartre in order to pursue some of the sidetracks which might prove to be worthwhile from the point of view of a politically oriented study.

“Classical” Sartre interpretations tend, for example, to understand Sartre’s examples, such as the one about a woman in a café engaged in a conversation with a would-be lover, both contextually and conceptually given. In my view Sartre uses his examples rather loosely to illustrate certain points when developing his concepts or to add views that are not explicitly discussed in the text. Both of these ways of use leave a certain distance between the question at hand and the example given, a distance which, in its turn, both leaves room for and invites interpretation. However, they are often presented as an organic part of Sartre’s argument, and the changes in the register or in the point of view taken are not discussed.

For example Ronald E. Santoni in his *Bad Faith, Good Faith, and Authenticity in Sartre’s Early Philosophy* (1995) takes up the example mentioned that Sartre gives when discussing bad faith (*la mauvaise foi*) and argues that Sartre has “omitted” a certain perspective (that of good faith (*la bonne foi*)) from his exposition. However, when advancing this view Santoni does not specify that he is in fact using a reading strategy which permits him to take a path from Sartre’s examples in the direction in which he wishes to take his analysis of the phenomenon of bad faith instead of following strictly Sartre’s line of argumentation. Not that I would agree on the direction he has chosen, quite to the contrary, but the reading of Sartre he forwards in his book is an example of a reading which is not perhaps quite as “orthodox” as he seems to think and in his discussion the concepts he focuses on are discussed in a frame that is less self-evident than he seems to argue.

With this example I wish to forward a view which casts a certain doubt on claims of “orthodoxy” and point out that - as also in Santoni’s case - the most interesting discussion seems to arise from transgressions of the “orthodox” reading, or, so to say, from a reading which uses the “strategy” of bad faith instead of that of good faith. This could also be illustrated through Richard Rorty’s comment on philosophy. For him

“Interesting philosophy [...] usually [...] is, implicitly or explicitly, a contest between an entrenched vocabulary which has become a nuisance and a half-formed new vocabulary which vaguely promises great things.” (1991, p. 9)

Rorty places Sartre amongst those he calls “metaphysicians”, i.e. those who search for an “intrinsic nature, a real essence” in contrast to the “ironist” who is “a nominalist and a historicist” (*ibid.*, p. 74, 99). This is a view I wish to contest through reading Sartre as if he were much closer to the Rortyan ironist than Rorty himself

suggests. In this sense I suggest to read Sartre as a writer whose “vocabulary” differs from that of the “metaphysician” and also as one who brings forth indications of a “vaguely promising new vocabulary”, in other words, in an ambience which tries to place Sartre in a context where his specific “vocabulary” could be profiled.

Still, the establishing of this kind of preliminary ambience for reading does not suffice, for an interpretation of a text also requires a way of entering into the text. In the above mentioned book Noudelmann takes as a guiding thread or as a way of entering Sartre’s texts the study of image, of the metaphoric which he sees as not reduced to a mere illustration of concepts but as a way of apprehending reality (see *ibid.*, p. 10-12). According to him, this point of entrance permits both the study of figures and the understanding of the articulation of the registers Sartre uses as well as the understanding of the conceptual operations he makes – an objective that I, once again, share with him. Noudelmann’s starting point is quite interesting because image is, effectively, one of the figures which throughout Sartre’s texts also offers a conceptual device for reading his descriptions as a perspective for interpretation.

Through using the image as a point for entering Sartre’s texts Noudelmann wishes, however, to show the “profound and dynamic” unity of Sartre’s thought in its “metamorphoses” and evolution (*ibid.*, p. 10-11) which is no longer an objective I would share with him. My reading of Sartre is partial and fragmentary and hence does not aim at bringing forth a “unity” either in a textual, contextual or conceptual sense. I shall neither follow the gross lines of his thought nor go through the changes it underwent over the years, nor shall I discuss all the concepts, not even all the central ones he used and developed. Furthermore, I shall not discuss any of his texts as a whole, or as Noudelmann says, as a retotalization of the past texts (*ibid.*, p. 10).

Where some scholars take an “external” view of Sartre’s texts I would like to stress the importance of an “internal” reading (see for example Knee 1993, p. 1).<sup>3</sup> The “internal” one is, in my view, necessary in every reading of Sartre for the complexity of his text. His concepts cannot be fully grasped without placing oneself within the setting of his discussions. However, the “external” one – inasmuch as it is not understood as merely remaining within a superficial survey of the text – is needed to bring about the possibility of distancing oneself from the texts as well as from Sartre’s use of terms and even from his use of language and vocabulary which can, if too closely followed, form a labyrinth from which there is no exit.

Those who have read Sartre's thousands of pages know very well that he uses a language of his own, not only in the sense that he creates new words to express concepts, but also that he, especially in the *Critique*, construes phrases which have such a very complex structure that they do not easily disclose their meaning. The use of synonyms, the repetition of phrases in other words and the use of apparently irrelevant examples are common to him as well. Yet this is not

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3 Or as Charles Gervais puts it: “Le paradoxe de cette philosophie est donc d’obliger le lecteur à chercher l’essentiel dans l’implicite et à comprendre l’œuvre de Sartre à partir de ce qu’elle ne dit pas mais annonce.” (1969a, p. 96-97)



only a feature of a style of writing,<sup>4</sup> the idea behind this kind of use of language is closely related to Sartre's idea of change: one of the premises of change, the "re-understanding" of reality is here sought for by giving language a methodic task of keeping thoughts from forming tight, immobile concepts, or so to say, in a way Sartre is playing with language both in order to underline and undermine the question at hand. Nevertheless, Sartre's use of language is such that it complicates the reader's task of reconstruing the relations between the issues he discusses as well as the reconstruction of his conceptual systematics. Therefore a perspective which uses images and figures which are not taken directly from Sartre assist in maintaining the necessary distance to the labyrinth of his concepts and language.

In order to construe such a perspective I shall in this work use metaphors and figures which form a commonplace in certain currents of politically oriented study. Through their use I wish to bring forth the possibility of construing an entrance to the texts as well as the points of encounter where the "purely" Sartrean context is at least to a certain extent relativized. The ones used - such as theater, scene, game and play<sup>5</sup> serve as guidelines for placing the analysis within a perspective, or in other words, serve as coordinates for the discussion - coordinates which can be referred to when a "name" needs to be given to the specific questions, problems and topics pointed out in the course of the study.

Furthermore, the perspective I shall take here is limited in another sense as well: I shall not discuss the concepts which I take up in all their aspects or variations or in all the contexts in which they can be found. Instead of this I shall, to use Barry Barnes' words, take "the literature primarily as a repository of concepts, images, procedures and arguments, not as a collection of recognized texts" (1988, p. xiv) and advance to construing what I hope will form a personal perspective of Sartre's work - a perspective which allows me to focus on the task I have set for myself in this present work, namely that of reading Sartre politically, which here means two things: reading Sartre as a political thinker and reading him from a political point of view.

Reading Sartre within these two perspectives entails two thematic delimitations. Firstly, it means reading Sartre's texts as political texts instead of reading his "political theory" and suggesting that the political aspect of his texts as well as of the conceptual constructions in his texts form an important perspective on his texts - a perspective which, as I indicated above, has not been widely discussed. Secondly, it means that Sartre's work shall here be read through political perspec-

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4 In the above mentioned interview with Sicard Sartre makes a difference between his texts that are, from the point of view of the use of language, well written (for example *L'idiot de la famille*, 1971-72) and those that are not (for example the *Critique*) (Sartre and Sicard 1979, p. 24). See also *Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre* (1975, p. 11) and *L'écrivain et sa langue* (1965, SIT IX, p. 74-78).

5 For a view of these and other metaphors see for example Geertz 1993 (1983) (esp. p. 24ff.) who discusses them as analogies used in research. I would, however, in the case of the game metaphor stress much less than Geertz does the aspect of following rules and give more importance to the situations a game offers as places for action partly in order to avoid references, however distant, to an idea of action in a "natural state" without any rules, partly to avoid an image of advancement either as a spatial or a temporal figure. Furthermore for Sartre action cannot be understood through the mere knowledge of the rules of the game (see CRD I, p. 469). I would also, in what Geertz calls a drama analogy, stress the aspect of action he brings up through Victor Turner's words "making, not faking" (ibid., p. 27) - acting on stage does not refer to a "mere show" (ibid., p. 26). See also Burke (1969 (1945)) and Noudelmann 1996.

tives construed around conceptions such as “change” and “limit-situation” which can be interpreted from Sartre’s texts and about which I shall argue that they form a frame through which his texts can be read politically to a further extent than through a more classical approach focusing specifically on his discussions of political issues or on his “political theory” or even on singular concepts.

This takes us to the specific understanding of the political in this present study. The understanding of action, or of a situation, as political, or its being construed as such, requires the reaching of the political written into this act or situation through reconstruction or through experience. It is clear that the perspective of interpretation of an agent in an action situation is different from the perspective of a scholar studying politics. However, we can build an analogy between these two with regard to reading a text: an interpretation of a text is a political act which carries its own political interests. When one’s aim is, as mine is in this work, to bring to the fore certain issues within a political perspective, to read the Sartrean way of thinking politically and to discuss Sartre’s political reinterpretation of philosophical concepts, the interpretation of a text from a political point of view does not only entail the reading of the political in the text but also the politicizing of the text - the political in a text depends on the problems posed, questions asked and perspectives taken (see Palonen 1994a, p. 51). Hence my interpretation here is construed more as a reinterpretation from a political perspective which “detects the political aspect in a phenomenon not earlier considered as political or some new dimensions of the political in a phenomenon already acknowledged as political”, which “[expands] the presence of political in it” and which sees reading the political as “demapping” of the existing principles of drawing the map (Palonen 1993, p. 11, 13, 15). With regard to Sartre this perspective can be taken also for example in connection with his plays which can be read as displaying the political as well as in connection with many of his conceptions which are not explicitly discussed as political ones, for example temporality which will be addressed in detail below.

If we think of Sartre as a political writer the first question which invites more specific attention is his view of the human being construed in relations of conflict and as contesting the self-evidencies of the given reality. In this respect we can find in Sartre’s texts a clearly formulated view. Already in *L’être et le néant* he postulated the relation between “human realities” as a conflict (EN e.g. p. 502) and this view did not suffer important changes as his work advanced. It is this view which forms the nucleus of the political written into Sartre’s texts and which serves as a starting point for reading the political in his texts as a discussion on the political outside a traditional institutional context from the point of view of action and action situation. Sartre’s discussion is, beneath the surface structure of the analysis of for example organization, institution and state as forms of groups, a discussion of the political from the point of view of the agent. This is a perspective where the focus is centered on descriptions of the construction of the agent in a situation as well as of the strategies of action. Hence studying the political in Sartre means here concentrating on the changing aspects of the construction of the agent and of the action situation, on settings embracing conflict and on different perspectives taken on these instead of analyzing immobilized structures or generalized patterns of action from a perspective where time stands still.

Through this perspective we can understand Sartre as writing with a conceptual apparatus which permits the locating of the political and of political action outside the institutional frame in the action of the agent. It also permits reading Sartre in a heuristic manner from points of view which stand in the margin of the texts and through conceptual constructions whose interpretation does not carry the weight of having been canonized to the extent some others, generally considered as the central ones (for example freedom), have. Furthermore, it permits taking a view of Sartre's highly personal style of writing and his use of concepts and language and seeing them as forming a part of the political aspect of his work. We can also see them as his attempt to distance himself from the discussion of the questions at hand and as an attempt to reformulate the concepts used and views taken of the question. This forms a setting which has proved to be both interesting and fruitful in opening perspectives of interpretation on Sartre, perspectives which allow both for a reinterpretation of his concepts and descriptions and for a profiled reading where the political is brought to the fore in contexts which do not display an immediate image of politics.

## 2.2 A View of the Texts

"A présent, il faut commencer. Comment? Par quoi? Cela importe peu [...] L'essentiel, c'est de partir d'un problème." (IF I, 8)

The quotation above, taken from the beginning of *L'idiote de la famille* (1971-72), the contested, speculative biography of Gustave Flaubert that Sartre put into its final form toward the end of the 60's and at the beginning of the 70's describes well my approach to his texts: the point of view I take in this study is neither that of a general rereading of Sartre nor that of reconstructing certain lines of his thought through his texts within the conceptual and contextual perspective that Sartre uses - which seem to be the "classical" ways of reading Sartre - but that of coordinating the perspective through a focus placed on the agent. William McBride says:

"I cannot claim to be furnishing a "definitive" interpretation of Sartre's political thought, not because of lack of competence on my part, but because of obstacles intrinsic to Sartre interpretation." (1991, p. 2)

Even though this sentence could be read as an expression of disappointment directed toward the impossibility of this kind of "definitive" interpretation, it still expresses what I believe to be one of the most important, or, so to say, one of the most political characteristics of Sartre's text: it is indeed not possible to make "definite" interpretations - or to reduce what Sartre writes into a one and only "truth". A little later McBride goes on to describe Sartre's philosophy as a philosophy tending toward "openness and tentativeness" (ibid., p. 3) - which, again, indeed are characteristics of Sartre's texts and conceptions - and Sartre's attitude toward his work as "at once serious, ironic, and detached" (ibid.) which, in their turn, are characteristics of the ambience Sartre creates in his texts. All these

descriptions point to the necessity of formulating one's own view of Sartre as a means for presenting an interpretation.

The freedom of the reader to which I referred earlier expresses this openness and this ambience of Sartre's texts from the point of view of the reader. If this freedom is used - as it is used in this present study - as an opportunity to read the texts through an interpretation which, while construed on the basis of Sartre's concepts, however requires reading him starting from problems other than those posed by Sartre himself, it also requires reading his texts in a manner that could be described as reading "between the lines" instead of following the narration of his thought. It also requires the construction of a specifically thematized views of the questions Sartre himself asked.

Sartre's own main concern in the *Critique* is clearly expressed: he wishes to offer the prolegomena to any future anthropology (CRD I, p. 153). However, this, were it taken as Sartre's ultimate objective, would give us quite a narrow perspective on the problems with which he worked. The construction of a systematic frame for more detailed analyses which the "prolegomena" indicated entailed a number of questions he focused on. Apart from those most obvious, such as history and the ever-present question of morals, his questions were also directed by his concern for political action and, as I shall argue, for the agent in particular. In order to reach these questions an approach with such thematic delimitations and reading strategies is required which permits reading the *Critique* so that the questions Sartre explicitly brought to the fore are left to the margin, and certain undercurrents present in the text are placed in the center of the focus. In the following I shall proceed to this through re-reading the concept of production in his work from a perspective which shows a line of argumentation pointing beyond the Marxist setting which, as I shall argue, Sartre used as a springboard for his own discussion.

Distancing oneself from Sartre's texts and from the questions he himself asked through reading strategies does not, however, display all the aspects of my approach. It merely covers the aspects of "escaping" the surface layers of the texts, and stresses the view that Sartre's concepts can and do offer, as such, perspectives which can be used in the context of my work. Bracketing this layer of the *Critique* does to a certain extent entail the bracketing of the history of the concepts written into Sartre's texts - the tracing of the changes they underwent from one text to another does not, in the perspective of this present study, form a primary view of understanding the way Sartre construes his concepts and how he operates with them. Furthermore, this bracketing stresses the view that the history Sartre wrote into his concepts is not necessarily a history of "progression" or "fulfilment", but more a history of different topics and different perspectives, each of them started, developed and frequently returned to, but rarely, perhaps never finished or completed.

This takes us to the use of the texts in this study. The stressing of different perspectives taken, at the expense of a textual and a conceptual unity or even continuity, makes it possible to discuss Sartre's concepts without totally discriminating against any of them on the basis of belonging to the earlier / later texts or to different contexts of discussion. It also makes it possible to draw such parallels between the concepts which are not evident if the texts are read within a chronologically oriented logic.

As already mentioned, the *Critique* - the key text of this study - was partly written as a contribution to the discussion around Marxism in the 50's. Hence it is obvious that one cannot read the *Critique* without somehow situating it in this discussion, but this aspect will, however, remain in the background of this study but for the exception of the discussion on the concept of production where it will be problematized within a specific, limited view. As this study concentrates largely on the *Critique*, other texts are used mostly in the perspective of shedding additional light on the questions at hand and, as is mostly the case with regard to *L'être et le néant*, in that of setting forth a background relevant to the question. The second volume of the *Critique* will be referred to in places where the discussion of the first one is continued in a fashion which can clarify the problems discussed. The texts from the period after the *Critique* are, with a few exceptions, excluded because there is an easily detectable shift in his thinking toward the end of the 60's. The texts belonging to that period would not offer a relevant point of view on the themes discussed in this work without recourse to a setting exceeding the one of this study.

Yet, with regard to *L'idiot* this is not quite as obvious. It is a text which partly leans on the discussion of the *Critique*, partly seeks its roots elsewhere. The *L'universel singulier* text from 1964<sup>6</sup> forms a bridge between these two works, a bridge through which certain perspectives from the *Critique* can be extended to *L'idiot*, but which are, however, discussed there in a different setting. Even though *L'idiot* uses to quite an extent the methodological and conceptual perspectives of the *Critique* the point of view it takes, seen from the perspective of this present study, differs considerably from that of the *Critique*. Where the latter is a text in which the agent can be seen as a conceptual construction which can be described through conceptual operations present in the work, the former takes the perspective of a singular person. This is a difference which, in my view, makes it impossible to read *L'idiot* as a continuation of the *Critique* and requires reading it as a work which calls for a study of its own.

Furthermore, the discussion on the concept of history in *L'idiot*, the posthumously published fragment of the fourth part included, which to a certain extent bears on the discussion of the *Critique*<sup>7</sup> is left out of this present work because, even though the question of history will be discussed, it will not be discussed in terms of interpreting Sartre's views on history but in connection to the concept of temporality and hence from a limited perspective. Moreover, *L'idiot*, in spite of several interesting questions it raises, is not, from a point of view of a political reading as important a text as the *Critique* as it operates far less than the *Critique* with politically relevant concepts and topics.

These delimitations in the textual material of this work highlight the perspective taken here. I am reading Sartre starting from specific, thematized perspec-

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6 A communication given by Sartre in the UNESCO colloquium on Kierkegaard in Paris (SIT IX, first published 1966 under the name *Kierkegaard vivant*).

7 Sartre himself says in the interview on the occasion of his 70th birthday that the essential questions he wanted to bring forth in *L'idiot* are said in the three first parts: "[...] je pense que l'essentiel de ce que j'avais à dire, je l'ai dit dans les trois premières tomes. [...] Mais, je vous dis, l'essentiel est fait, même si l'ouvrage reste en suspens." SIT X, p. 151. Still, there are a few points in the *Notes sur "Madame Bovary"* which in a detailed study of the work could shed additional light on these questions.

tives. This means reading Sartre to some extent in fragments - i.e. not reading his whole conceptual apparatus nor the overall architecture of his texts but bringing to the fore a certain number of his concepts and the way they are construed and used. It also means making use of his concepts when reading him - which implies that my work has in a sense a two-way structure: I am reading Sartre through his own concepts, or, if you prefer, interpreting Sartre through Sartre. Hence my interpretation is focused on specific problems and the concepts are analyzed from specific, limited perspectives which will, as non-exclusive ones, allow for other interpretations as well.

The perspective of interpretation taken here exerts a relatively strong stress on the aspect of the use of the concepts, on the writer's vision of what can be said of them largely independently of the purpose to which Sartre used them. This forms the background for the themes taken up in this present study. As already pointed out, they do not follow the themes Sartre himself exposed as the center of his discussion nor do they follow the conceptual logic of his work as he exposed it but rather bring forth from chosen perspectives themes which seem to have been buried under his explicit discussions and logic. These themes, which form one of the political perspectives of his works, can be reached by diving into his texts and by searching for the political aspects that do not meet the eye within an exegetic frame of reading. The uncovering of the themes through the freedom of the reader sets a task which gives this freedom another aspect: it is not only the freedom of interpretation, when reading Sartre it is at the same time an "obligation": the opacity of his texts demands the reader to *invent* her/his own way through this opacity.

The way I dive into Sartre's texts through his use of concepts reflects my general viewpoint here: I am not in the first place interested in *what* he says about the human being, action, state and such, but more interested in *how* he construes and frames what he says, which kind of descriptions he makes and which concepts he construes and uses and how he uses them. Yet as the form and the contents cannot be separated to a very large extent, a discussion of "what" is said will also be present throughout this work.

Hence the problem setting here could be described further as follows: a description of the political aspects and of the possibilities of interpretation inscribed in Sartre's texts as well as the construction of such conceptual devices through which this description can be reached in order to expose the portrait of the political agent. In brief, the central aim of my work could be said to be the following: Jean-Paul Sartre is seen here as a political thinker from a perspective of interpretation where the outlining concepts used for a description of the political agent are political action, production, temporality, the question of subjectivity, and the strategies of the action of the agent. These are analysed in relation to the conceptual constructions and the figures Sartre uses in his texts and they form relatively autonomous perspectives on the questions discussed. Moreover, all this is seen in the perspective of painting a portrait of the political agent in Sartre against the background of a certain ideal action situation, a situation where in the first place all the given alternatives open for action can be considered as impossible ones and, in the second place, a situation where acting within the impossibility

of the situation construes a perspective of the possibility of reorganizing action and of changing the situation.

In order to proceed to a study along these lines a more specific context of interpretation is needed. In the following I shall elaborate upon the conceptual context from which I start reading Sartre and take a closer look at the points of view that I take of his texts.

### 2.3 A Framework for a Political Reading of Sartre: Ambiguity, Ambivalence and the Perspective of Conceptual Logic

“Je n’aime pas parler de l’existentialisme. Le propre d’une recherche, c’est d’être indéfinie. La nommer et la définir, c’est boucler la boucle: que reste-t-il? Un mode fini et déjà périmé de la culture, quelque chose comme une marque de savon, en d’autres termes une *idée*.” (CRD I, p. 9)

The commonplace knowledge that Sartre’s texts are written both in a very dramatic and also in a highly personal style does not offer a sufficient view of the question. As already indicated, the form and the contents of a text are closely related<sup>8</sup> and it would mean, in my view, underestimating Sartre’s texts were they to be considered as written merely in a “personal” style. Following Clifford Geertz (1993, p. 19-21) we could say that Sartre is one of those whose work forms a part of the refiguration of social thought through genre blurring which invites interpretation as they are works which “we can order only practically, relationally, and as our purposes prompt us.” (ibid., p. 21).<sup>9</sup> The most obvious case would be Sartre’s *L’idiot* to which Geertz refers as a “philosophical [inquiry] looking like literary criticism” (ibid.). However, I would like to suggest that this description should be extended to his other works as well. Many of his plays could be described as political and moral treatises or even lectures on politics in the spirit of *polis*, his “autobiography” *Les Mots* (1964)<sup>10</sup> as a psychoanalytico-philosophico-politico-literary essay, his *Saint Genet* (1952) as a moral inquiry into the nature of Modern Evil and the *Critique* could be described as a political Odyssey (Flynn 1986, p. 122, see also Palonen 1994a p. 51-52) - just to mention a few. This genre

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8 When discussing the possible ways of reading Jean Genet’s texts Sartre says: “[m]ais forme et contenu ne font qu’un: c’est ce contenu qui exige *cette* forme [...]” (SG p. 537) See also Sartre 1969, p. 56 where Sartre comments on form and meaning as related to the production of a constructed object in a text.

9 Geertz includes Sartre in a list where figure such writers as Borges, Mailer, Lévi-Strauss, Said and Feyerabend and says that “one waits only for quantum theory in verse or biography in algebra” (ibid., p. 20).

10 In my view the autobiographical character of this work is questionable at least to some extent. There is no doubt it is written in the form of memoirs but it forms to a much greater extent an analysis of a writer called J.-P. Sartre by a philosopher called J.-P. Sartre. In an interview from 1969 Sartre says: “[t]he reason why I produced *Les Mots* is the reason why I have studied Genet or Flaubert: how does a man become someone who writes, who wants to speak of the imaginary. This is what I sought to answer in my own case, as I sought it in that of the others.” (Sartre 1969, p. 65) See also *Enrietiens* 1974 p. 304-05 where Sartre comments on the first version of the book (called “Jean-sans-terre”) as follows: “[c]’est parce que je voulais écrire toute ma vie d’un point de vue politique [...]”. On this see also Catalano 1986, p. 8n20 and Howells 1988, p. 183ff.

blurring has its equivalent in Sartre's conceptual apparatus in what is generally described as the ambiguity of his concepts but which I would like to call also ambivalence.

In his *Modernity and Ambivalence* (1991) Zygmunt Bauman discusses the concept of ambivalence in a manner which brings up several features that can also be assigned to the ambiguity of Sartre's concepts. Where Bauman writes that ambivalence is experienced "as a disorder" and as a counterconcept to classifying in the sense of giving "the world a structure" for multiplying "its probabilities" (ibid., p. 1) one could describe Sartre's concepts in an analogic manner: they are indeed concepts that indicate a counterposition to order and to the permanence of structures and his use of language supports this ambiguity/ ambivalence character of his concepts. This is not only indicated by the highly interpretable as well as interpretative character of his concepts but also by the fact that they resist strict classifications. They cannot be given any one meaning but, paraphrasing Bauman, are assignable to more than one category at once (ibid.), nor can they be systematized to any large extent on the basis of their use. If we follow Bauman we could say that this represents a distinct anti-modern characteristic for he sees modernity as a "particularly bitter and relentless war against ambivalence" (ibid., p. 3). However, especially with regard to the *Critique* also the opposite could be said, for Sartre's quest for the "prolegomena", his systematization of the "practical ensembles" into One History as well as his explicit logic of the "levels of experience" used as a methodological device for advancing in his study show us a picture where everything is prone to being neatly ordered and explained. This "contradiction" brings a further ambivalence to his text, that which can be placed on the one hand within the relation between the concepts and the structure of the work and on the other between the concepts and Sartre's objectives. In other words, his concepts as ambivalent/ ambiguous resist the overall logical systematization of the questions he discusses: the work, so to say, speaks against itself.

On the bases of this it is clear that any effort of classification tending to an overall systematization of Sartre's concepts is next to impossible. Nevertheless, in my view, an effort to proceed to a sketchy classification is not an entirely vain effort for an approximative classification can prove to be useful in describing the perspectives taken on the text. Still, I would like to differentiate here between two different kinds of classifications. Firstly, a classification based on the meaning or on the substance of a concept would be to no avail as it tells very little, if anything about Sartre's text as his use of a concept varies according to the context - or more precisely, in a given context it describes one aspect of the question at hand, in another another aspect. Hence also purely functional systematizations - such as the one Thomas R. Flynn gives in his *Sartre and Marxist Existentialism* (1986, p. 150) - tend to immobilize the description into a snap-shot which displays a moment but does not reach any further into the text or into the use of the concepts. As a contrast to this a second way of classifying Sartre's concepts can be evoked. This refers to classifications which aim at describing the ways the concepts are used in the text and which can shed light on the lines of argumentation traceable from the text as well as on the perspectives taken. An example of this can also be found in Flynn (ibid., p. 122) where he gives a table of polarities in the *Critique* which forms a view of Sartre's perspectives. Another example can be taken from Noudelmann



whose classificatory tables are based on Sartre's use of words and express at once both Sartre's perspective and Noudelmann's own and also reflect the ambivalence of the concepts (see 1996, p. 39, 59, 103). In the following I shall introduce one view of this question and my view will follow the second line indicated: a construction of perspectives described within the frame of the ambiguity/ ambivalence of Sartre's concepts.

The ambiguity/ ambivalence character of Sartre's concepts forms also a background against which the following of Sartre's "gross schemes" in the interpretation of the text appears as an approach which lays stress on the systematization of his concepts within the methodological perspective he takes. The regressive analysis describing the architecture of each of the "levels of experience" Sartre forwards is accompanied by a progressive perspective which is developed through the advancing of the "story" from the "individual praxis" to the "practico-inert" and to the "groups" (see for example Catalano 1986, p. 49-50, 82, 90, 92, 107). This perspective shows the construction of the concepts within a synthetizing view which tends to hide from sight another conceptual architecture written into the *Critique* - one construed around the lines of argumentation which form a background to Sartre's discussion but are not explicitly thematized by him as they take a perspective different as well from the synthetizing one embracing the overall logic of the work as from the one of regression bringing forward the concepts Sartre uses as logical devices for the construction of the progressive perspective. The ambiguity of the concepts, as it directs the view on the fashion in which the concepts are used indicates a conceptual logic which breaks with both of these perspectives in that it shows both logical and conceptual operations which are more fragmentary and less systematized than those taken within the two views of progression and regression which form the explicit, outspoken logical frame of the work. The concepts of production and temporality, for example, form a part of the implicit conceptual construction through which Sartre forwards a view of the agent at a relative distance from the "practical ensembles" he uses as a guiding thread in his discussion.

As the aim of this work is to bring forth a perspective of this "hidden" conceptual setting the approach adopted here follows a conceptual logic which takes a much more delimited profile than that of the "progressive-regressive" method through operating with concepts construed for the purpose of discussing Sartre's specific conceptual operations. As this approach is not based on the method used in the *Critique* as such it has proved to be useful also in studying Sartre's earlier texts even though the difference between Sartre's method in *L'être et le néant* and in the *Critique* is considerable. Where in the *Critique* he uses the progressive-regressive method and a form of dialectics developed first in his texts preceding the *Critique* in *L'être et le néant* his approach is based on phenomenology.<sup>11</sup>

From the methodological point of view of this present study the distance between these two works - sometimes considered as a radical change, sometimes

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11 In addition to the Husserlian background Sartre's *L'être et le néant* can be considered to quite an extent as an answer to as well as a critique of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*. On this see for example Fell 1979, Haar 1980, Catalano 1986, Busch 1990 and Cumming 1992a and 1992b.

as a mere development in views - fades into the background as we can, through the conceptual constructions used here, show aspects of continuity in Sartre's manner of construing and using his concepts combined with notable changes in the perspectives taken. This "ambiguity", in its turn, leads to stressing that the continuity in the construction of the concepts is not automatically followed by a continuity in Sartre's descriptions, postulations or in the methods he uses, and through the constructions used in this work there can be shown to be certain ways of approaching and of thematizing problems in Sartre which point beyond the *Critique* to other texts.

From the first to the last philosophical writings of Sartre we can find one important line of investigation, the quest for a real human being in a real world. However, we should note here that the "real" which belongs to Sartre's vocabulary throughout his work should not be understood as diametrically opposed to "irreal" or to "imaginary" (see for example *L'imaginaire* (1940) p. 266-76, 284) nor should it be understood as opposed to ideal within an idealistic - realistic division. This is a division which Sartre intended to surpass already in his earlier works (see EN p. 31, 279) and in the light of the nominalism of the *Critique* Sartre cannot be considered a realist, either.<sup>12</sup> Rather, in Sartre the "real" refers to the inclusion of the dimension of the "world" as a concept thematized in relation to the agent. From this point of view the relation between the human being and the world forms an important perspective on the political in Sartre as one of the primary descriptions of his position. This relation is for Sartre an asymmetric one and it is the pole of the "human being" which is construed as the one directing the perspective on the question. Sartre formulates this already in his *Carnets* in terms of human being and situation:

"J'esquisserai donc un autre type de description historique, qui renverse l'explication et va de l'homme à la situation et non de la situation à l'homme." (*Carnets* p. 548, see also Sartre 1972, p. 83)

Sartre's first perspective on this was through phenomenology. In *La transcendance de l'ego* he considered that the phenomenologists had "replaced" the human being into the world (TE p. 86). For Sartre this was a "realistic" view which he never ceased to defend. However, it is only in the anthropology of the *Critique* that Sartre considered that he had found an approach from which this "realistic" point of view could adequately be described (see for example Sartre and Sicard p. 14-15) which I consider to be a reference to the manner in which he construes his concepts of the "agent" and the "world" in the *Critique*.<sup>13</sup>

Still, if we consider Sartre's texts from different periods of his production from the methodological point of view of this present work, a number of other

12 In this light also the division of Sartre's views of morals into "idealist" and "realist" used by some commentators (see for example Anderson 1993, p. 1 and Contat-Rybalka 1970, p. 216) appears somewhat unfounded, especially considering that Sartre himself, when asked by Michel Sicard in an interview on his "idealist" and "realist" morals answers in terms of "individualist" and "realist" (Sartre and Sicard 1979, p. 15, see also Astruc, Contat 1977, p. 39, 98-103).

13 One should consider here the term "world" as loosely referring both to its use in *L'être et le néant* with a Heideggerian background and to its use in the *Critique* where there is present an "ambiguity" in the use of the terms "world" and "social reality", or "reality" *tout court*.

conceptual constructions can be found which have remained constantly within Sartre's concerns as well. This makes it possible to study them from a perspective taken mainly from one text without this leading to an underestimation of the differences between the texts. In addition to that discussed above, a division into earlier and later works, or a division based on the difference in methods Sartre uses is not a view that would sufficiently characterize Sartre's work either from a methodological point of view or from the point of view of the subject matter of this present study. What is needed in addition to this is an emphasis laid on the fragmentary character of Sartre's work. "Fragmentary" does not here refer only to his well known habit of leaving his texts unfinished but also to the methodological characteristics of this "unfinishing" policy and to the texts themselves. There is a theoretical, methodological and conceptual fragmentation present in Sartre, a fragmentation which both contradicts his tendency to construe "gross schemes" and offers a view of his conceptual constructions. Even his most central concepts (such as freedom, situation, practico-inert, to mention a few) are not "finished" once and for all but are under revision throughout his work - redefined, rethought and used in changing conceptual landscapes.

It is in this sense that there is an internal history of concepts in Sartre's texts, a history which does not form any clear continuum but contains temporal discrepancies. This history cannot be traced exclusively on the basis of the year indicating the time of writing the text but must be traced also, and perhaps even in the first place, in relation to the different settings the concepts are used in. Considered within these different settings they can be seen to have several different aspects, each of them brought out in a different light depending on the the setting where they are used. I do not consider this a mere change or development in Sartre's thought but as proof of a central feature of his approach - that of taking different views of the problem at hand, views which, even though they sometimes prove to be contradictory or at least discrepant, do not exclude each other but highlight the different perspectives which Sartre over the years construed on his texts. Within Sartre's texts we can reconstrue these changes in concepts as forming limits which Sartre uses as something against which he rethinks his positions without abandoning the earlier positions as such. This is to say that within his work he uses his own concepts as limit figures for developing his thought - as is well known, Sartre used to think "against himself".

In a letter to Simone de Beauvoir (29.5.1940) we can see Sartre commenting on the very question of the limits his concepts can take. Referring to the concept of "collective", which twenty years later in the *Critique* holds a considerably reformulated place amongst his concepts, he says:

"C'est assez étrange et fort ce qui nous arrive: nos jours sont remplis et prenants, on ne s'ennuie pas un instant; il semble que nous soyons dans une *aventure* mais notre vie personnelle est réduite au végétatif: manger, dormir, travailler un peu aussi et rien ne distingue de ce point de vue un jour de l'autre. [...] je ne crois pas d'ailleurs qu'il me soit possible de pousser plus loin le sens du collectif." (LC 1940-63, p. 257)

Sartre's own relative unawareness of the different perspectives his concepts take<sup>14</sup> shows in some comments made, so to say, after the fact. For example in the *Critique* he refers to his conception of time and temporality as it is exposed in *L'être et le néant* as one he uses as such, without modifications and relates it to the concepts of temporality and history in the *Critique* without specifying any view whatsoever of the relation of these two different texts or of the different perspectives they take of the question. This remark shows that Sartre was using his concepts representing different conceptual "epochs" in his text within the same discussion as different views: the discussion of temporality in the *Critique* is not an amended view of the question, but a view taken from a different perspective.

In spite of the discussion above this present work is not intended to form a view of Sartre's texts through the conceptual history written into his texts and concepts, but the fragmentation and the limit figure characteristics of these both will be used as guiding threads in the study of his conceptual constructions and as conceptual devices in interpreting the political in Sartre. The "operational concepts" which I shall discuss in the following form the skeleton of this study with regard to the methodological aspect as well as with regard to the interpretations undertaken.

As I have already mentioned my intention in the first place is not to make an overall interpretation of Sartre nor to focus solely on an interpretation of some of his concepts but to show how the conceptual constructions that can be found in Sartre can be used to describe the construction of the actor into the political agent. I shall proceed to this starting from the elaboration of the operational concepts which will serve firstly to elucidate and "classify" Sartre's concepts as well as for a further interpretation of them and secondly to put in profile the setting where I discuss these concepts as well as to outline my own contribution to the discussion through what could perhaps be described as a rather non-conformist interpretation of Sartre.

The concepts put forward in this context have to some extent in my reading been turned away from describing what Sartre described through their use, and used to describe the same setting from a different perspective and posing different questions. To give an example, the woman in the café in the example in *L'être et le néant* finds escape from an impossible situation through bad faith (i.e. "pretending" that she is not doing what she is doing) and hence is reduced to passivity. This description will in this present work be read in terms of concepts, perspectives and questions that do not arise from the context of *L'être et le néant* and which postulate the woman as a political actor using bad faith as a means of acting within the impossibility of the situation. In the latter the choices that can be made in the situation in question acquire radically different dimensions compared to the first one: playing with the aspects of action inherent in the situation described in the example is one thing, and "passive" acceptance of the existing another - or reversed, and expressed in terms closer to Sartre's : confronting the action of the Other by the reduction of oneself to "nothingness" that awaits being "filled" with a meaning given by the Other versus an interpretation through postulating the

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14 Klaus Hartmann comments on Sartre's own reading of the *Critique* by saying that he tends to "fall victim to a popular reading of his own theory." (1971, p. 44)

choice of escape as an instrument of action within a strategically established project of refusing to take the given options as the only possible ones.

## 2.4 The Operational Concepts - in Place of a Classification

In this present study I am looking for ways of conceptualizing the political dimensions in Sartre's work and I use the "operational concepts" as well as the concept of limit-situation which will be discussed in the following chapter both as background constructions to the problems I shall discuss and as alternative entrances to Sartre's text - one might think that I am not entering the text-house by the front door, but by the back door, or, preferably still, by the window or even by the basement door or an attic window, like a thief. As a remote background to this kind of entrance I have used Sartre's own texts (for example his plays) but also to some extent views developed within existential psychoanalysis (e.g. R.D. Laing and D. Cooper) and more directly certain conceptual constructions used in political anthropology and, more indirectly, in a rhetorical approach (e.g. in Anthony P. Cohen's (1985, 1994) and Kenneth Burke's (1969 (1945)) work). All these, read and used from a purposefully delimited perspective, offer devices for opening Sartre's texts from a point of view which forms a pole in relation to which the questions taken up shall be framed. Apart from the heuristic value this kind of approach offers it also serves the purpose of not remaining exceedingly entangled in Sartre's own formulations and terminology. The choice of these devices and the way of using them stem from the method I am using as well as from the context of the work.

The metaphors I shall discuss below are not used in order to thematize all the questions brought up here, nor in order to present an exclusive perspective. On the contrary, to quite an extent they are used merely for indicating possibilities of forming analogical views of Sartre, for indicating possible perspectives and as figures for naming them.<sup>15</sup> However, these help-devices are not there solely for these purposes but also in order to form a wider referential context for this present study, a kind of landscape where it "takes place". This landscape will be partly discussed before entering into a more detailed discussion of Sartre's texts, partly it remains in the background with only some references in the discussion on the political aspect of the texts and concepts indicating its presence.

The approximative, ambiguous and ambivalent character of Sartre's concepts, as already indicated, does not allow for the construction of a strict classification or a typology which could pretend to be exhaustive. However, for the purposes of entering the texts, for establishing coordinates and landmarks which refer to the conceptual constructions discussed, the use of a sketchy classification has proved to be useful. In the following I shall discuss briefly the configuration of the conceptual devices used in this present work in the form of such a classification. The aim of this classification is not to give a list of concepts based on

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15 See Kremer-Marietti (1992, p. 229ff.) who discusses metaphor as a play of identity, difference and analogy in a process of nomination in a Nietzschean context.

chosen criteria but to offer a setting for discussing the different kinds of ways of using concepts that can be interpreted from Sartre. Furthermore, the aim here is not to give a frame within which the concepts Sartre uses could be classified either throughout his work or from whichever perspective of interpretation. On the contrary, this classification aims solely at bringing forth the aspects of the concepts which are relevant from the perspective taken in this present study and at construing a view which stresses above all the operative use of the concepts at the expense of any substance that might be assigned to them. Hence, for example, such substantial criteria as "sameness" or "otherness" used by Flynn (1986, p. 122) are not included.

The following sketchy classification is formed of groups of concepts which indicate the manner in which Sartre both construes his concepts and uses them. It also indicates the purpose of his conceptual operations as well as the thematic perspectives delimited and put forward through the concepts focused on. Hence the internal cohesion of these groups is based partly on shared themes, partly on a shared form of construction and of operational use. The inter-relations of the groups are construed in the form of aspects: they all describe different aspects of Sartre's conceptual constructions through different conceptual operations used as well as through different thematic perspectives taken by him. None of the groups as such nor all the groups together are meant to form a whole or a view which would cover all the aspects of the questions discussed. On the contrary, the discrepancies, the overlapping of the groups and the discontinuities present are the very means through which the similar characteristics in Sartre's texts and in his use of concepts are underlined. Furthermore, these groups are not meant to form keys through which Sartre's argumentation could be systematically reconstructed but are meant to shed light on the ways he uses his concepts to describe the political aspect of the question he is discussing. They are meant to shed light on the construction of the agent and of the action situation as political.

If we focus on a conceptual point of view, the "operational concepts" describe the directive and coordinating constellations thematized in this present study. The argumentation of this work uses them as its background, simultaneously as a conceptual frame and as a postulation concerning Sartre's conceptual apparatus and the whole construction is divided into two owing to different perspectives taken. The concepts are classified firstly using as primary criteria the thematic perspectives relevant in the context of this present study. Hence this part of the classification, in addition to offering a view of Sartre's concepts, serves also to give a background to this study as well as to show approximative criteria for the relevance of the themes discussed. Secondly, another classification will be given using as primary criteria what is postulated here as Sartre's manner of using concepts seen from the specific perspective adopted here.

At this point this "typology" is presented as a schematic one and will, to some extent, be substantiated in the course of the work. Moreover, as this classification serves in the first place as a device for offering views for interpretation, no further justification based on the logical status or position held by the concepts presented in relation to Sartre's conceptual apparatus will be given - their justification lies in the heuristic value in the context of the thematization and interpretation made in this present study.

## I THEMATIC PERSPECTIVE

1) *The Agent, action and the field of action.* In the course of this work I shall show how Sartre construes an agent's perspective on action and how this perspective forms a specific conceptual device for describing action and the field of action. Furthermore, the thematization of the relation of these concepts shows that the relation of the agent to the field of action is postulated in Sartre in such a manner that it forms a larger conceptual setting together with the concepts of production and of the exteriority and interiority. This, in its turn, brings forth a primary view of the agent as a political actor.

2) *Change and space of action.* In Sartre we can find a constant postulation of change as a view taken of the agent and action. This can be rendered evident through the concept of space of action which serves as a counter-concept to permanence, identity and compactness. These two concepts also indicate the presence of a limit-situation as an ideal type of action situation and construe the agent as a player in an action situation through thematizing action in relation to the given.

3) *Production.* Within the perspective of re-reading Sartre's framing of the *Critique* the concept of production forms a central device for uncovering the constant undercurrent in his argumentation which postulates the agent as well as a "producer" as "produced" but excludes the view of a "product". This forms a first key to the view Sartre takes of the agent and the field of action as well as of their relation. It also forms a first key to the concepts of exteriority and interiority as well in relation to the concept of history as that of subjectivity.

4) *Temporality.* Temporality forms a specific concept both in *L'être et le néant* and in the *Critique* as it serves to thematize the agent as a non-self-identical actor in relation to the action situation described in terms of past, present and future. Furthermore, in the *Critique* it forms a topic on its own in a specific relation to Sartre's conception of history indicating a perspective which points beyond the synthesizing perspective of the work into a view of the action situation as a setting of the encounter of different time perspectives.

5) *Strategies of action.* In the frame of these four thematic perspectives mentioned the agent is profiled in the *Critique* as an actor using different strategies of action for playing the political condition of being-situated-in-the-world. The strategies of action set forth a further view of the portrait of the political agent where the agent is described as a construction which cannot be reduced to a singular actor or to a self-identical subject. Furthermore, they set forth a view within which the conceptual constructions and the perspectives of the *Critique* with regard to the agent and action can be extended to describing the political in Sartre's texts other than the *Critique* as well.

The thematic perspectives presented above are intertwined and partly overlapping and therefore cannot be discussed strictly within such a division into "categories" presented here. Also, they form a "table of contents" for this work but only in a limited sense as they do not directly cover all the themes discussed and as the conceptual perspective to be given in the following does not form a separate level of interpretation but partly offers a thematic perspective as well. This, in my view, stems from the approximative character of Sartre's concepts - they do not lend themselves to classifications which would allow for pushing the distinctions

further or for exposing a more substantial view without losing their originality and radicality. Pushing this point further would hence mean losing the very aspect of Sartre's concepts which points to the political: a concept cannot be considered merely as a "technical" device but implies the political through its construction as well as through its use. Moreover, all categorization of the kind I have presented here is to be understood as views delimiting the perspective taken on the subject matter and not as classifications of the "object" of the study.

Within these reservations we can, however, push the classification somewhat further in order to present devices for further study of Sartre's conceptual constructions. Sartre's concepts are classified in what follows within scenery offered by the thematic perspectives described above and from viewpoints construed on the bases of those main features of the use of the concepts which in the context of this present study can be interpreted from Sartre.

## II CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVE

1) *Pole-concepts* are, in Sartre, concepts which are construed within the tension between two poles. This should not, however, be understood as a construction which divides the concepts discussed into two separate or opposite poles which offer a different view but on the contrary as forming a polar relation<sup>16</sup> where both poles are seen as constituting the view taken of the question at hand. Moreover, this should be seen as separate from the concepts of "reciprocal" and "inner" relation which Sartre himself constantly uses as they do not describe the use of concepts but merely a relation whereas the term pole-concepts describes the use of the concepts for construing a specific device for argumentation.

The point of view taken of the relation of the concepts can shift from one pole to the other and it can also include a third term - as it is the case with the "third" (*le tiers*) that Sartre postulates as a mediator between the agents. Also, pushing the construction a little further still, the third term is not postulated as constant but equally shifting so that any of the three terms can stand for the third and the two others stand for the poles. Hence no particular concept can be called a pole-concept since polarity is a functional attribute assignable to concepts within certain constructions. Moreover, pole-concepts are concepts which constitute each other but do not form a compact or a fixed constellation with no margin for conceptual shifts. In other words, pole-concepts, to use an image, are used to form a setting which is "extended in space" instead of being mere points connected by a relation. As an example one might mention the concept of practico-inert which Sartre uses as one of the central reference points in his argumentation. The concept is thematized for example as a pole in a relation where the agent is postulated as the other pole and it is described at once in terms of "worked matter" as produced by the agent and in terms of "worked matter" as producing the agent. In this setting the poles cannot be described as separate and the choice

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16 On the use of the terms "polar" and "polarity" in connection with Sartre see for example Whitford 1982, Flynn 1986, p. 122, McKinney 1988, p. 328 and also McBride 1991, p. 120. See also TE p. 54-87.



between the perspectives of producing and being produced indicates the function of the concept in the argumentation.

2) *Relational concepts* form the reverse side of pole-concepts: instead of taking the viewpoint from the poles the view is taken from the relation between them. Such a constellation is used by Sartre, for example, in a description of action in a setting where the agent and the produced form the poles but where the description is carried out from the perspective of the relations mediating the poles, such as exteriorizing, interiorizing, seriality and group relations. These concepts form a specific view of Sartre's conceptual constructions as they do not carry such possibilities of counter-constellations as other concepts discussed here do. Hence, for example, serial and group relations merely form a background which reveals different positions of the agent in relation to the others, to the produced and to the agent her/himself. They form two differently construed perspectives of action and their political aspect will be taken up only passingly in this present study. The focus will be placed more on the concepts of interiorizing and exteriorizing because, as I shall argue, the concepts of interiority and exteriority form an important political perspective on Sartre's work. In the following I shall, however, discuss these concepts without specifically bringing forth their relational aspect in so many words. The "interior", the "exterior" and other related terms will be discussed here starting from the postulation that it is question of relational terms, that interiorizing and exteriorizing form a constantly present background view of the relation of the agent to the interiority and exteriority.

3) *Counter concepts*. This "category" has its background in Sartre's conception of the human being. As already pointed out, for him the human being's existence in this world indicates conflict, i.e. it has a political dimension. This condition offers the primary perspective on any description of the agent and of action and it excludes any vision, political or moral<sup>17</sup>, of our existence as (Heidegger's) *Mitsein*. Counter concepts describe the agent and action within a relation of conflict (for example adversity or counter-finality) to the world and also use figures such as scarcity (*la rareté*) as limits against which the relation is described.<sup>18</sup> As said, they also describe the agent in relation to others. This is probably most evident in Sartre's fashion of using the Other as a counter concept to the agent when describing the latter through the perspective of interiority.

4) *Asymmetric concepts*<sup>19</sup> design a setting where the relations postulated between the concepts discussed cannot be described as having an equivalent status in the

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17 Thomas C. Anderson, in his *Sartre's Two Ethics* (1993) when discussing Sartre's view of the conflicting relations between human beings considers that "such a position obviously has grim implications for ethics" but that in spite of this Sartre does "hold out a slight glimmer of hope that things could be different" (p. 27). I disagree with Anderson on this - the view he takes in the beginning of his book ends on the last pages into a statement which in my view is incompatible with Sartre's thought: "The later Sartre, however, since he insists that the human being's essential dependency on other persons and on their love is not inimical to its freedom, but in fact, absolutely necessary for its flourishing, has therefore, less reason to be suspicious of attempts to account for the reality of radically contingent beings by means of a loving Creator-person." (ibid., p. 166).

18 Limit figures are not used by Sartre only in the description of the relations of conflict but also, as we shall see in the following chapter, as devices for construing the limit-situation.

19 This concept refers loosely to Reinhardt Koselleck's (1979, 211-259) view of asymmetric concepts but the structure present in Koselleck (concept - asymmetric counter concept) is here "modified" in order to use it in the Sartrean conceptual structure.

relation established. The postulation of concepts as asymmetric offers on the one hand the possibility of analyzing the way Sartre construes his concepts in accordance with his views of "human reality". For him the human being is not self-identical (like an ink-pot, see EN p. 98) but a never ending and always failing quest for such identity across nothingness (*le néant*) and the relation between the "for-itself" (*le pour-soi*) and the "in-itself" (*l'en-soi*) is not postulated as a symmetrical one. On the other hand the postulation of the asymmetry of the concepts stresses the opening present in Sartre's conceptual constructions - concepts in an asymmetric relation do not "meet" each other and hence a description made through them limits itself to describing an aspect of the relation and no pretention to extend the description to cover all the aspects of the setting in question is put forward. On the contrary the impossibility of a "total" description as well as of a description in terms of equivalencies is stressed. This, in its turn, stresses the discrepancies and differences in the points of view present in Sartre's conceptual constellations. In this sense Sartre's concepts form a flexible network rather than a hierarchical structure.

As an example of the asymmetry one could give the description of bad faith in relation to the concepts of authenticity, sincerity and good faith. None of the three latter concepts - even though they are all concepts which in Sartre can be discussed only in relation to bad faith - cover the same conceptual field and when related to the concept of bad faith the asymmetry is displayed by the possibility of taking at the same time several views of the concept. In other words, none of these three concepts form such a view in relation to the concept of bad faith which could be considered as describing all the aspects of the setting.<sup>20</sup>

The asymmetry in the relation of the concepts forms a key to reading Sartre as a postulation of symmetry between the concepts he uses, in most cases, would lead to the loss of the dimensional structure of Sartre's conceptual apparatus. It forms a key also in the sense that it shows the impossibility of discussing Sartre's concepts in terms of simple comparisons between, for example, "free action" and "alienated action" or serial and group action - i.e. it refuses the perspective of manichaeism.<sup>21</sup>

5) *Dimensional concepts* describe constructions which cannot be assigned a "place" understood as a fixed, limited point. As an example we could take temporality which in Sartre is "spread" over the three ek-static dimensions of past, present and future and not construed of "points" assignable to linear time. These concepts offer another primary view of Sartre's fashion of construing and using concepts as they also indicate the exclusion of such dividing lines which would establish a dualistic separation between concepts and different perspectives taken on a question. Moreover, they indicate perhaps more clearly than concepts construed

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20 However, it should be noted here that it is not uncommon amongst Sartre scholars to consider the bad faith - authenticity relation as a symmetric one. This will be discussed in detail below in the chapter on morals and politics (see below p. 210ff.).

21 Asymmetry as a feature of the relation of two terms is expressed by Sartre, for example, as follows: "Il y a certains cas d'échecs flagrants et sur lesquels il n'est pas nécessaire de discuter. Mais il n'y a pas symétriquement de réussite incontestable, sauf dans les cas où l'enjeu est artificiellement et conventionnellement limité (sports, jeux, etc.). C'est que comparaison entre la fin projetée et la fin réalisée est impossible." (CM p. 451, see also EN p. 501-02, Simont 1990b, p. 92, 108, 112, 114 and Boyer 1996, p. 49)

in other fashions the triadic structure present in Sartre's conceptual constructions - for example the agent construed as "individual praxis", "passive activity" and "active passivity", or in *L'être et le néant* the "human reality" construed as in-itself, for-itself and nothingness.

6) *Limit-concepts* are concepts construed through the postulation of a limit as their constitutive element. The scarcity already mentioned is used in Sartre as a limit concept as it is construed as indicating the encounter of the agent with the exteriority as well as the possibility of the impossibility of the agent in a world where there is "not enough" for everyone. The concept of the traitor (*le traître*) could serve as another example as it is construed as the limit within the fraternity-terror construction as well as a limit indicating the encounter of the agent acting in group relations with the exteriority. Furthermore, limit concepts are used in relation to the concepts of impossibility and possibility with a reference to change and hence they describe the action situation and also the agent in relation to playing the limit.

This schematic classification covers the central conceptual perspectives taken in this study and it will be referred to in the course of the discussion, at times with additional clarifications with regard to its use and/ or its relevance to the question at hand. However, as I have pointed out, it is used as a framework and as a heuristic device in my interpretation and argumentation and hence no detailed nor systematic analysis of Sartre's concepts through it will be given. Refraining from proceeding into such an analysis does not, however, only imply a choice of the way of approaching the subject matter but also stems from the character of Sartre's concepts: one and the same concept can, in different contexts take a different perspective and have a different function and a search for detailed systematics would be counter-effective as it would tend to establish too rigorous a view of Sartre's conceptual apparatus. Therefore the concepts given above as examples should not be considered as exhaustively interpreted here - classifying them into one "category" does not form an exclusive perspective on my interpretation.

In addition to this twofold "typology" I also use three concepts which refer to the conceptual constructions both used and discussed in this present work, i.e. the concepts of figure, attribute and strategy. These three serve as additional descriptive devices in establishing the perspectives used here: one referring principally to conceptual constructions (figure), one referring to a descriptive perspective taken through these constructions to the agent and action (attribute) and one used for highlighting the political aspect of action (strategy). Or in other words, figure refers to naming and identifying a conceptual device in a given context as serving for the construction of concepts or of the setting of the description. Hence, for example, scarcity as a limit concept is a figure which serves for construing concepts such as interiority and exteriority. Attribute, in its turn, refers to describing the construction or the function of the concept in relation to another concept. Hence, for example, authenticity and bad faith can be postulated as attributes of action as action can be described as constituted within the asymmetric relation of authenticity and bad faith. Lastly, strategy refers to the use of

figures and attributes as devices for describing a political perspective of action. Hence bad faith, for example, will later on be interpreted as a strategy of action and Sartre's Genet given as an illustration of a strategic figure.

As Sartre's texts are not usually explicitly formulated in terms which could straightforwardly be identified as "political terms" the writing out of the political aspect has here been done through the use of the conceptual devices discussed. This view, which could be described as a view of the micro-politics in Sartre's texts, takes us to a considerable distance from Sartre's own manner of configuring the problems discussed and hence gives the possibility of taking a perspective different from Sartre's as well as of concentrating on views which Sartre did not explicitly include in his discussion. Furthermore, the perspectives taken through these conceptual help-devices aim at bringing to the fore such undercurrents within his conceptual apparatus and his way of construing concepts which establish views which both contest and break with certain concepts and conceptual divisions that are of considerable importance to a discussion on action and the agent, to say the least - as is the case with regard to the concept of subject to which I shall return in detail later.

In the following chapter I shall give additional perspectives on the writing out of the political in Sartre's text and discuss certain figures and metaphors as well as the concept of limit-situation in more detail in order to establish the overall perspective and the ambience of this present study and to highlight the central characteristics of Sartre's work seen from this perspective.

### 3      **LIMIT-SITUATION AS AN IDEAL TYPE ACTION SITUATION AND THE PLAY METAPHORS**

In the presentation of the operational concepts above the concept of limit-situation was passingly referred to. This chapter will present the concept in more detail, and argue that in Sartre's texts there are conceptual constructions which are formulated in such terms that with this concept we can reach the political aspect of these constructions. Furthermore, the aim of this chapter is to create an ambience, or a scenery for discussing Sartre's views as interpreted in this work. The specific features coloring my perspective have their background in the sceneries described in this chapter and the views sketched here will serve as guiding threads in the body of this study.

Limit-situation, which serves in this work as a figure for bringing to the fore the common denominators of such constructions, can in Sartre be read as an ideal type action situation. The "ideal type", as already indicated, is here understood in the Weberian sense of a pure representative case which prevents a normative perspective from being established, but brings forth the constituting elements of the construction. However, the idea of alternative or opposite ideal types present in Weber is excluded as it is the construction of the situation which is in focus here (see Weber 1988 (1904) and also Parvikko 1996, p. 25-26, 50ff.).

As this study advances I shall show that when reading Sartre politically, this ideal type situation is not only present in discussions that are directly concerned with action, but that it can be interpreted as indicating the presence of the political elsewhere in Sartre's discussions as well. This present chapter will concentrate on the key elements construing this situation and the discussion will be substantiated in the course of the work.

In addition to this, I shall argue that the concept of limit-situation can be related to certain concepts used in the field of political anthropology, and that, moreover, it can be discussed in relation to metaphors which thematize the agent as a political actor. Sketching the agent through these concepts and metaphors,

together with the limit-situation as a perspective on action, will form the skeleton of my discussion on the portrait of the political agent we can construe through an interpretation of Sartre's texts. However, it should be stressed here that within this view no strict dividing lines will be established between action and the agent as a perspective on action. On the contrary, these will be used as a twofold setting where both aspects are present, but brought to the fore with a different stress depending on the perspective taken. Using the operational concepts described above we could say that the concepts of agent and action form both relational concepts and pole-concepts, and that they can, as we shall later see, be discussed as dimensional concepts, too.

In the previous chapter I have discussed the concepts I use in this work as conceptual devices merely as a part of the methodological framework for interpreting Sartre. The concept of limit-situation discussed here exceeds the mere methodological perspective in that besides serving as a conceptual device, it also presents a claim on the substance. Hence, the concept will be used throughout the analysis of this work as a twofold concept which both describes certain conceptual constructions Sartre uses, and serves for the reconstruction of the political dimension in the relation of the agent, action and action situation in his descriptions. As the concept is in the first place construed in relation to the concept of limit, I shall discuss it first.

### 3.1 The Concept of Limit in the Sartrean Context

The concept of limit is rarely discussed in relation to Sartre.<sup>1</sup> This is not surprising as the concept as such is used explicitly for focusing the discussion only on a few occasions. Nevertheless, within the framework of this work, such a concept can be construed as a device for studying Sartre. In addition, as it is one of the central conceptual devices used in this work, and as it describes the background against which I am reading Sartre, as well as forms the primary perspective from which the political aspect present in Sartre's work is interpreted, I shall discuss it at some length.

The rare references to the concept of limit in commentary literature tend to follow two different interpretations. Firstly, it is used to refer to some limiting factor which construes a "line" that cannot be crossed in action. Secondly, it is

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1 An example of the use of the concept in the same sense as I use it here with a stress on the impossible can be found in Witt (1990, p. 163) where she quotes *Les séquestrés d'Altona* as follows: "[...] Frantz's revolt against the present has no outlet. Sartre postulates a *situation-limite* in a dialogue between Johanna and Frantz:  
Frantz. We can neither die nor live.  
Johanna. Neither see each other or leave each other.  
Frantz. We are truly concerned.  
Johanna. Truly.  
Frantz. There must be a way out." (see SA p. 273-74) Note that the translation of "drôlement coincés" with "truly concerned" somewhat undermines the feeling of impossibility present in the situation.

used to express something (for example a normatively understood ideal situation) which cannot be reached, but which is seen as a referential frame to the discussion. As an example of the first use one could give Christina Howells' way of using it in relation to the concept of freedom.

In her *Sartre. The Necessity of Freedom* (1988) Christina Howells uses the concept of limit when referring to the limits of freedom in *L'être et le néant*: "[...] my own freely chosen project constituted a *limite de fait* if not *de droit*, to my behaviour." (ibid., p. 95) This use of the concept takes an entirely different, even an opposite view of the concept than the one taken in this present work, as it presents the limit as a limitation which modifies action.

On the one hand Howells' view is a comment on the discussion around the nature of freedom in Sartre, to its absolute and/ or limited character, and as such it discusses a question which, from the point of view of this present study, is not seen as relevant. Freedom is not seen here as a founding, inherent *quality* of the agent which could "then" be seen in terms of absoluteness or as limited by the situation of the agent and hence modified. On the contrary, freedom is postulated here as an attribute of action which means that no such agent is postulated which could form a basis or a foundation for establishing a conceptual division between the agent and freedom<sup>2</sup>, were it made only in order to discuss the different positions Sartre holds in *L'être et le néant* and in the *Critique* as Howells to some extent does. In my view the differences in the question of limitations in Sartre's earlier and later thought are more differences in Sartre's views concerning the action situation and the agent in relation to it than differences concerning the concept of freedom. In a sense the human being for Sartre is not just free, but *freedom* and hence "acts in freedom". This central political aspect of Sartre's thought has not changed from *L'être et le néant* to the *Critique*. What has changed is the description of the situation and of action (see CRD I, e.g. p. 361).

On the other hand, Howells discusses freedom in the *Critique* as "a matter of *praxis* rather than of choice" (ibid.) and sees the limitations of freedom in relation to action rather than in relation to the options of choice - a view with which I entirely agree. Nevertheless, she considers that freedom in the *Critique* is limited, as it is alienated because of "the inevitable limitations imposed by situation and facticity" (ibid.), which, again, refers to the concept of limit in terms of an external limitation modifying action, an "outer" limit.<sup>3</sup>

The concept of limit, as used in this present study, is not understood in terms of limitations or modifications of action in the sense Howells describes

2 See for example *L'être et le néant* where Sartre writes: "[...] la condition indispensable et fondamentale de toute action c'est la liberté de l'être agissant." (EN p. 511, italics mine). See also p. 516 where Sartre says: "[l]'homme [...] est tout entier et toujours libre ou il n'est pas." Note that the English translation of this sentence in *Being and Nothingness* is misleading: "Man [...] is wholly and forever free or he is *not free at all*." (BN p. 441, italics mine). What Sartre says here is that the human being is entirely free or *is not*. "Not at all free human being" is an impossibility even as a concept in Sartre, the "n'est pas" refers to the contingency of freedom as well as of existence. In the context of absolute/ relative freedom see also Martinot 1995.

3 See also Verstræten (1992, p. 354ff.) who also sees limit as an external limitation when discussing the limit, the unlimited, the finite and the infinite. See also Detmer (1988, p. 39ff.).

them, that is, as a perspective which construes a discussion on the extension of the validity of the concept, of freedom. On the contrary, the limit described here refers to a setting formed by the encounter of these two concepts, alienation and freedom. This is an encounter which, in its turn, refers to a conceptual setting implying the presence of different perspectives taken - alienation and freedom form two different perspectives on action. Therefore, for example, with regard to freedom the limit here does not imply a conceptual division into "freedom" and "alienated freedom", but implies a conceptual construction where the limit construes a perspective of rupture. In this sense both "freedom" and "alienation" are present as constant, parallel perspectives on action and action is both organized and reorganized at the limit of these perspectives. From this point of view the limitations (of the situation and of action) are also constantly organized and reorganized and they form an inner, constitutive perspective on action rather than an external limitation. The role of the limit as a constitutive perspective, rather than an external element, is expressed by Sartre in *L'être et le néant* as well as in his *Aller et retour* (1945) where he takes a view of the human being as that which is construed at the limit:

"[T]out l'être que j'ai à être est à sa limite comme une courbe asymptote à une droite. Ainsi suis-je une totalité détotalement et indéfinie, contenue dans une totalité finie qui la cerne à distance et que je suis hors de moi sans pouvoir jamais ni la réaliser ni même l'atteindre. [...] Pourtant cette limite hors d'atteinte qu'est mon Moi-objet n'est pas idéale: c'est un être réel." (EN p. 346-47)

"L'homme: non pas *nature* humaine, cette réalité toute faite; mais l'homme en condition, cet être qui ne tire son être que de ses limites." (SIT I, p. 224, see also EN p. 346)

As an example of the second use of the concept of limit we could read from William McBride's *Sartre's Political Theory* (1991) a comment on "limiting case" situations: "[a]lthough in general I am supportive of Sartre's explorations of "limiting case" situations [...]" (1991, p. 180). From his brief reference to this while discussing the *Rome Lectures*<sup>4</sup> one could read a view closer to my way of using the concept. Here, however, McBride uses the concept for a different purpose and in a different context than I do. He describes Sartre's "Marxian notion of an ultimate communist society" (ibid.) as a limit which is related to an "end" (or, as I shall put it in the following, objective), or as a point which forms a referential frame for the discussion. I agree here with McBride to a certain extent, namely in that, that a reference to "an ultimate society" can be understood as an example of how Sartre uses limit figures offering a view of the perspective within which the question is discussed. However, McBride's "ultimate communist society" remains a rather vague description of a set of Sartre's provocative views enveloping the Kantian "Kingdom of Ends", the Hegelian "One History" as well as an outspoken defense of a future socialist society that can be found in quite a few of Sartre's texts from after the second World War. For Sartre this is not, however, a question of central interest, and in addition, McBride's comment carries an undertone which places

4 The "Rome lectures" refers to the so far unpublished notes Sartre wrote on the occasion of a series of lectures at the Istituto Gramsci in Rome in 1964. On this see Jeanson 1966, Contat, Rybalka 1970, Stone, Bowman 1986, 1991a and 1991b, Simont 1987, 1989, Verstræten 1987 and Seel 1988.



this limit as a reference point into some distant future, and gives the limit a linear temporal attribute, which the limit discussed in this present study does not pretend to convey. "Limit" in Sartre, as discussed here, is a temporal construction, but does not carry a reference to any linear conception of time through an objective placed *in* the future. In a way, McBride remains within such a perspective of time by not rendering explicit the specific role played by Sartre's view of an objective, which, as we shall see later, does not refer to something placed *in* the future, but functions as a limit figure for present action. McBride does not discuss the concept of limit further, but he is, however, amongst the few Sartre scholars who do even passingly refer to this aspect of Sartre's thinking.

As the concept of limit plays an important role in this work I shall attempt to introduce the reader to it, as well as to the concept of limit-situation through an example taken from Fernando Savater's book *A decir verdad* (To tell you the truth<sup>5</sup>) (1987).

Savater begins his "autobiographical" collection of essays by a description of how he was nearly run over by a car on Charing Cross Road ("la calle con más librerías de Londres" / the street with more bookshops than any other in London, *ibid.*, p. 12). He uses this incident to bring forth the concept of a limit-situation (*situación-límite*, *ibid.*, p. 11) as a possible point of departure for writing this book, a description, as we might say, of the situation of a philosopher-writer. This limit-situation offers a view of his life, a view through which it is not his intention to merely register incidents of his life, but to interpret them, or to reorganize them into a text which will surpass the limits of just one person's life on this earth - in brief, to opt for a portrait painted by a skilled painter instead of a snap-shot. The limit-situation serves as a different entrance into the "story" of his life. "Miré hacia la izquierda, como siempre, pero el enemigo llegó arrolladamente de la derecha: no fue una metáfora política sino una lección de tráfico." (*ibid.*) (I looked to the left, as always, but the enemy arrived crashingly from the right: it was not a political metaphor but a traffic lesson.) We can, of course, agree with Savater: a Continental European in London, the traffic and a near-by death, that is not a political metaphor, just a reminder that there are still places where crossing the street when the red light is on is not the only way of playing with cars. But we can also disagree with him: his metaphor is, in spite of his denying it, political in two ways. Firstly, limit-situation is a politically attributed situation as it refers to a change in terms of action and in terms of the changing of an entrance point to the question at hand. Secondly, the political "metaphor" in his sentence cited above is not the "left/ right", nor "the enemy", but the "it was not a political metaphor but a traffic lesson".

On the opening page of his book Savater refers to what he later explicitly brings up: ethics, morals, politics, narrative, novels and theater, and the problems they refer to - they all form a part of the same game and speak with the same voice: "Todo forma parte del mismo juego y brota de la misma voz." (*ibid.*, p. 23). They also form a background to this limit-situation, the central characteristic of which is established through the "nearly killed" situation revealing an impossibil-

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5 Translations from Spanish are mine.

ity of going on living as before. Savater tells us how he had to write himself into a text in order to reassess and redefine his past life (ibid., p. 12). This is the point where the usual attributes given to the situation ("traffic-accident") are changed into new attributes which define the setting of the situation: a "promising philosopher-writer" (see ibid., p. 11-12) nearly killed in London after having bought Joyce and some other books and not having interiorized that in London one must follow the writings on the ground and not to try to read the movements of the enemy-cars, and that one must forget this old political metaphor of left and right ("words of political shorthand", McBride 1991, 43).

This introduction to Savater<sup>6</sup> serves in my view well as an introduction to a limit-situation: his choice of words, style and subjects put in profile the uncontrollable and impossible aspects of the limit-situation. The descriptions through irony, sarcasm and even mockery which are familiar to his readers (see for example his *Diccionario Filosófico*, 1995) introduce a scenery where the given settings and attributes are changed. One of the well known descriptions of this kind is, of course, Sartre's *Saint Genet*: the very attempt of describing the Modern Evil. Savater shares (in addition to some other perspectives, we might add) this with Sartre: a view that places the spectator in a corner from where the visibility is limited and hence focused on certain, chosen themes or questions.

### 3.2 Limit-situation and Sartre

I have used Sartre's concept of limit and his unsystematic and unthematized expression "limit-situation"<sup>7</sup> (*la situation-limite*)<sup>8</sup>, which do not often occur in his texts, as a background to the more elaborated concept of limit-situation used in

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6 There are also other descriptions of limit-situation in Savater's book. See for example his description of the suicides of the Japanese writers Yasunari Kawabata and Yukio Mishima (ibid., p. 36).

7 Hazel Barnes translates *situation limite* as "limiting-situation" (e.g. EN p. 509, BN p. 434) but I have preferred to use the expression "limit-situation" to stress the understanding of a situation construed as a limit instead of a situation seen as one merely limiting action. In addition, here Barnes' much criticized translation also contains errors (EN p. 509-10, BN p. 434-35) which completely alter the original text: the passage changes from a description of a limit-situation into a mere description of motives for changing a difficult situation.

8 Sartre's use of this concept can be loosely related to Jaspers' *Grenzsituation* with which Sartre came across in the 20's when correcting the French translation of Jaspers' *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* with Paul Nizan. (See Contat, Rybalka 1970, p. 50 and Hayman 1986, p. 61, 67). Comparing Sartre's view in *L'être et le néant* to Jaspers shows, however, that in Sartre the concept has been radically politicized. For Jaspers *Grenzsituation* is a condition of life of a mortal being: "Situationen wie die, daß ich immer in Situationen bin, daß ich nicht ohne Kampf und ohne Leid leben kann, daß ich unvermeidlich Schuld auf mich nehme, daß ich sterben muß, nenne ich Grenzsituationen." (Jaspers 1973 (1932), p. 203) In Sartre, a limit-situation does not refer to any inevitability but forms a situation which calls for action. In addition Jaspers, as well as Sartre, relates the limit-situation to possibility but where this possibility in Jaspers is related to the possibility of the *Existenz* of *Dasein*, in Sartre it is related to a possibility of action of the being-in-the-world (or human reality) (for Jaspers' view see for example ibid., p. 201ff. See especially p. 233ff. where Jaspers' view of limit-situation as *Kampf* comes somewhat closer to Sartre's position. See also Jaspers 1985 (1919), esp. p. 126, 229, 257-59, 280).

this work. Sartre's description of this situation in *L'être et le néant*, even though it does not cover all the aspects assigned here to the concept, brings to light the essential features of the limit-situation.

The description of a limit-situation comes up in a short passage where Sartre discusses change in an example on Rome and Constantinople (EN p. 508-10). In this passage Sartre defines the limit-situation as one against which we can see the impossibility of the present situation. Furthermore, he states that a limit-situation cannot be reached simply through conceiving the present situation as a "real state of things", the limit-character of the present situation is revealed only through relating the "real state of things" to an "alternative state of things".

"[...] cette situation-limite ne peut être conçue à partir de la simple considération de l'état réel des choses [...]. Car il faut ici inverser l'opinion générale et convenir de ce que ce n'est pas la dureté d'une situation ou les souffrances qu'elle impose qui sont motifs pour qu'on conçoive un autre état des choses [...]; au contraire, c'est à partir du jour où l'on peut concevoir un autre état de choses qu'une lumière neuve tombe sur nos peines et sur nos souffrances et que nous *décidons* qu'elles sont insupportables." (EN p. 509-10, see also p. 614 and VE p. 74)

This description follows one of the central postulations in *L'être et le néant*, namely that of seeing "human reality" in terms of having to be that which it *is-not*. Limit-situation is conceived of in relation to the present "state of things" as that what-it-is-not (see EN p. 509), i.e. in negative terms implying distance. It is only through this distance it becomes possible to conceive of the present situation as impossible. In this sense the present situation is both opened and spread in its structure toward the *is-not*, and a space of action for changing the present situation is thus construed. Hence, as Sartre here says, a limit-situation is a situation where the possibility of change is related to seeing the present situation as an impossible one - and the impossibility of this situation can be conceived of only when the possibility of a different "state of things" is projected, i.e. is present in the form of a limit-situation. The limit is not seen here as a limit imposed from the outside, or as given as a result of the action of the others (see EN p. 606-07), but construed within the perspective of the action of the agent.

Furthermore, as said, we can also read from this passage that a limit-situation cannot be conceived of through looking at the "real state of things", but only from the perspective of an alternative. Hence it is the alternative which is postulated as the perspective which configures the present as impossible. At the same time the alternative is also postulated as something that must be construed in order to construe the present situation as a limit-situation. However, the relation between the "alternative", the "present" and the "limit-situation" is not a relation which could be expressed in terms of linear time, in terms of "before" or "after", but these terms must be seen as contemporaneous: projecting an alternative "state of things" in relation to the present construes at once the limit-situation. In the same passage, through stressing the necessity of reversing the "general opinion" concerning change, which looks for *motives* for changing the situation, Sartre stresses the difference between the mere changing of the present "state of things" and the limit-situation. It is not the mere wish to change, but the impossibility of the present situation which brings forth the limit-character of the situation. Hence

the motives of action do not enter the picture, the main features of a limit-situation are the alternative and the impossible as perspectives on the existing situation and on acting in it, features which lay stress on the political aspect present in the construction. Sartre's description ends here but using the elements he has given we can take the constellation further and relate it to some of his other concepts.

The alternative, forming a view of the present "state of things" can be construed through several concepts Sartre develops and uses in his texts, such as contingency, failure, bad faith, but also subjectivity, production and morals which shall all be discussed later on. These concepts form figures for both the "alternative" and the "impossible" as they refer to a space of action where a counter-setting is postulated: contingency - necessity, project - failure, bad faith - authenticity constellations all show breaches in the opacity of the present "state of things". However, this should not be read as an automatic process for several reasons. The contingent and the necessary, or bad faith and authenticity do not form symmetrical relations where the limit would be placed "between" them, but they are related asymmetrically. This is the very characteristic that allows for the postulation of the "openness" or of the "spreadness" of the situation with reference to action. From this point of view we can describe the initial attributes of the limit-situation and take a view of the strategies of construing a limit-situation.

### 3.3 Limit-situation: Attributes and Strategies

#### 3.3.1 The Impossible and Change

*"L'impossible n'est pas français."* (CM p. 249)

Limit-situation is a concept which gathers together certain attributes of a situation which forms a setting for action. It could be described as an ideal landscape of political action in Sartre. It can also be described through several figures which display different views and which give us a first look into the conceptual constructions through which Sartre describes action.

The "impossible" in Sartre is an important figure used to describe the political aspect of a situation of action. However, it has been widely neglected by commentators who mostly concentrate on discussing the concept forming the other (asymmetric) pole, namely the "possible".<sup>9</sup> One reason for this could be that Sartre himself discusses the "possible" to a much greater extent than the "impossible". However, in my view, even though both poles form an important perspective on Sartre's text, it is through the concept of the impossible, however implicit, that we can step out of the perspective within which the "possible" is interpreted as a purely positive term indicating action headed toward something to be "achieved", and at once remotely evoking a linear conception of time.

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<sup>9</sup> On this see for example Flynn (1986, p. 72ff.) who discusses Sartre's concept of possibility in relation to Marx, Lukács and Weber.

Bernard Sève, in his article *Le possible dans L'être et le néant* (1996) discusses the possibilities of rendering explicit Sartre's "modal logic" from the point of view of the concepts of contingent, necessary, impossible and possible, and comes to the conclusion that it would be "[...] une entreprise difficile et assez aventureuse, d'autant plus que les quatre modalités n'ont pas chez lui de sens univoque" (ibid., p. 89). He continues describing Sartre's texts as follows: "[l]a logique modale, ici, se fait érotique modale." (ibid., p. 90). Even though Sève's point of view is quite different from the one adopted in this present study, we can find an important point here. The much less frequent use of the concept of the impossible than that of the possible in Sartre (to which Sève also refers, ibid., p. 88) can be seen through the postulation of the impossible as related to the concepts of possible, necessary and contingent within a limit-situation as described above. The impossible as such cannot be conceived of, it is actualized only in relation to other attributes which define the situation and in relation to the perspective brought into the situation through, as Sève points out, the conflictual setting formed by contingency and possibility (ibid., p. 89). Limit-situation implies the perspective of conflictuality in action.

As we know from *L'être et le néant* possibility for Sartre is something that possibilizes itself ("[l]e Possible n'est pas, le possible se possibilise [...]") (EN p. 147). The possibilization expressed in terms of action in relation to an objective receives in Sartre its "full" status as possibility only once it is realized, and hence neither change nor chance forming an opportunity of action, play a role in relation to this concept. Or in other words, possibility is not a concept which would be construed as having change or chance for a constitutive attribute, for an attribute which would construe a view of playing with an open field of possibilities. On the contrary, possibility refers more to a position implying an engagement in one ("future") possibility as a perspective of action and as a perspective taken on the present situation. Therefore the concept of the impossible is, from a political point of view, a more interesting one.

This is largely the view Sartre takes of the concept of the possible in *L'être et le néant*, but as the work is not - even though it is more systematized than the *Critique* - without fruitful internal contradictions and conflictual perspectives, one can also read from it another, a more politically formulated view of the concept within the discussion on temporality. The concept of the possible, as we shall see in more detail in the chapter on temporality below, is discussed within a setting which lays stress on the *projected possibility* which does, to a certain extent, imply both change and chance and hence reveals another aspect of Sartre's concept of the possible.

Another dimension to the concept of limit-situation can be added by describing it through an image of the limit as a breach, corresponding to a "metaphor" Sartre uses on the ontological level, namely the nothingness which separates<sup>10</sup> the in-itself from the for-itself. The nothingness which is at the very core of our existence, within it, that which makes non-self-identical existence possible, keeps us from being self-identical - that is, denies existence and action where no attrib-

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10 In order to avoid introducing a dualistic view of this construction one should perhaps express this by saying the nothingness which *relates* the in-itself to the for-itself.

utes forming different perspectives are possible. Hence, "breach" (break, rupture) also refers to negation, to the possibility of the negation of the existing (situation), and of its attributes. Therefore, for example, the possibility of the existence of a traitor, which Sartre postulates in his description of the groups as a threat to the existence and action of the group where the agents are "brothers", is a negation of fraternity (*le fraternité*) as a strategy of action, and a figure for a strategy of construing a limit-situation. It is through the traitor that the present strategy of action of the group is postulated impossible and its dissolution back into seriality (*la sérialité*) possible - a situation which offers the perspective of changing this setting through the terror (*la terreur*) which forms a counter-strategy in the face of the alternative created by the traitor. This description of Sartre's shows an aspect which does not form an issue in the description of the limit-situation in *L'être et le néant*: the alternative is not seen merely in positive terms of a possibility of changing the existing situation to a better one, but also in negative terms of avoiding an unwanted alternative. In both cases there is present a change in the organizing of action against the background of the impossibility of the present situation seen in the light of an alternative one.

The limit as breach, as rupture refers directly to change as a main attribute of the limit-situation alongside impossibility. It refers to the breaking up of the compactness of a situation which in its turn refers to the possibility of action through the construing of a space, or a margin, for action.

### 3.3.2 Lines, Limits and Other Conceptual Divisions

It has already been indicated that the concept of limit is not understood here as a limiting factor or as an ideal objective of action to be or not to be reached in the future. Furthermore, the limit-situation should not be understood here as containing a limit as a dividing or a separating line between two elements, but as a situation embodying a limit in the sense of the one Sartre describes in connection to freedom in *L'être et le néant*. My freedom confronts your freedom as a limit and at once receives a new dimension: my freedom is organized in relation to this limit in such a fashion that an "outside" can be postulated:

"Pourtant, l'existence de l'Autre apporte une limite de fait à ma liberté." (EN p. 606)  
 "[D]ès qu'une liberté autre que la mienne surgit en face de moi, je me mets à exister dans une nouvelle dimension d'être [...]. Nous venons, il faut le reconnaître, de rencontrer une limite *réelle* à notre liberté [...]. Encore faut-il s'entendre: la limite imposée ne vient pas de l'action des autres." (EN p. 607)

"La véritable limite de ma liberté est purement et simplement dans le fait même qu'un autre me saisit comme autre-objet et dans cet autre fait corollaire que ma situation cesse pour l'autre d'être situation et devient forme objective dans laquelle j'existe à titre de structure objective." [...] En un mot, du fait de de l'existence d'autrui, j'existe dans une situation qui a un *dehors* [...]" (EN p. 608).

The limit of freedom described by Sartre serves here as a figure for bringing forth the concept of the "outside", which in Sartre offers a perspective on the agent already in *L'être et le néant*, and even more in the *Critique* where it forms one of the central devices for the description of the agent and of action. What is important in

this passage is the description of the "outside" as a constituting part of the situation of the agent, as "my outside", the "outside" which I am (see EN p. 346). In other words, the "outside" is not described as something which lies beyond the situation or as something imposed by the action of the others.

From this point of view a limit can be differentiated from a border or a frontier in the sense that it does not refer to a line across which one moves (or cannot move) from one thing to another, to something that is "on the other side" - it refers only to the way "this side" is construed. In the passage referred to above the "outside" forms the exteriority of the situation or the "être-dehors-pour-l'autre" (EN p. 608). Hence limit can here be understood as an opening and as something "up to" which something is extended and which hence forms a space, but it can only be understood from the "inside". Sartre's concept of fraternity describing the form of relations in the pledged group could also serve as an example here. The limit of fraternity does not refer to crossing the limit through moving from being a "brother" to being a "traitor", but to the possibility of the existence of a "traitor" within the group of "brothers". The "traitor" and the "brother" are pole-concepts which refer to different perspectives taken on action. Moreover, the relation between these concepts is an asymmetric one - you can be "brothers" only to the extent you are not "traitors" (see CRD I, e.g. p. 668) but at the same time you cannot be a "traitor" unless you are a "brother".

However, we can push this description still a little further. In a way the limit-situation can be seen from two viewpoints. What was discussed above as Sartre's limit-situation stresses the setting present in the situation: one must be one of the "brothers" in order to see the "traitor" as impossible, or, as above, one must see the alternative in order to see the present situation as impossible. In addition to this, the point of view can be taken by stressing action as well as the space and the organization of action: the "traitor" offers a view of the action of being "brothers", of the group as a space within which action is organized; and making the alternative a value, as in Sartre's example discussed above, offers a view of the present situation analogically.

The impossibility is postulated differently from these two points of view or, rather, aspects of the limit-situation. In the first one, impossibility refers in the first place to possibility as its counter-figure, and politically to the failure of realizing this possibility as a chance for changing action and the situation. In the second one, it is the impossibility seen in relation to action which is placed in focus as it construes an opening in the situation, an opening which in its turn, can be read politically as a space for creating strategies of action. In this sense, the "traitor" is not seen as the destroyer of "brotherhood" but as a figure for escaping the present organization of the group.

In this sense the impossible - possible relation, which can be found, as already indicated, for example in Sartre's conception of temporality where the future as a possible "state of things" is postulated as impossible, describes the way Sartre configures the pole of the action situation, and the impossible - action relation describes the way Sartre configures the pole of action. Limit-situation, as defined here, includes both these aspects, and the different viewpoints it is seen from will be used in the following to interpret the political in Sartre's texts.

In addition to those described above, there are certain options open for a political reading of this setting, but which are, however, excluded from the perspective taken in this present study. For example the limit is not read here as a figure referring to the configuration of the space of action with an “inside” and an “outside” through a division into center - periphery relations. Rather, it is seen as a moment in a play or as something which construes a certain margin of action within the impossibility.

Also, the words limit and margin used here do not refer to “extreme” evoking a spatial image, or to “exceptional” evoking a temporal image, but rather to “extraordinary” evoking the image of an opportunity and of a counter-image to the ordinary, to the established. It also refers more to a margin in a book seen as space for interpreting the text on a page, or to a margin from or through which the so called normality is interpreted. Therefore, limit-situation forms here, so to say, an ideal type of action situation in which the situation as well as action are (re)interpreted within the perspective of change.

It is starting from the limit-situation as a setting for a discussion that we can take a further look into the ways the political aspect in Sartre’s texts can be interpreted.

### 3.4 Excursions into Political Anthropology

#### 3.4.1 The “Inside” and the “Outside”

A further view of the limit-situation, and of the possibilities of interpreting action and the agent it offers, can be gained by taking a look into some concepts used in the field of political anthropology.

In his *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (1985) Anthony P. Cohen discusses extensively the concept of boundary. His aim in the book is described by the editor as follows: “[...] he sets out to deal with community as it is symbolically *constructed, as a system of values, norms and moral codes which provides a sense of identity within a bounded whole* to its members. This emphasis on *meaning* neatly sidesteps the definitional problems posed by the search for a structural model of community as a specific form of social organization.” (ibid., p. 9, italics mine) This description gives a hint of a question that can be raised in connection to Cohen’s quite interesting work. His definitions of the concept of boundary (see ibid., e.g. p. 12-14, 21), read from the point of view of this present study, display a clear distinction between the “inside” and the “outside” construed in relation to the boundary. He also seems to indicate that identity, amongst other phenomena he discusses, is dependent on the “being on the inside” which is differentiated and separated from the “being on the outside”. In addition, according to Cohen, the boundary is used to maintain the “inside” to the extent that “reversing” the boundary as well as the “rituals of rebellion” which “form a protest against established authority” are seen as something that “celebrates the normal, the “standard cultural act”” (ibid., p. 58-59).



In this description of boundary, compared to the description of the concept of limit, we can see a certain loss of the perspective of the political, understood in terms of change, in terms of breaking or transgressing the boundaries which in Cohen seems to be buried behind the perspective of using the boundary as a device for construing identity. Likewise we can see a loss of the perspective of choices leading to "marginality" as an alternative point of view to the existing situation. In addition, the view Cohen takes of the social entity, "community", is taken either from the inside or from the outside - the "stranger" becomes an "outsider" (see *ibid.*, p. 37), the one who does not possess the skills to play the game, to be an actor. At once the perspective of the "stranger" as an "insider", as the one who plays the same game with different rules but still contributes to the game is lost. This seems a somewhat surprising point of view in a text which discusses meanings, as one would expect a view of playing with meanings, especially playing with the limits of meanings.

Instead, the view Cohen offers to the situation of "being on the inside" is that of a change which takes place within the "inside" and leaves the "outside" intact, or, at most redefines the setting through a replacing of the boundary (see *ibid.*, e.g. p. 13, 81, 86-87). This forms a striking contrast to Sartre's views where the limit is postulated as relating the "inside" to the "outside" which together construe a space of action in such a manner that for example a "social entity" such as a group cannot be seen as an organic whole separated from the "outside" "surrounding" it, but is rather seen in terms of the limit as the "place" for the constitution of the group.<sup>11</sup>

Presenting the view Cohen offers to the question becomes relevant from the point of view of this present study in that it underlines the difference between the two ways of understanding the limit: as a dividing line and as a limit toward which something is extended. This difference is, in my view, crucial for the understanding of Sartre's use of concepts. There are quite a few examples of Sartre interpretations where the structure and the logic of the concepts he uses is understood through leaning on a reading which establishes his concepts as having an exclusive boundary between them. This kind of interpretation is often followed by a postulation of a connecting relation between the concepts, a relation which reaches across the separating boundary. In contrast to this, the primary argument concerning Sartre's concepts that is forwarded in this study is that they form different views on a shared space of competence, that they are concepts which cannot be directly confronted with or related to other concepts across a separating boundary, that they are concepts which are both confronted and related through a limit in the same sense that Sartre describes the limit of freedom. In other words, the concepts Sartre construes and uses are structured in relation to other concepts and gain their relevance only within this relation. Hence they cannot be read as describing a "sector" of a phenomenon or as completely alternative or exclusive descriptions of the same phenomenon, but require to be read as pole-concepts.

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11 See also Cohen 1994 (esp. p. 118ff.) for a discussion of boundary in somewhat different tones in relation to a distinction between the concepts of boundary, border and frontier, to gatekeeping and to contestability.

Among Sartre's concepts those that seem to be quite often read through this kind of separating boundary are, in my view, those of authenticity and bad faith.<sup>12</sup> As an example we could take Ronald E. Santoni's earlier mentioned work (1995) on Sartre's morals. Santoni forwards an interpretation where he does not only establish a separating boundary between these two concepts in order to clearly differentiate them from each other as concepts, but also in order to interpret them as concepts which discuss two issues which are related through a direct confrontation, i.e. describing two moral conducts that exclude each other. The establishing of a boundary between these concepts offers him a possibility of discriminating the concept of bad faith in favor of that of good faith which he develops far beyond Sartre's texts. It also offers him the possibility of claiming that Sartre's fundamental problem in discussing morals in the period of *L'être et le néant* is that of not having developed the positive concept of good faith, which as a "salvageable and constructive alternative to bad faith" would establish the possibility of positive morals (see *ibid.*, e.g. p. xxv). With this constellation Santoni establishes such an incompatibility between the concepts of authenticity and bad faith that it approaches what Sartre would call manichaeist morals of good and evil.

However, in Sartre's views on morals one of the most important postulations is that of opposition to such a manichaeist view. Each of the concepts he uses in this context speaks against the kind of dividing line which permits the establishing of "good" and "evil", a division which empties the playground. The concepts of authenticity and bad faith, contrary to Santoni's use of them, are used in Sartre as pole-concepts which construe a common space of competence where they both describe a different aspect of action and where the point of departure for morals is that of playing with the limits each of these concepts form in relation to the other.

Santoni's use of these concepts closes the view of one of the settings where we can see how in Sartre the political and the moral are woven together to an extent which in my view cannot be ignored. It also depoliticizes both the question he discusses and Sartre's concepts through eliminating the perspectives of change and of impossibility related to the concept of limit inscribed into the setting formed by authenticity, bad faith and conversion. For Sartre the conversion to authenticity, away from bad faith - or, to follow Santoni, acting in good faith instead of bad faith - is impossible. This impossibility is not, however, due to Sartre's grim view of existence, but a built-in characteristic of his concepts: they are not concepts which would indicate a mutually exclusive perspective but concepts which express playing with the twofold condition of the human being. Using a boundary to separate the concepts results into the loss of this inherently political aspect we can interpret from them. It also means a loss of the perspective that both authenticity and bad faith are not inherent qualities of the human being but attributes of action, we *are* not in bad faith but we *act* in it as well as we do or do not *act* authentically.

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12 It is not rare, either, to read such interpretations of the concepts of the in-itself and the for-itself or of the practico-inert and praxis.

### 3.4.2 The Mask

The concept of mask has occasionally been used as offering a tool for reading Sartre. In his *Sartre's Phenomenology of the Mask* (1976b) C.R. Bukala discusses Sartre from the point of view of seeing his human being as an actor always wearing a mask. Bukala's analysis partly proceeds to presenting views which are in contradiction with views presented in this present study, but partly it expresses the concept of mask as used here. He writes:

"The men and women of Jean-Paul Sartre's writings are all actors who appear on a stage [...]. The men and women of Sartre's world wear various masks. His phenomenology of the mask has as its point of departure the dialectic of the conflict among these characters." [...] The Sartrean man [...] appears in the world faceless, without definition [...]" (ibid., p. 198).  
 "Every man, in so far as he freely determines his activity, is an actor. He changes roles and assumes various masks in the drama of the human condition." (ibid., p. 199)

This view summarizes to quite an extent that which a political reading of Sartre can gain from the concept of mask. The agent is seen as an actor wearing a mask on the stage of an acting situation, a skillful actor who can change masks in order to adopt different strategies of action according to the turns of the play. However, the psychologizing aspect of the concept of mask, which is present in Bukala's text, principally in postulations which refer to "that which is behind the mask" (ibid., p. 200), is closed out of this present discussion. The agent is not seen here as a "real" human being hiding behind a mask, one that is either difficult or impossible to reach, but the mask is understood politically as a description of the agent in an action situation. In this sense the mask is not understood as hiding something but on the contrary as revealing the political in the agent.

Another view of the concept of mask can be reached through Cohen's already mentioned text (1985). Cohen tells us that he is looking for the diversity under the mask which for him represents the deceiving belief that we all know what we are speaking about, and that we are really speaking about the same thing (see ibid., p. 73-74). Looking under this mask of "common" in search of different interpretations is certainly most interesting and important, but from the point of view of politics, it might be that the playing with the mask, playing with the deceiving belief in the "same", without which rhetoric could not form a political strategy, would prove to be of interest to those who wish to take a look into the game and into how it is played.

The concepts of boundary and mask are closely linked. Cohen seems to use the concept of mask in two slightly different senses, firstly as a common, general representation of the "community" to itself (or to the actors) and, secondly as "unanimous" representation of the "community" toward the others (or to the spectators). The latter sense also represents the boundary (ibid., p. 74). If we take a look at this constellation outside the context where Cohen places it, we can take a view which indicates that crossing the boundary means here at the same time breaking the mask of "common" postulated as representing the same to everyone, and gaining the possibility of taking part into the political game of the struggle over interpretations.

In Bukala and Cohen we find two aspects present in the concept of mask. On the one hand, the way Cohen uses it can be, to some extent, related to Sartre's concept of a collective object. It is the collective object which gathers people together under the mask of "unanimity" of the deceiving sameness of numbers in a series, and it is the further appearance of seriality in the institution and in state that completes the scene. On the other hand, the view Bukala offers of the agent as an actor underlines more radically the specificity of the political in Sartre. It is the agent as an actor wearing a mask - that of a "third" for example - who confronts the mask construed in relation to the collective object. It is in this double sense that the agent in Sartre is a *persona* in the etymological sense of the word, an actor or a mask.

### 3.5 Theater and Play as Metaphors

#### 3.5.1 A Short Description of the Problem Using a Metaphor Known to Everyone

"I describe a psychological experiment, the apparatus, the questions of the experimenter, the actions and replies of the subject - and then I say that it is a scene in a play. - Now everything is different. (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* IIv)

Theater as a metaphor describing political action is a classical one. On the one hand Sartre uses it himself explicitly as a means for shedding light on the human being acting in the world:

"Aujourd'hui, je pense que la philosophie est dramatique. [...] Il s'agit de l'homme - qui est est à la fois *un agent* et *un acteur* - qui produit et joue son drame [...]. Une pièce de théâtre [...] c'est la forme la plus appropriée, aujourd'hui, pour montrer l'homme *en acte* (c'est-à-dire l'homme, tout simplement)." (SIT IX, p. 12, see also Gisi 1979, Palonen 1994, p. 52-53 and Winter 1995, p. 9-10).

On the other hand, he also politicizes the metaphor through problematizing the setting. The metaphor does not only serve for describing action but also for blurring the line drawn between living, acting and playacting.<sup>13</sup> Where Genet is described as a "comédien", Freud (and Sartre) written into a "scenario" (1959)<sup>14</sup>, in *Un théâtre de situations* (1973) Sartre differentiates between "comédien" and "acteur" describing the former as the one working and the latter as the one who playacts her/himself:

"L'acteur c'est l'opposé du comédien qui, lorsqu'il a fini de travailler, redevient un homme comme les autres, alors que l'acteur "se joue lui-même" à toutes les secondes." (TS p. 284)

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13 See Burke 1969, p. 503 who describes the use of a metaphor in bringing out "the thisness of a that and the thatness of a this".

14 *Le scénario Freud* (1984).

Furthermore, in his play *Kean* (1954), as Philip Knee indicates, no dividing line between life and stage is established (Knee 1993, p. 49-52). Kean acts his life and plays his acting:

“Être ou ne pas être. Je ne suis rien, ma petite. Je joue à être ce que je suis. De temps en temps Kean donne la comédie à Kean.” (Kean p. 75)

The same is present in *L'être et le néant* where the waiter plays at being a waiter acting “as if” (he *were* a waiter) forms a political view of existence where Hamlet’s words are altered into Sartre’s *is-not-what-it-is* and *is-what-it-is-not* (see EN e.g. p. 183), into a play with the two aspects of the human condition.<sup>15</sup>

However, Sartre also uses the metaphor in a more indirect manner. On the one hand, there are texts written as if they were plays: we can read *Les Mots* as a play where *Poulou* plays the leading role and we can read both *Saint Genet* and *L’idiot* construed as a setting of drama. On the other hand, we can read the *Critique* as a play where the agent plays the leading role as the constructor of the setting on the stage and where Sartre himself as the writer is one of the players.<sup>16</sup>

The concept of playing in Sartre is extended to cover the metaphor of game as well. In the *Critique* Sartre gives several examples using the metaphor of game - either sports (football, boxing) or others, such as chess, through which we can picture the agent as a player, too. The world is the field where the play/ game takes place and the agent is the actor/ player who both construes the scene and acts in it. In addition, in *L'être et le néant* playing a game is used by Sartre for bringing to the fore action as freedom as well as for describing the human being producing her/himself without a foundation or an origin:

“Qu’est-ce qu’un jeu en effet, sinon une activité dont l’homme est l’origine première, dont l’homme pose lui-même les principes et qui ne peut avoir de conséquences que selon les principes posés? Dès qu’un homme se saisit comme libre et veut user de sa liberté, quelle que puisse être d’ailleurs son angoisse, son activité est de jeu: il en est, en effet, le premier principe, il échappe à la nature naturée, il pose lui-même la valeur et les règles de ses actes et ne consent à payer que selon les règles qu’il a lui-même posées et définies. D’où, en un sens, le “peu de réalité” du monde.” (EN p. 669)

Furthermore, as Pierre Verstræten indicates in the title of his *Violence et éthique. Esquisse d’une critique de la morale dialectique à partir du théâtre politique de Sartre* (1972) Sartre’s plays carry an inherent political dimension which reaches beyond the mere use of theater as a metaphor. They bring forth a setting of action which is rendered political expressly by the use Sartre makes of his philosophical concepts which describe what can be called political aspects of action. More than a background, the use of these concepts forms a political landscape where the play takes place. On the basis of this an extensive analysis of different political

15 On this see for example Winter (ibid., esp. p. 51-55 and 62-68) who discusses Sartre’s plays in terms of *L'être et le néant*. See also Knee ibid.

16 See Winter, who quotes Sartre: “Mon premier film *Les jeux sont faits* ne sera pas existentialiste. [...] Tout au contraire: l’existentialisme n’admet point que les jeux soient jamais faits. [...] Mon scénario baigne dans déterminisme, parce que j’ai pensé qu’après tout, l’était permis, à moi aussi, de jouer.” (Winter 1995, p. 4, orig. Sartre and Carrière 1947).

situations in Sartre's plays could be carried out. However, it is not my intention here to proceed to a comprehensive analysis of Sartre's plays, but to discuss some of their aspects and present a view according to which a twofold relation can be found in his plays: looking through his concepts we can reach the political in his plays but also, using the scenery, or the landscape offered by his plays we can reach the political in his concepts as well.

Certain plays Sartre wrote (for example *Les Mouches*, 1943) have been interpreted as direct political metaphors describing an existing situation, as Sartre's comments on contemporary politics (see *Entretiens* 1974, p. 264-65 and e.g. Gore 1970, Galster 1986), or as the politics of "*qui perd gagne*" (see e.g. Howells 1988, Knee 1993, Palonen 1994a, Witt 1990 and Haarscher sa.). Both these views undoubtedly present a relevant view of the political in Sartre, but within the perspective of this present study we can establish yet another significant level of discussion of the political in Sartre's plays. We could, in general terms, call it the micro-level of the political which is construed by his use of the concepts and which we can reach through studying their use. Within the perspective adopted here, the central concept that can be used for reading Sartre's plays politically is that of limit-situation.

It is in this context that in the commentary literature more commonly used metaphors of acting and theater and the less frequently discussed metaphor of game can be understood as a discussion on the political in Sartre's texts. However, I would like to suggest that we can take a deeper view of the question, a view which in addition to revealing the political aspect in Sartre's plays and other texts indicates also how his texts politicize these common metaphors. "Play" or "game" are not only figures expressing the political aspect in the plays but also figures which both politicize the setting and are politicized at the same time. The primary question concerning the former aspect is that of describing action in terms of playing, both in the context of a theater and a game, but the primary question concerning the latter is that of asking how the scenery and the actors are construed in this setting and how the metaphors and the figures are rendered political.

In a sense, that which will be discussed in this context is not in the first place the agent playing in a political game or acting on the scene of politics, but the agent as a strategic actor, and hence as a political figure whose action politicizes the game (the play). In order to establish a setting along these lines for a further discussion on the agent and political action I shall in the following sketch the first views of the construing of the agent in the specific scenery of the political.

### 3.5.2 The Scene: Place, Space and Temporality

When discussing Sartre, we can take a perspective on the metaphors of theater and stage through the metaphor of game. This aims at bringing out theater as a setting which is not described merely as the setting of "political action played by the actors". In Sartre the stage is not merely the *place* where actors play but it constitutes the *space* of action. What is referred to here, is a perspective where the construction and the organization of the space of action is placed into focus, i.e.

where *space* is not seen as a spatially delimited or defined *place* to which the agent can be assigned, but in terms of action configuring it as well as in terms of temporality. For Sartre, where there is an agent and action, temporality emerges into the world and the world is organized.

If we consider Anthony Giddens' (1991, p. 16-17) comments on space and place which forward an "emptied" space as well as an "emptied" time and a place from which space has been pulled away as features of modernity, we can say that Sartre's configuration of the question to a certain extent contradicts these features by both spatializing and temporalizing the place as a space of action. Moreover, the spatial and the temporal in Sartre express the agent construed in this space of action. Neither the agent nor the space of action can be seen just as a "container" of definitions or characterized as a convertible relation of representation between the "container" and the "contained"<sup>17</sup>. Through spatializing and temporalizing the place as well as the relation of the agent and of the space of action, Sartre attempts to deconstruct the dividing lines separating time, space and action and to construe the agent as well as the action situation across these separating lines. This is an attempt for which theater or stage as spaces of action give an apt expression. The idea of a fixed, identifiable place where action would take place, which Sartre discards in favor of the space of action, serves as a landmark for establishing separating limits and divisions in terms of space, time and action. In contrast to this Sartre's construction suggests the impossibility of such landmarks and limits and the replacing of them with a "spread" dimensional structure of the agent, action and the action situation.

We can look for an illustration of understanding "place" in these terms from Sartre's plays as in many of them this aspect is thematized in very specific ways. In *Huis Clos* (1945) where according to Bukala the persons are "wearing the mask of the dead [...] because for them "the chips are down"" (Bukala 1976b, p. 201)<sup>18</sup> place has been thematized from the point of view of time, but it has also been thematized as a space of action.

The first pages introduce us to a place that is false - not a "real" place, not a place at all - the furniture is "wrong", there are no mirrors, windows or beds (HC p. 11, 13-14), and Garcin, who notices it, asks, ironically: "une situation fausse dans une salle à manger Louis-Philippe, ça ne vous dit rien?" (HC p. 12). From not having a bed, i.e. from not being able to sleep in this false place that is expressed

17 On this see Burke's discussion on the relation of the stage, the agent and acting in terms of synecdochic relation (Burke 1969, e.g. p. 3, 15-17, 507-10).

18 Bukala also says that they are wearing "the mask of their pretended innocence" beyond which there is "the true self" (ibid.). The "mask of the dead" describes, in my view, aptly the situation of the play where life is described in terms of death but the postulation Bukala makes of a "true self" revealed in the play overrides one of the political aspects of the play, namely that of playing with this mask: in addition to the mask of innocence also the mask of guilt is taken into play. "Garcin: [...] Estelle, est-ce que je suis un lâche? Estelle: Mais je n'en sait rien, mon amour, je ne suis pas dans ta peau. C'est à toi de décider. Garcin [...]: Je ne décide pas. [...] A la fin j'ai pensé: c'est ma mort qui décidera: si je meurs proprement, j'aurai prouvé que je ne suis pas un lâche...". Neither guilt nor innocence serves here for an explanation of action, but they are played together. "Inès: Ah! Voilà la question. Est-ce que ce sont les vraies raisons? Tu raisonnais, tu ne voulais pas t'engager à la légère. Mais la peur, la haine et toutes les saletés qu'on cache, ce sont aussi des raisons. Alors, cherche, interroge-toi." (HC p. 63-64).

as a false situation, Garcin comes to thinking of why it is hard not to sleep and concludes that it is because "c'est la vie sans coupure" (HC p. 14), a life without a break, without a curtain which would separate one moment or act from another ("un rideau qui tombe et qui se relève: la coupure est faite" (HC p. 15), continuing repetition without escape. The temporal aspect of action is brought in as its negation: in the eternity of Hell the perspective of change has been closed and what is left is the eternal "future" repetition of the eternalized past in a false present where nothing can be moved. Here the scene is also described as a place which has no "outside", no other side of the wall, no "after" the corridor, only the inside, other corridors and rooms (HC p. 15). With the help of these descriptions we can imagine the place-situation of the play as a closed, halted inside with no views, a space where action is impossible (there is not even anything one could break, "rien de fragile", HC p. 13), where no politics can be made and where Garcin is, for the time being, alone.

However, the setting changes with the arrival of the others. As soon as Inès comes in we are told that the door is locked (HC p. 20), the place-situation is closed from outside - from an outside that does not even really exist, the locked door underlines the view that there is no "outside" for those "inside". This description narrows down the space of the play even more, to the point that the only remaining distinction one can make in terms of difference is the distance between the bodies. Furthermore, Inès is disturbed by the changes of the expressions on Garcin's face (HC p. 21-22) and for Garcin the conditions of a peaceful coexistence are physical: "je ne parle pas, je ne remue guère et je fais peu de bruit" (ibid., p. 21). When Estelle arrives, the body-dimension is intensified by Sartre by assigning each character their own sofa which forms the physical place they form a part of - the only place there is as the lack of the "outside" deprives the "inside" of its character of a place. The sofas are not objects they use, they are "them", an expression of their being placed there in the space of action. The inside character of the space of action is expressed further through the impossible but yet inescapable relations to the others who are, in the perhaps most famous sentence of Sartre's, described as Hell (HC p. 75).

Another expression which takes us to the space-aspect of the play comes out when Estelle protests against the use of the word "dead" when answering Garcin's excuses of not being "un mort de bonne compagnie" (HC p. 26) by using the word "absent":

"S'il faut absolument nommer cet ... état de choses, je propose qu'on nous appelle des absents, ce sera plus correct." (ibid.)

Absence as a Sartrean concept does not refer to place, but to the situational and the space-aspect of action, opposed to presence, but also defining an "elsewhere" as well as a movement between these positions. In brief, it refers to a space where, by the virtue of openness and of the lack of fixed dividing lines, action is possible. However, in this play, as action is impossible, also absence is absent, for the characters within this closed space, this "inside", cannot be but present to each other - "each other" is all there is. Estelle's wish for absence, which at the end of the play leads to a vain attempt to kill Inès who is already dead, can be realized only through the use of words (HC p. 75-76).



This is where Sartre construes the space: between the agents, and the first hint of the kind of space it is, we get from Garcin's comment to Inès when he suggests that they should be as polite as possible to which Inès answers that she is not a polite person (HC p. 21): it is a conflictual space. The last description of this conflictual space of action is given in the above mentioned sentence "l'enfer, c'est les Autres", which is usually interpreted as an expression of relations between people only, but which from the point of view adopted here could also be interpreted as an expression of the impossibility of construing a space of action when the perspective of temporality and that of the "outside" are closed out. This is a negatively politicized situation, a situation where the actors play with their impossibility to act, where they form but a part of the setting of the stage.

A somewhat similar kind of thematization of space as a situation and a space of action can be found in *Les séquestrés d'Altona* (1960)<sup>19</sup> where Frantz, locked in his room (locked from the inside) and the others, locked out of Frantz's room and closed into a house they cannot leave, are struggling over the possibility of crossing these limits built in space. They are struggling over the possibility of entering Frantz's room, over having him come out of his room into the closed house, and finally, over the escape from the house which turns into failure in the double suicide of Frantz and of his father - a scene representing a temporary opening after which the space is closed again as Leni takes over Frantz's place in the locked room.

Mary Ann Frese Witt describes the play in terms of temporality and place (1990, e.g. p. 152) and sees it representing an "eternal instant in which time is represented spatially" (ibid., p. 159), a situation "in which time has become spatial and choice impossible" (ibid., p. 160) and also "a refusal of time" in terms of eternity (ibid., p. 161). This setting, very similar to that of *Huis Clos* is undoubtedly present also in *Les séquestrés* but I would like to suggest that we can take the analysis a little further. In *Les séquestrés* the space, described as a "double-inside" (i.e. the house and Frantz's room within it) displays a setting different from *Huis Clos*. It is Frantz in the inside of the inside that forms the point of focus of the play and it is from his interior perspective that the others are defined as those in the exterior, as the Others. There is also a distant echo of the "outside" which is designed by Frantz's endless conversations with imaginary adversaries stored on the tape-recorder - conversations which rewrite the history of the outside as a never ending and falsified story to which none of the other characters of the play have an access. The outside is present also through the other characters in their references to places and events outside the house but no one in the play has access to it, it is something that can be reached only in death. This construction, an inside within inside and an outside out of reach which construes the interior (Frantz's room) and the exterior (the rest of the house) in the inside (the house) is a setting which, as we shall see later, is repeated also in the *Critique* where it describes the space of action as a playground where the limit between the interior and the exterior is played. It is played there in the same sense as in this play, as a struggle over the limit which relates the interior and the exterior: the possibility of access-

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19 For a view of the closed space of these two plays see Contat 1968, especially p. 14 and of space in *Huis Clos* also Issacharoff 1977 and Kryszynski 1982.

ing Frantz's room plays as important a role in *Les séquestrés* as the possibility of leaving it.

The perspective of time to which Witt refers as immobility and eternity and which expresses the impossibility of action is brought in on the first pages of the play: all the three temporal ek-stasis, past, present and future are brought into this inside-space containing both the exterior and the interior. They are brought in in a scene where time is marked by the striking of the clock and is discussed in terms of waiting, of being early or late and of being punctual. After this the three ek-stasis are introduced through the grammatical categories of verbal times:

"Leni [...]: Moi, je mourais de peur mais je me disais: il *paiera*.

Johanna [...]: Il *a payé*?

Leni [...]: Il *paie*." (SA p. 16, italics mine, see also p. 13-15)

Introducing all the three dimensions of time at once underlines the fact that the play begins with a reference to time and temporality. Witt sees time spatialized but in the play there is a counter-aspect to this as well: space is seen in temporal terms. The "outside" is seen in terms of the past, represented by memories, by references to an established order (the father has, in the past, set the rules for the house) and by Frantz's constant reformulations of the past in the lonely conversations with the tape-recorder. The inside of the house, as an exterior in relation to Frantz's room, is presented in terms of future: the objective of the characters within the exterior is either to make Frantz come out of the room where he has confined himself or to gain access there. This is a description which, in its turn, underlines the construction of the house as an "inside" where the relation of the interior of Frantz's room and the exterior within the house are played. The interior and the exterior within the house are not described as separate as they form parts of the same house. However, the constant interplay between them has been interrupted by Frantz and the others are, each in her/his fashion, trying to re-establish this interplay.

In terms of temporality, the present represented by Frantz in his room, is presented as absence which becomes presence when Frantz in the end leaves his place to hide: the magic of the interior as a closed space is broken and the game played by the characters is interrupted. However, this break does not lead to a reconciliation between the past, present and future, the interplay between the interior and the exterior is not re-established. On the contrary, it is the original situation which is re-established through Leni taking Frantz's place. The conflictual situation between the actors is not harmoniously solved through action, the space of action as a space for playing at the limit of the interior and of the exterior is maintained. Moreover, the perspective of temporality, through which the space of action is represented, remains unaltered. The different dimensions of time are all present contemporaneously forming a contrast to an idea of progress in terms of linear time, an idea which is also negated through Frantz's and his father's suicide - it is in death that they reach the "outside" ..

In this play, contemporary to the *Critique*, the space of action is described firstly in terms of an impossible action situation into which failure brings a possibility of change which, however, remains marginal: changing Frantz to Leni

is a false change. Secondly, it is described in terms of the interior and the exterior the limit of which is played more or less successfully by the characters. Thirdly, it is described in terms of temporality - the future is represented as impossible, the present as absence and the past through the "outside" as inalterable but also as re-interpreted through "falsifying" (in the sense of bad faith).

This play shows the extent to which the metaphors of theater, acting, playing and game can be used in reading Sartre. It is not a question of using them merely for illustrating action, they are also rendered highly political through the politicization of the setting of the play. Sartre does not use theater and his plays merely as a metaphor for action but also for his philosophical concepts, which are at the same time politicized through the political aspects of his plays. Moreover, in this setting these concepts, in their turn, politicize his use of the plays as metaphors. Hence the political is highlighted also through his placing of himself as a writer on the scene as one of the actors: he does not only claim that acting in the world can be expressed through acting on stage, but also that acting on stage means playing with the world. The metaphor is turned here into a strategy of action, into a game played between the writer and the reader, a game played over the limit between the interior of the play and the exterior of the reader within the temporal dimensions brought into the reading by the reader. It is in this ambience that Sartre's texts are read in this present study.

#### 4      *CRITIQUE DE LA RAISON DIALECTIQUE, THE PERSPECTIVE OF PRODUCTION AND THE AGENT*

In Sartre's *Critique* the central perspective from the point of view of this present study is that of an agent. This chapter will follow the line of argumentation based on the concept of production and its interpretation in Sartre and advance to showing how the focus of the *Critique* is placed on this perspective of the agent. The interpretations are largely done on the bases of the first two sections of the work, namely *Questions de méthode* and *Introduction*, as it is in these sections that the primary arguments and concepts construing this view are introduced into the work.

In this and in the following chapters I shall argue that the role Sartre offers to the agent as a political actor is formulated in such a manner that it does not seek a justification of the agent through an identification to a subject or through conceptual constructions which would describe the agent as assignable to a place in the sense discussed above. Furthermore, I shall argue that even though the framework within which Sartre discusses the central themes of the *Critique* is that of production, the agent is not postulated as a produced object but as a producer produced and that this difference is of central importance to the understanding of the Sartrean agent. Moreover, I shall show that there are two other perspectives which frame Sartre's discussion as interpreted here, namely that of temporality and that of the interiority - exteriority constellation together with a specific view on subjectivity, and that these form a view of the agent in Sartre without which the construction of the agent as a political actor cannot be reached.

The lines of argumentation forwarding these perspectives are not presented in the *Critique* at the same pace with the overall logic of the "story". On the contrary, they form a fragmentary whole which partly displays a logic of its own, partly views both contradicting and affirming the systematics of the work. Therefore a closer look into the *Critique* as it is read in this work is required.

#### 4.1 The *Critique*

An attentive reader of the *Critique* notices that its conceptual apparatus is not fully developed in the *Questions de méthode*, written apart from the rest of the work<sup>1</sup>. There is both a textual and a conceptual gap between the *Questions* and the body of the *Critique*, both the tone and the perspective of the first section change as the text advances. However, there are to some extent similar changes in the *Critique* proper which suggest that the work is not much a textual unity as often thought. This also suggests that its logic hides sceneries that do not meet the eye if the text is read as an advancing whole, and that the changes can be better uncovered following the argumentation of the text from one theme to another. In my view these changes, which indicate a possibility of taking different paths into the text do not occur "chronologically" at the same pace with the text. It should be possible to show through a detailed study of the text that, firstly, the *Critique* was written in fragments and secondly, as Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre says in her introduction (CRD II, p. 7), the second volume of the *Critique* was partly written before finishing the first one. This adds to the impression that there are discontinuities and breaks which may conceal the development of a part of the conceptual apparatus used in the work. In my view this is especially true with regard to the concepts considered here as the central ones, namely production, temporality, interiority, exteriority and subjectivity. Furthermore, it is clear that the concepts present in the work are not presented in a "chronological" order, either. For example the groups serve as a horizon for the discussion in the *Questions*, for example in the short passage on subjectivity (CRD I, p. 67n1) and also in other connections (see e.g. p. 50, 54, 55, 83-84), and so do the collectives (see e.g. p. 56, 84, 87, 88).<sup>2</sup>

The complexity of the *Critique* is not limited to its logical or conceptual structure and to their development but is extended also to the framework of the text. The framing problems that Sartre worked on go from those explicitly thematized (dialectic, Marxism, history, totalization etc.) to those more implicitly brought up - sometimes only in the form of a nearly total absence from the text, as is the case, as I shall argue later, with the discussion implying one of Sartre's themes which can be traced back to most of his philosophical texts in one form or another, namely that of subjectivity.

From the conceptual perspective of this work this indicates two possibilities. Firstly, as I already observed, we can postulate a certain change in Sartre's perspective between the *Questions* and the *Critique* proper, a change which does not overlook the discussion of the earlier text, but where the focus has been redirected compared to certain central postulations of the earlier text. Where the former aims

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An earlier version of the *Questions de méthode* was published as an article under the heading of Existentialism and Marxism first in a Polish review (1957) and then in *Les Temps Modernes* (1957). See Contat, Rybalka 1970, p. 310-11.

2 Norman McLeod (1968, p. 44) considers the body of the *Critique* "the groundwork of the 111-page "Question de méthode"" (sic.). I would not make as strong a claim, but a certain discrepancy in the temporal order of the logic of the texts compared to the order of presentation is present.

at criticizing certain methodological views and forms a general introduction to the conceptual apparatus Sartre uses in the *Critique*, the latter is a “theory of practical ensembles”, i.e. a description of social reality, of the ensembles produced. This change of perspective can be seen also in connection to the concept of production as it is discussed in the *Questions* in a manner which construes the perspective of production for the *Critique* where this perspective remains more in the background. However, as it is the conception of production which, in the *Critique*, establishes a primary view of the agent, we need to take a more specific look into the work in order to reconstrue the perspective it offers. Therefore in the following I shall discuss the shift of focus in Sartre’s views of production and argue that in the *Questions* and in some earlier texts Sartre discusses his position through criticizing the Marxist concept of production. In addition, he, in these texts, establishes the perspective which he uses in the *Critique* proper as a background for his questions from a viewpoint which differs to an important measure from the Marxist oriented discussion.

Secondly, we can, in the structure of the work, trace a complexity which affects the conceptual framework and the logic of the text deeply: the order in which the concepts are presented in the text does not necessarily form a frame which would permit the forming of a view of the features of the conceptual apparatus Sartre uses that are the focus of my interest. In my view it is the third part of the *Critique* proper - the Book II discussing the groups - that can be taken as a background for reading the second part, i.e. the discussion on practico-inert, and these two form parallel backgrounds for reading the first part, i.e. the initial discussion on the concepts in the *Introduction* which outline to quite an extent the perspectives used in the work.

This “reversed” order of reading leads to a stressing of the triadic structure of the conceptual frame of the work: there is no strict succession - chronological or logical - from the first to the last conceptual definitions, or from the less complex to the more complex structures exposed in the work, but each of these three sections forms a different perspective on the themes of the work. It also leads to stressing the perspective taken here: the initial conceptual formulations of the first part of the *Critique* proper are not seen merely as a prelude to the rest of the work, nor as a beginning, but rather as formulations of concepts which can be interpreted and fully grasped in some of their aspects only through using the other parts of the work as reference points in this “reversed” order of reading.

In brief my argument here is that it is from this “reversed” order of reading that it becomes possible to reach in the *Critique* the widely overlooked central role of the concept of production discussed in this chapter as a framework for the use and the development of the other concepts in the work. Hence my reading of the *Critique* focuses on the developing and construing of the conceptual devices it uses in parallel perspectives breaking not only with the idea of a chronological story (which Sartre breaks himself, too, also in the very body of his analysis, see CRD I, e.g. p. 383-84, 410) but also with the logical story (see CRD I, e.g. p. 410, 500) which Sartre holds to as an explanatory principle for the description of the “levels of experience” which moves from “the abstract” to “the concrete”, or from the “simple” to the “complex” (CRD I, p. 92, 154, 433).

Sartre's conceptual constructions do not follow the logical order he claims to forward through these "levels of experience" in as rigorous a manner as he intends them to. In a strict sense, from a conceptual point of view, they do not form a logical story, but are to quite an extent fragmentary and, compared to the advancing of the text, carry as an inner attribute a discrepancy in their "logical time". The descriptions of the *Critique* take place within a framework of contemporaneity, the construction of "social reality" for Sartre takes place at the same time on all the "levels of materiality" ("[...] a lieu *en même temps* à tous les étages de la matérialité" - Sartre is describing the restructuration of the collective into a group, CRD I, p. 384-85) - and it is in this frame of contemporaneity that his concepts are construed.<sup>3</sup>

In my reconstruction of the *Critique* I have not in the first place aimed at bringing forth the most manifestly (and also, from a certain perspective, the most dubiously) political aspects of the work (for example those explicitly concerned with group action, institution or state). Instead, it is my intention to concentrate on the political that can be ascribed to his use of concepts as well as on the political implications of the conceptual constructions introduced in the *Questions* and on their further variations discussed in the *Critique* proper. My focus, placed to a large extent on the first sections of the *Critique*, aims at bringing forth the political also in the part of the text which has even been considered as "unpolitical". This is a view with which I profoundly disagree, for in my view it overlooks both the inherent political design of Sartre's conceptual constructions and also tends to relate the themes of this part of the work to economical questions (see for example Freund 1961, p. 223 and also Lichtheim 1963-64, p. 234, 240). The formulations which could be understood as referring to a discussion in terms of economy form a part of the layer through which Sartre maintained a discussion with the Marxists and they do not affect his theorizing to the extent and in as direct a manner as is often thought.

The importance of the beginning of the work is highlighted also in that the central conceptual devices Sartre uses to construe his discussion on the groups (for example the interiority and exteriority) are developed before Book II and it is there that the logic of his argumentation is to a great extent exposed and discussed. Furthermore, it is also there that we can find the elements that construe the initial political constellation of the whole work: an agent in a temporal reality postulated as an actor in the "inside" in the sense discussed in the previous chapter. This forms a setting where the political forms perspectives which traverse the structural exposition of Sartre's "social ensembles", the series and the groups as milieus of action. Therefore this study will concentrate on discussing these questions instead of going through the structural moments Sartre himself uses as guiding threads in his work.

The reconstruction of the logic of the *Critique* taken here as a starting point requires a certain revision of the view taken of the relation between *L'être et le néant* and the *Critique*. From the point of view of this present study neither a

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3 By these suggestions I do not wish to argue that Sartre's process of writing or thinking would have followed this "order" but to stress that the perspective adopted in this present study brings along a restructuration of the logic of Sartre's work.

chronological nor a logical view of their relation - were it seen in terms of development, differences, similarities or ruptures - offers a fruitful perspective for discussing the political in the conceptual apparatus of Sartre's work. The main overall theme of my study - that of showing that Sartre's concepts can be interpreted as political ones - forms a perspective where the setting "earlier" - "later" Sartre is relativized and concepts which have their origin in different texts written at different times are to a certain extent discussed within a frame of logical contemporaneity.

However, this does not mean reading the two works as simultaneous or equivalent texts, but as poles. These texts are conceptually related and cannot be read entirely separately when one's perspective is the conceptual apparatus that Sartre creates and uses, even though *L'être et le néant* would largely remain in the background as it does in this work. It is well known that some of the ideas and concepts of the *Critique* are present already in *L'être et le néant* and that certain questions discussed in the *Critique* (for example temporality) cannot be reconstructed without reading their background in the earlier work. Still, as the two texts form an entirely different setting for discussion, not all the concepts of *L'être et le néant* offer a fruitful view for a study that takes the perspective of the *Critique* as a starting point. In this sense, when considering these two works as partly contemporaneous, neither of them forms a "before" from which changes in the political aspect of the conceptual apparatus could be traced but they both refer to each other.

Reading the *Critique* in a "reversed" order has its equivalent in the relation of these two works. Joseph Catalano refers to Frederic Jameson's remark which indicates that after the reading of the *Critique*, *L'être et le néant* appears different and he considers this perspective "crucial" (Catalano 1986, p. 7). It is indeed crucial, because quite a few of the questions which are present only implicitly in the earlier work, or remain open there, have found their way into the later one through a reformulation. Moreover, certain questions that could not be formulated after *L'être et le néant* can be formulated after the *Critique*. Keeping this in mind *L'être et le néant* can be read in a different light - in a light which stresses less for example the Heideggerian connection and retains from the work the specifically Sartrean tone. As I already mentioned, the question of temporality forms an example here as it has been subject to quite extensive reformulations in the later work even though it was never explicitly brought up there as a thoroughly thematized question by Sartre - on the contrary he refers to *L'être et le néant* as if he had taken its analysis of the question as such. However, in spite of the reformulations, the analysis of temporality in *L'être et le néant* - as it contains the perspective of politicization of temporality - forms an important pole for understanding temporality in the *Critique*. I shall return to this question later in the chapter on temporality (see especially chapter 5.2.1 below).

The question which frames the analysis of the *Critique* from a perspective where the logical story of the text is postulated as fragmentary and in terms of contemporaneity, and where *L'être et le néant* is seen as a pole in certain conceptual constructions and their logic, is the question how Sartre construes his descriptions of the "social reality" in a spread form of the "levels of experience" in order to show how it is produced. The picture he paints us is a picture of the compact



reality of our experience deconstructed into conceptual elements which aim at forming a coherent view into the structures of this reality, into the relations between and within these structures and, first of all, into the agent that both produces them and is produced by them.

In spite of this perspective, Sartre's analysis does not, however, result in a skeleton, in a technical drawing used on a construction site - or in a Léger. It results in a Picasso or a Braque-like painting with a distorted image where the picture can only be visualized through a creative reading of the facets that form the image ("[l]'expérience révélera ce jeu de facettes en tant que le totalisateur est toujours en même temps le totalisé", CRD I, p. 157, see also p. 309, 464n1, 501 and 560). On the one hand it results in a Gothic building with no such facade which could be apprehended from a single viewpoint, but which needs to be formed through reconstruction. On the other hand it results in an image with an undertone of a Malevič or even a Vasarely.

The text of the *Critique* with its advancing descriptions does not easily lend itself to this kind of reading as many of the concepts it uses seem to invite the reader to making conclusions on temporal terms: the "before" and the "after" in the logic of the text seem to form the guiding thread which could take us through it. Yet, the facet-like image offers a view from which these "befores" and "afters" can be questioned and the text read as a constructed whole, a three dimensional picture where the concepts, like the facets or perhaps like the triangles and circles of Malevič, are related to each other in a manner which does not become apparent from the logical story. Hence, for example, the concept of scarcity, a part of the logical rock-bottom of the work, can be seen construed into all the facets of the image, also there where the point of view taken of the picture hides it from sight. This forms an image where the question of the absoluteness or of the relativity of scarcity loses its relevance - present in all the picture it no longer has the role of founding it, but that of limiting it. Seen as a foundation scarcity would imply different perspectives depending on whether it is considered absolute or relative. Considered as a limit it directs the view in both cases indistinctly and posing the question of defining its character in these terms would mean stepping out of the picture painted. It would also mean claiming that scarcity is a fact of a "reality" which lies somewhere behind the picture where it in Sartre's text is a conceptual device for painting the picture - the prolegomena to any future (political) anthropology "here and now" (CRD I, p. 153). In my view this painting metaphor illustrates to a large extent the structure of the *Critique* and its central idea: the task of developing conceptual devices for describing the reality we live in.

The nearly forty years that have passed since the release of the *Critique* have seen shifts in the stress of the framing of the work - to a point that in addition to agree with Aronson who also sees various possibilities for framing it (1987, p. 9), one could almost say that like the city has many tales, the *Critique* has different frameworks for the reader to choose from and they all tell a different story. This is one of them.<sup>4</sup>

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4 On a "contingent story" starting with a conditional "once upon a time..." and ending with an unconditional end which is the beginning of another story see Oakeshott 1991 (1975), p. 105.

## 4.2 Production as a Framework of the *Critique*

The point of departure of this story is a view according to which the whole conceptual apparatus of the *Critique* is construed within the framework of the concept of production. If we think that the project of the *Critique*, after sporadic references to the theme that we can find already in Sartre's earlier works<sup>5</sup>, began to take a more coherent form after Sartre published the three articles of *Les Communistes et la paix* (1952-54) and after Maurice Merleau-Ponty published his *Les Aventures de la dialectique* (1955)<sup>6</sup> we can place the initial formulations of the question of production between these articles and the *Critique*. However, even though Sartre's discussion on the question starts already before the *Critique*, its conceptual point of departure is formulated in it (more precisely, in the *Questions*) as the very nucleus of the view Sartre takes. Hence, unless we take a look at them first, the significance of the earlier formulations may not become apparent.

The formulation of the question in the *Critique* starts with a Marxist thesis which Sartre attributes to Engels who is the principal target of a large part of Sartre's critique (see CRD I, e.g. p. 30, 61, 127, 168-69, 175). It is a question of the thesis on the human being making history on the basis of what has already been made - a thesis with which Sartre entirely agrees (CRD I, e.g. p. 30, 61) but which he starts reformulating through his critique addressed to the "lazy Marxists" (CRD I, p. 86). What he advances is a methodologically oriented critique that takes up various themes through which Sartre approaches the question: existentialism in relation to marxism, dialectic of nature vs. historical materialism, dialectical reason - just to mention a few - and it is through all these themes brought up by Sartre that we have to read his developing of the question of production.<sup>7</sup> The perspective I take here as one of the possible ways of entering

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5 See for example *Qu'est-ce que la littérature*: "J'essaierai quelque jour de décrire cette étrange réalité, l'Histoire, qui n'est ni objective, ni jamais tout à fait subjective, où la dialectique est contestée, pénétrée, corrodée par une sorte d'antidialectique, pourtant dialectique encore." (SIT II, p. 86)

6 Many of the biographers and commentators pass Merleau-Ponty's work with its quite strong criticism of Sartre's articles with a brief mention, but I agree with Ronald Aronson in that the influence of Merleau-Ponty's critique on Sartre's *Critique* has been considerable. For example the stress on polarity in the construction of the concepts in the work can also be seen as an answer to Merleau-Ponty's reading of Sartre's texts in terms of either/ or. For a brief discussion on this see Aronson 1987, p. 9-11, footnotes 26 and 27 and p. 17 where he says that Merleau-Ponty's critique was "a powerful basis for this reflection [leading to the *Critique*]" as well as p. 18, and also McBride (1991, p. 10) who, referring to Aronson, sees "Sartre's later work in this area [...] as a response to the charge of [...] Maurice Merleau-Ponty" (see also *ibid.*, p. 87-88). See also Sartre's *Merleau-Ponty* (1961) and de Beauvoir's *Merleau-Ponty et le pseudo-Sartrisme* (1955).

7 Sartre's *Critique* has largely been seen as his either failed or more or less successful attempt to establish Marxism philosophically (see for example Aronson 1987, p. 9 and Catalano 1986, p. 5n9 and p. 6), but staying within this frame in this context would take us astray. The *Critique* has its roots in the time and the context in which it was written but in order to take a look into the problem at hand here we have to distance it from its original context and distance it also from the use of concepts within Marxism: Sartre discussed with the Marxists through his own terminology and within the perspective of his own purposes (for an example see for example *Les Communistes et la paix*, SIT VI, p. 333-35 and 350-53). In this connection see Palonen (1992) who discusses the perspectives of reading the *Critique* today and also cites Sartre's words from the year 1975 as follows: "Marxist is a word that I used

the *Critique* is the suggestion that the work can be read more in a constructionist sense, or with a constructionist undertone that has been done, and that this aspect of the work can be read in the first place through the concept of production.<sup>8</sup>

In Sartre the use of the concept of production receives a specific meaning. At places, especially on the metaphorical level of the "Machine" and of the "Tool", it evokes an early industrial ambience, or even almost a craftsmanshiplike picture of producing as an art of creation. In other places it takes the Marxist use of language as a starting point for universalizing production in a - often highly - modified sense to cover the construction of the "world" as well as the agent.<sup>9</sup>

The umbrella concept - as far as we can use such a description of Sartre's concepts - under which "production" should be placed, is *faire*. The "les hommes font leur histoire sur la base de conditions réelles antérieures" (CRD I, p. 61) or the "une dialectique que l'homme fait en se faisant et qui le fait en retour" (CRD I, p. 128) indicate the Sartrean view of the human being making her/himself on the basis of what has been made of her/him. However, the *faire*, from the perspective of this present work, does not express to such an extent certain characteristics of Sartre's thinking as the concept of production does. First of all the connection to the Marxists setting is absent from the former concept and, even though one could maintain that the *faire* represents the very Sartrean aspect of the use of concepts, this connection is of importance specifically because it delimits the perspective Sartre takes of the agent in relation to the produced. This aspect cannot be reached from the *faire* as it to quite an extent disregards the role of the "already made" while placing the stress on the "making". Hence it does not evoke as its central perspective the relation of producing and being produced as forms of being related to the produced, but rather lays stress on action or, in other words, the "production" discusses explicitly both "passivity" and "activity" whereas the "making" refers in the first place to "activity". This tendency is present in the *Critique* in spite of the fact that it is in this work that Sartre places greater stress on the aspect of "what has been made of us" while the stress for

a bit lightly then. At that time I considered *Critique* to be Marxist; I was convinced of it. But I have changed my mind since then. Today I think that, in certain areas, the *Critique* is close to Marxism, but it is not a Marxist work." (Schilpp (ed.) 1981, p. 20, cited from Palonen *ibid.*, p. 20. See also Hartmann 1971, p. 44)

- 8 However, even though this aspect can be shown to be present in the *Critique*, the production of "reality" is indeed not expressed in Sartre's texts through any direct or unambiguous formulations. Hence it is legitimate to think that Sartre himself did not understand *produire* or any of the other terms he uses to describe the same question as pushing the implicit constructionist aspect further even though for example his stress on dialectical nominalism points to the contrary.
- 9 For an example of the concept of production which oscillates between a traditional Marxist origin concept and an "extended" use see for example Lefebvre 1968, p. 40-41 and esp. p. 63ff., 1976-78, esp. III, p. 157 and also 1980. Another writer who participated in the discussion at the time of the publication of the *Critique*, Cornelius Castoriadis, discusses the question of production in terms of "creation" in his essays and articles from 1968 to 1975 published as a book in 1978 (e.g. p. 20-21, 230-31, for a discussion on the use of these concepts see p. 222-26, see also 1979). The difference between Sartre's use of the concept of production and that of, for example, Lefebvre's and Castoriadis' is quite obvious. For a view of Sartre's development of the idea of creation and production see CM p. 552ff. For examples of the term "technique" in this connection see the above mentioned and Axelos 1961. For an example of an interpretation of "producing history" in Sartre which fails to see the use of the concept of production and treats the "social" outside this concept see Poulantzas 1965, esp. p. 105-06.

example in *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* (1946) still was on "what we do". Furthermore, the *faire* does not in the same measure as the concept of production entail a view into temporality as it does not bring to light the temporal discrepancy of the "already produced" and of producing.

On the other hand, it is through the relation between these two concepts that the action dimension of the concept of producing is maintained: the *faire* offers a view of the concept of production which makes it impossible to reduce the latter into a concept describing merely a "productive activity" and which maintains the tone of construing the world and the agent. It is from the sentence concerning the making of history that Sartre starts to formulate this "double register" of making and producing, and it is through this he proceeds into specifying what "making history" in his view can be said to mean.

All this is by no means explicitly nor systematically written into the *Critique*, but following Sartre's choice of terms it is clear that there is a difference made between these concepts. It is already rendered evident in the texts preceding the work as the discussion on history and on interiority, exteriority and subject (in terms of class, mostly) starts there. Hence the use of the concept of production here, even though it does not aim at replacing the specificity of the Sartrean *faire*, aims at bringing to the fore the setting where the central conceptual constructions Sartre uses to describe the agent are formulated. It is against the background of the stressing of the role of the exteriority as produced and the interiority as a view of producing that the portrait of the agent is painted in the *Critique* - the *faire* alone would not represent to such an extent the constructionist undertone present in the work.

Seeing the *Critique* from the point of view described above alters considerably the setting for the reading of the *Questions*. It takes the interpretation further away from the traditional Marxism - Existentialism comparison and stresses Sartre's independence as a thinker: he *does* use concepts used by others but modifies them into his own tools. For example, as Traugott König says in his comments on the new German translation of *L'être et le néant*, the concepts Sartre has taken from the German context, in König's case especially from Heidegger, cannot be automatically translated back to German with the words Heidegger used, as they have acquired another meaning in Sartre (see König, 1986, 1991, esp. p. 1084). This is a comment which can be extended: those of Sartre's concepts that he "inherited" from others, were it Kierkegaard, Marx or Freud, cannot be considered to be used by Sartre in the same meaning as the original ones, on the contrary, he practiced quite a creative reading of the texts of others. This opens up a possibility of stressing the reading of how Sartre uses the term production in the *Critique* reformulating it to suit his own purposes. This kind of reading of the production perspective changes in the first place the view of the *Questions* but its effects are not limited there: the *Questions* brings up the basic formulations but the issue covers the entire *Critique* as well as, as I already mentioned, the texts written as a groundwork to it in which numerous examples of formulations related to this question can be found.

When thinking about the theme of production the implicit character - or the can-be-read-from-the-text character that the question takes in many points - should be taken into consideration with the fact that Sartre's choice of terms is by

no means systematic with regard to the question.<sup>10</sup> In addition to this, wherever he gives a definition, it is a temporary one, one that applies to the problem he is discussing from the specific point of view taken at the moment of the discussion. However, one seems to learn more about the question through different formulations from which a reference to production can be traced, than one would from any even well formulated definitions. In the following discussion I shall show - within the delimited perspective of this work - how these formulations are related to different concepts Sartre construes for the purpose of using them as attributes of action and of the agent or as figures which serve for formulating coherent perspectives on the question he is discussing. The perspective of production gives a specific tone to the whole *Critique* and the use of this tone as a background to a study of it brings up both issues and views which are at risk of being lost or overlooked from other perspectives.

### 4.3 The Marxist Vocabulary in the *Critique*

As I already pointed out, Sartre is as ambiguous with the concept of production as with his other concepts. Even though I stressed that the production-perspective takes us further away from a Marxist related reading of the *Critique* and especially of the *Questions* than many other perspectives do, we can still see that there is, no doubt, a Marxist vocabulary present there, formulations which aim at explicitly placing Sartre's thought into the "indépassable horizon" of Marxism (CRD I, p. 87, see also p. 9 and 29). On the other hand, this vocabulary also sheds light on what was the sense in which he postulated this horizon.

Even though it can be legitimately claimed - as does Aronson for whom the third part of *Les Communistes et la paix* contains the only analysis before the *Critique* by Sartre that can be called Marxist (1987, p. 17) - that there are not that many texts by Sartre that take in use the Marxist tradition and hence express serious doubts with regard to a straightforward attribution of all, or even of a considerable part of the categories of the *Critique* to this tradition, it is still evident that a part of Sartre's vocabulary is indeed inherited from the discussion with the Marxists and especially from the critique of the understanding of the question of production in relation to history as well as to the concept of class. In the context of this present work it represents an aspect of discussion which does not hold as central a position in the *Critique* proper as in the earlier texts, and through which another discussion can be traced: the Marxist vocabulary has been used for different purposes by Sartre compared to the Marxists.

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10 The "unsystematic" character of Sartre's use of terms and words does not, however, mean arbitrary. It allows for variations and different formulations as well as for different reference points and views, but my analysis of his use of terms suggests that this cannot be extended to the changing of the logical context where the term in question has been construed. As an example of this one could give the concept of "environment" which is used by Sartre to describe different views into the relation of the agent and "materiality". It is systematically used in the logical context of the interiority - exteriority setting but formulated from different perspectives in relation to nature, to the produced and to the produced as a "milieu" of action of the agent (see CRD I, e.g. p. 166-67, 173-74, 199, 206, 211, 235, 367, 412 and 428-29).

This vocabulary could be described through the legitimizing character it displays: Sartre took part in a discussion where one of the positions he held was that of a thinker who thinks in relation to what others have thought. The history of Sartre's political activity offers several views of the complicated relationship he kept up with the Marxists and of the way this affected his theoretical work. However, this is not an issue in this work and it will suffice to refer the reader to the possibility of finding additional views on the question.<sup>11</sup>

The legitimation character, or the use of what is here called the Marxist vocabulary, already becomes evident from the fact that Sartre quite specifically addresses certain Marxists - such as Claude Lefort and Roger Garaudy - a fact which partly legitimates his participating in the conversation of the time. It can also be seen in Sartre's use of figures such as Marx, Engels and Lukács from the point of view of his own thinking as points of departure for his contribution to the discussion. This does not mean that his discussion in these terms would not have been a "real" one, that Sartre would not have written on the questions he wrote out of his own theoretical interests, but that his texts are read here from what we could perhaps call a strategic viewpoint. The discussions with the Marxists formed a useful horizon for Sartre for developing his views which were not adapted to the audience of the discussion but focused on his own interests.

Hence the legitimation character refers also to Sartre's use of the discussion as a springboard for his own use of the terms: at the outside it should not be impossible to read the *Questions* bracketing the Marxism related discussion and concentrating on the "properly" Sartrean views, as only a part of the text takes the character of the legitimation. However, this cannot be extended to the concept of production, because Sartre's references to Marx and Engels (and to Lukács) are not only a part of this legitimation but they also formulate quite precisely Sartre's point of entering into some of the main questions of the *Critique*.

The concept of production plays in a certain manner a double role: we could say that partly it forms a part of the Marxist vocabulary and only partly stands up as a concept on its own. Examples of this ambiguous status of the concept are abundant in the *Critique*, and especially in the *Questions*. The following citations will show both aspects of the concept - the changes between the two registers are sometimes very striking and even surprising as they can occur even within the same phrase. This can be seen in the first citation where Sartre combines working, i.e. producing things, with the unveiling of the world which is here the moment which defines the human being as a product of her/his own product, i.e. it is the unveiling of the world (as a moment of producing oneself) that in "return" produces the human being as the product of her/his own product. The second one, on the contrary, is a pure reference to producing things, the third, in quite rudimentary terms, to the producing of the human being through work, whereas the others refer in different contexts also to the constructionist undertone present in the work. In the last one Sartre himself refers to distancing himself from the Marxist use of the terms.

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11 Sources for this could be, for example, biographies (Cohen-Solal 1985, Hayman 1986) or commentary literature such as McBride 1991, Aragüés 1995 and to some extent Aronson 1987.

"[L]e travailleur se produit par son travail comme un certain dévoilement du monde qui le caractérise objectivement comme produit de son propre produit." (CRD I, p. 185, see also p. 30n1)

"La *production*, en effet, comme impératif inconditionné c'est la quantité de biens produits en tant qu'ils ont absorbé comme leur moyen inessentiel la force et l'activité des producteurs." (CRD I, p. 349n)

"Il est donc parfaitement exact qu l'homme est le produit de son produit: les structures d'une société qui s'est créée par le travail humain définissent pour chacun une situation objective de départ: la vérité d'un homme c'est la nature de son travail et c'est son salaire." (CRD I, p. 64)<sup>12</sup>

"[L]'objectivation devient la production de l'objet en tant qu'il se pose pour soi; cette fois le produit devient l'homme et comme tel le produit." (CRD I, p. 360)

"[...] le *projet* par lequel Flaubert [...] se constituera [...] comme l'auteur du *Madame Bovary* et comme ce petit-bourgeois qu'il refusait d'être. Ce projet a *un sens*, ce n'est pas la simple négativité, la fuite: par lui l'homme vise la production de soi même dans le monde comme une certaine totalité objective." (CRD I, p. 93)

"L'objectivation devient *autre* parce qu'elle produit son objet dans le libre champ de l'action d'un autre. C'est la liberté qui limite la liberté." (CRD I, p. 361)

"[N]ous pouvons y voir - pour user de la terminologie marxiste - le projet d'arracher l'homme au statut d'altérité qui fait de lui un produit de son produit, pour le transformer à *chaud* et par les pratiques appropriées en *produit du groupe*, c'est-à-dire - tant que le groupe est liberté - *en son propre produit*." (CRD I, p. 639)

As clearly as some of these examples seem to refer to a discussion in perfectly Marxist tones they do not convince a reader who is looking for such formulations in the text that take a specifically Sartrean perspective on the question. However, if we read the *Critique* from this perspective there is present a possibility of confusion between the two different aspects of the concept of production. Sartre's formulations are such that only a careful reading can bring out the aspect of producing this present study focuses on and which in most discussions on Sartre is buried under the prominent Marxism - Existentialism perspective taken of the text - a perspective which efficiently empties the arena of other views and other dividing lines that could be drawn into it, even more efficiently than the division of *L'être et le néant* and the *Critique* in terms of Existentialism or not.<sup>13</sup>

In all, the concept of production has only been discussed in a few Sartre commentaries and even when it has been referred to, the discussion has hardly surpassed the Marxism - Existentialism division corresponding to the settings

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12 This quotation could also serve as a good example of the legitimation character of some of Sartre's formulations. It figures in a context where the discussion is focused on the concept of possibility in quite different terms - this sentence does not, in fact, advance Sartre's argumentation at all and the "worker" discussed here serves as an example or as a mere figure, only.

13 In the closing chapter of his *Sartre: l'incarnation imaginaire* (1996) François Noudelmann refers to the passage from *L'être et le néant* to the *Critique* as a problematic continuity where - para-phrasing Noudelmann - the adaptation of the discourse of the first into certain theses of Marxist inspiration leads to a conceptually adjusted fabric of figures where the images used display the problems of this conceptual arrangement as well as the solutions offered. It is within this general setting that Noudelmann analyses both works from a perspective that leaves behind certain traditional dividing lines and forms a perspective to a certain extent analogic to the one sketched here.

established in the original reception of the work.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4.4 The Marxism - Existentialism Division as the Touchstone of the Original Reception of the *Critique*

The discussion around the *Critique* in the original reception was carried out largely in terms such as Blakeley's, who describes the *Critique* as "a total critique of Marxism-Leninism" (1968, p. 122). His judgement, however, is somewhat rough, as he reads Sartre starting from a division into "Soviet and non-Soviet Marxist philosophers" (ibid.) which scarcely gives credit to Sartre's very nuanced text even if read only within the perspective of Marxism. However, one of the main issues of the reception was the question about Sartre's position in relation to Marxism, which was partly triggered off by Sartre's own definitions of his position as a representative of "Existential ideology" (CRD I, p. 9-10, 18,107).

After the publication of the *Critique* a large number of commentaries were published, but with only a few exceptions the general tone was the same - it was Sartre's point of departure, the making of history and its relation to his critique of Marxism that functioned as the point of focus in the comments. This led to a noticeable neglect of the aspects of the *Critique* that exceeded this setting which in my view Sartre used as a springboard into a discussion with quite a different design.<sup>15</sup> Even the scope of Sartre's critique - for the *Critique* is a far reaching critique not only of Marxism, but also of many of the classical philosophical positions - was to a certain extent overlooked. It was the Marxism - Existentialism division<sup>16</sup> that was focused on, a concise description of which can be found in Lessing:

"It seems clear that the rock-bottom foundation of Sartre's Marxism is his earlier Existentialism rather than the other way round. What Sartre is aiming for is not a new Marxism but a new Existentialism, in fact a Marxist Existentialism." (1966/67, p. 481)

The originality of this comment lies in the change in the perspective it takes on the question as it implicitly problematizes both Marxism and Existentialism in

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14 One of the exceptions to the use of this schematic division could be mentioned. The earlier mentioned book by Aragüés, even though it takes a clearly outspoken Marxist view of the *Critique* and Sartre's posthumous works with a stress on the possibility of a collective subject and an "inalienated society", aims at drawing other kind of dividing lines into the Sartrean scenery. The results are interesting even though one would disagree with the writer's interpretations of Sartre (see Aragüés 1995 and also 1994).

15 For the original reception see for example Patri 1960, Doubrovsky 1961, Dreyfus 1961, Dufrenne 1961, Freund 1961, Lefebvre 1961, Morot-Sir, 1961, Reynaud 1961, De Waelhens 1962, Macciò 1964, Cumming 1965, Desan 1965, Odajnyk 1965, Poulantzas 1965, Stack 1969, Schwartz 1976 (1967), McLeod 1968 and Gervais 1969a, 1969b and 1971. See also Aron 1973, Chiodi 1976 and Anderson 1979.

16 This is a division that was often referred to in terms of marriage - in terms of William Blake's Marriage of Heaven and Hell one would think (see for example Gervais 1969b, p. 273 citing Morot-Sir 1961, Lessing 1966/67, p. 461, 462, Cranston 1972/73 p. 183 and Kiernan 1981). It is also a division beyond which, one could speculate, the change of the name from the original *Existentialisme et marxisme* into *Questions de méthode* referred.



relation to Sartre, while most of the commentators adopted a view of one of them as a basis for their discussion. Lessing also discusses in this context the concept of freedom and takes a view of production and of bad faith (*ibid.*, p. 481-82) through a sketch drawn with only a few lines evoking a framework of history and of politics which shows that the writer was one of the few to step outside the rigid division of the original reception.<sup>17</sup> Another exception to the general reading is an article by Hermann Wein which, in spite of the mainstream overall tone takes a slightly different point of view on the question by discussing it in terms of "more-than-theoretical objectivity of *action* and political interaction", and of subjectivity (1968, p. 8).

Within this perspective the discussion was also centered much around the methodological questions from the point of view of dialectics (on this formulation of the problem, see for example Sartre, Garaudy, Hyppolite, Vigier 1962 and Stack 1969/70).<sup>18</sup> This discussion displayed nonetheless to quite an extent a repetition of the setting which Sartre brought up in the *Questions*: dialectical vs. historical materialism - the commentators failed on many occasions to see Sartre's work reaching further than the establishing of a "correct" dialectical method stressing the historical viewpoint.<sup>19</sup>

To a certain extent the focus of the original reception of the *Critique* can be traced back to the discussion around Sartre's earlier texts on Marxism (for example *Matérialisme et Révolution*, 1946) with Marxists such as Roger Garaudy, Pierre Naville and Henri Lefebvre (see Mc Bride 1991, Burnier 1966, Gervais 1969b, 1971, Garaudy 1969 (1959), Merleau-Ponty 1955 and even Lefebvre 1949) and even to other texts written at the same time such as *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, *Il nous faut la paix pour refaire le monde* (1948), the posthumous *Un article de 1949* and also *Entretiens sur la politique* (1949) which all, besides other views, contain an attempt somewhat out of the overall profile of Sartre's of establishing the possibility of a guiding positive solution to the problems he was discussing.<sup>20</sup> Roughly

17 Other formulations given on the division were for example "Jean-Paul Sartre, the most significant revisionist" (Wein 1968, p. 9) and "Der Marxismus ist für Sartre die einzig gültige Deutung der Geschichte" (Hartmann 1962, p. 301).

18 See also Sartre's letter to Roger Garaudy (probably from 1959, see Contat and Rybalka 1970, p. 333) where Sartre lays bare his view of the *Questions de méthode*: "Comprenons-nous: le marxisme, comme cadre formel de toute pensée philosophique d'aujourd'hui est indépas-sable. J'entends par marxisme le matérialisme historique qui suppose une dialectique interne de l'histoire et non le matérialisme dialectique, si l'on entend par là cette songerie méta-physique qui croirait découvrir une dialectique de la Nature." (Garaudy 1969, p. 112)

19 On Sartre and the question of history in the original reception see for example Lichtheim 1963/64 and Hincker 1966.

20 An example of this "search" for a possibility of a positive solution can be seen in the above mentioned posthumously published article: "La seule attitude qu'une France vraiment forte pouvait prendre, c'eût été c'est peut-être encore de se tourner vers Ho Chi Minh et de lui dire: "le gouvernement français ne veut pas continuer une guerre contre la démocratie et contre une résistance nationale; il est temps de reprendre les négociations"." (*Un article* p. 12) Another short example could be taken from the *Entretiens*: "A partir du moment où un problème particulier d'entreprise - par exemple un problème d'adéquation du salaire au prix de la vie - se manifeste devant les intéressés comme susceptible de recevoir une solution dans le seul cadre des comités de gestion et d'une politique économique générale contrôlée par la classe ouvrière elle-même, à partir de ce moment-là nous avons accompli un progrès dans l'émancipation." (EPol p. 31) See also Mészáros who calls the years 1946-50 Sartre's "Search for Politics in the Key of Morals" (1979, p. 78).

this turned into a discussion between Marxism and Existentialism as to which was to give the positive solution. Sartre himself did not take this line of thinking much further - the texts from the 50's display a clearly different character - but this tone was to a certain extent maintained within the discussion in the reception of the *Critique*.

Sartre himself takes a position on this in his *Réponse à Pierre Naville* (1956) (SIT VII, esp. p. 129-35) where the difference in perspective compared to the *Critique* is visible in his discussion of the relation between Existentialism and Marxism: even though Sartre says here, too, that “le marxisme est le climat de nos idées” (ibid., p. 130), he focuses on the dialectical method (ibid., p. 133) and does not bring up the questions of history or production. The question of the dialectical method was, as I already referred to, repeated and amplified in the *Questions* but it was done in a different frame. The shift that can be traced here in Sartre’s frame and focus does not, however, explain the extent of the “misreading” of the *Critique* at the time: there was a perspective missing, and even Sartre himself, in his replies to his critics was to a certain extent caught into the same basic configuring of the discussion.<sup>21</sup>

In all, from the point of view of this present study it seems evident that the original reception to a certain extent misread and simplified the very basis of Sartre’s way of entering the questions he discusses in the *Critique* and hence also the very premises of Sartre’s deep-going attempt of politicizing the description of “social reality”. In the numberless commentaries on the *Critique* one cannot find extensive discussions of this primary setting of Sartre’s way of formulating his starting point and his problems in terms of history and production. The central position that production takes as a framework in Sartre’s text was not discussed then, and it has not been discussed in detail by later commentators, either. Several commentators have left it out entirely or almost entirely.<sup>22</sup> Hence we cannot claim

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21 A similar setting was to certain extent repeated in Sartre’s discussions with the structuralists, mainly through his interviews in the middle of the 60’s. Sartre seems to some extent to have lacked adequate formulations for bringing up the differences between the perspectives and views he was criticising and his own: he did not quite reach the target. It was especially the discussions with the structuralists that lead some commentators to think that Sartre was no longer following the contemporary development of philosophy (see for example Cohen-Solal 1985, p. 574-75).

22 Amongst the general introductions to the *Critique* and to Sartre’s political theory see for example McBride 1991 where the index refers to production only as “Production, means of” (p. 244), and also Catalano (1986) and Aronson (1987) in whose index the word production does not figure at all. A slightly older example is Esbern Krause-Jensen (1979) who in his detailed analysis of the *Critique* does not discuss the question. Flynn (1986) does not include the term in his index nor in his typology of the mediations of the *Critique*, either. One could perhaps speculate whether Sartre’s critique toward the “simplistes du marxisme” (CRD I, p. 373) has influenced the overlooking of the concept and to refer to a passage where he brings this up: “Ce ne sont pas les problèmes d’organisation et de division du travail qui ont fait que des rapports se soient établis entre ces objets d’abord séparés, les hommes. [...] sauter l’étape abstraite de la relation humaine et à nous établir tout de suite dans le monde, cher au marxisme, des forces productrices, du mode et des rapports de production, nous risquerions de donner raison [...] à l’atomisme du libéralisme et de la rationalité analytique. [...] la séparation absolue réside précisément en ceci que chaque individu subit dans l’extériorité radicale le statut historique de ses relations aux autres ou - ce qui revient au même mais que dupe les marxistes peu exigeants - que les individus en tant que produits de leur propre produit [...] instituent des rapports entre eux (à partir de ceux qu’ont établis les générations antérieures, de leur constitution propre et

that it would be one of the established figures for reading Sartre but a few examples can be given.

#### 4.5 Reading Production in Sartre

Steve Hendley, in his *Reason and Relativism. A Sartrean Investigation* (1991), is one of the few writers who takes production as a perspective on Sartre even though he does not discuss the concept as such (the word "production" is not listed in the index of his book). He relates Sartre to Foucault and sees that certain problems in Foucault's conceptual constructions, especially concerning power, freedom and knowledge could be avoided by using Sartre's concept of the practico-inert (see *ibid.*, p. 26, 54, 66, 75). Hendley's view of the question can be summarized into two critical statements he addresses to Foucault:

"Practices are still grasped solely as events [...]. Practice, discernable only in its simple material anonymity, is a given; a historical product entering into empirical relations with other historical products. The practical *production* of history, however, is lost." (*ibid.*, p. 53)

"[W]e look in vain for anything like a positive articulation of free, productive action. [...] As power implies freedom, it also implies an account of action adequate to that freedom; an account of autonomy that is proper to practice in general, and our epistemic practices in particular, consistent with their heteronomous relation to power. For such an account it is necessary to turn to Sartre and his understanding of praxis as totalization." (*ibid.*, p. 54)

In brief, Hendley considers production ("practical *production* of history") as the perspective that marks the difference between Sartre and Foucault. He relates production to freedom and to "praxis as totalization", which, indeed, refer to the key elements of Sartre's concept of production: action, agent, interiority and exteriority, lived experience (*le vécu*) and temporality - and also, if we want to make a reference to a somewhat wider context, to project.

Even though Hendley brings up the importance of production in the *Critique* by indicating for example that the self is produced (*ibid.*, p. 58, see also p. 55), that reason is produced (*ibid.*, p. 161-62), that interpretations, significations, contexts and knowledge are produced (*ibid.*, p. 60, p. 115-16) and that "man" is produced (*ibid.*, p. 195-98), and also refers to "construction" (*ibid.*, p. 145), he nevertheless at times moves rather close to the echoes of an interpretation within certain Marxist terms and understanding, and stays to some extent within the terms that Sartre uses for legitimating his discussion with the Marxists. Sometimes he also seems to remain trapped within the vocabulary of the *Critique* (something no Sartre scholar can be certain to avoid).<sup>23</sup>

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des forces et ur-gences de l'époque)." (CRD I, p. 179-80)

23 See for example *ibid.*, p. 20 where Hendley describes praxis as material labor. The concept of labor, or work in Sartre is, however, used by Hendley without taking in consideration the specific meaning Sartre gives to it. For him it is not the beginning of history: "Et nous ne prétendons nullement avoir découvert ici le moment historiquement premier de la

Apart from Hendley there are some other commentators outside the original reception who refer to production in various contexts. We could mention François Noudelmann (1996) who discusses the concept of incarnation in a manner from which one could read an ambience related, though indirectly and fragmentarily, to the concept of production. In the definition of the image as having corporality (ibid., p. 11) a reader whose perspective is that of production can trace connotations that lead to an idea of a produced image playing a central role in the context of knowledge through the use of concepts, signs and symbols. Read from this perspective Noudelmann seems to postulate the relation of incarnation and image as a relation of producing - being produced (see e.g. p. 30-33, 82ff., 96).<sup>24</sup>

Also Stone and Bowman mention the concept of production in relation to the production of values (1991a, see e.g. p. 61, 63, 70). It is also interesting to note here that István Mészáros on the last pages of his *The Work of Sartre. Volume I Search for Freedom* (1979) postulates production as the very perspective which is missing from *L'être et le néant* and which Sartre later included in his theories, even though Mészáros on these pages is not quite explicit on the direction of his view - he refers both to work and "productive relations" and to "the production of the world" (p. 242-43). However, the general tendency is to use the concept without problematizing it as a concept or with regard to the status it holds in Sartre's text. In order to problematize the question a closer look into Sartre's formulations is required.

#### 4.6 Sartre Versus Claude Lefort

Production, in the sense it was often understood in the immediate reception of the *Critique* and also by some later commentators merely as the producing of commodities and of the relations of production, is not in the focus of Sartre's thinking. He sees this constellation as too limited and mechanistic and reformulates it to suit his own conceptual apparatus. The difference between the two views on production could be illustrated by Sartre's concept of freedom which gains an additional aspect from this point of view. The two aspects of the "Kingdom of Ends" can be put forward through relating them to production and freedom: one interpretation, present at moments in the *Critique*, points to Sartre's understanding of freedom as something that begins beyond the material production of life (see CRD I, p. 32 and Lessing 1966/67, p. 482) and another, the one in line with the

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dialectique: ce que nous avons voulu montrer c'est que notre expérience la plus quotidienne - qui est sûrement celle du travail - prise à son niveau le plus abstrait - celui de l'action de l'individu isolé - nous révèle immédiatement le caractère dialectique de l'action." (CRD I, p. 174).

24 Noudelmann does not, however, push this point further but takes a view that leads to a discussion on the relations of the reflected - unreflected in consciousness and the reality - irreality dimensions of the image. From this he arrives at quite an interesting discussion on the concepts Sartre uses - a discussion which, in my view however, suffers slightly from a categorization which often uses conceptual poles as opposites (for example empty - full, inertia - movement, see ibid., p. 117 and also p. 114) and postulates a perspective of "reconciliation" between conscience and reality (see e.g. p. 115).

interpretation of this present study, refers to freedom as a space of action within the process of producing and being produced.

Furthermore, as the limited discussion of his concept of production has not taken up the conceptual framework the concept implies nor Sartre's discussion of such concepts as inertia, the agent and being situated in relation to a produced situation which as such is already a politically described situation, another question of importance has remained without further attention. This is a question concerning the relation between *L'être et le néant* and the *Critique*. Seen from this perspective, there is an important difference between these two works: in the former the situation is discovered, in the latter it is produced in action.

As already indicated, the reformulation of the concept of production does not only take place in the *Critique* but begins already before it. In *Les Communistes et la paix*, *Réponse à Pierre Naville* and *Le fantôme de Staline* (1956-57) the concept is already present but remains, however, largely unproblematized and stays clearly in the background compared to the *Réponse à Claude Lefort* (1953) where Sartre explicitly discusses it when answering Lefort's critique of his *Les Communistes et la paix*. In his article *Le marxisme de Sartre* (1953) Lefort, amongst other things, criticizes Sartre of misunderstanding both the role of the producer in (industrial) production, which for him is essential, and of placing central importance on the concept of praxis. For Lefort the concept of production in Sartre's text plays "le rôle que joue le corps dans une philosophie spiritualiste, un instrument d'incarnation." (p. 1547, see also p. 1548-49) From this perspective Sartre's answer to Lefort's critique is a key text without which entering the theme in the *Critique* may result in difficulties and its significance to the discussion may remain overlooked. In this text Sartre, while in his turn criticizing Lefort, exposes in a concise form many of the central questions to which he seeks answers in the *Critique* although in a perspective which has developed much beyond these first formulations of the theme.

Sartre opposes a simplistic reading of the Marxist categories of production as early as in his *Les Communistes et la Paix* (see SIT VI, e.g. p. 202). He opposes a view according to which it is "la classe qui produit les hommes et non les hommes qui la produisent" (ibid., p. 215) hence stating his initial argument in the discussion. It is against this background that Sartre starts reformulating the question of the relation between nature and the produced.<sup>25</sup> However, it is not a question here of opposing Nature to Non-nature, what Sartre does here is to oppose the produced as a characteristic of the world to understanding social constructions as natural. This is an opposition that can be illustrated as that which is revealed in the counterposing of, for example, the following terms: "l'ordre culturel" and "l'ordre naturel", "forces "naturelles" and "forces "machinées", "instrument construit" and "relations "naturelles"" (CRD I, p. 96, 369, 451). However, as we shall later see (see p. 161, 166ff. below), the concept of nature forms an important part of Sartre's description of the space of action in the *Critique* where it is not only discussed through these oppositions, but is also used as a limit concept for

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25 There is a discussion in these lines already in *Matérialisme et Révolution* (see e.g. p. 185ff.) even though Sartre's use of the Marxist vocabulary here is not as much colored with his own perspectives as later (e.g. p. 178, 187).

describing the relation of the produced and the producer within the interior - exterior setting.

This question in the Lefort-text is discussed in somewhat less elaborated terms than in the *Critique* as it forms only the basic setting for the configuration of the question, or, so to say, only points to the direction Sartre is taking. Opposing nature (natural) to the produced serves Sartre for construing other concepts which, in their turn, construe a wider critical perspective than merely that of putting a "natural state" in question. Hence for example the redefining of the division between these two expressed by Sartre in *Les Communistes et la paix* as: "[n]on, la solitude de l'ouvrier ne vient pas de la nature; elle est *produite*" (SIT VI, p. 243) already receives more attributes in his *Réponse à Claude Lefort*:

"L'inertie des masses, ai-je dit que c'était leur statut naturel? Les masses ne sont pas naturelles: elles ressemblent à la Nature mais on les fait; l'extériorité des particules qui les compose est produite [...]" (SIT VII, p. 8).

In this quotation the nature - production relation is not the only question problematized nor the only one anticipating the future conceptual constructions of the *Critique*. The concept of exteriority understood as produced also offers an early view of the work, more specifically of the themes of interiority, exteriority and subjectivity as discussed in the *Critique* and also later on in Sartre's lecture on Marxism and subjectivity, to which I shall return in more detail later (see chapter 6.1.5.5 below).

Another important conceptual derivation from this setting can be traced through the question of the product. From an apparently simple setting Sartre develops one of the most complex concepts in the *Critique*, namely that of the practico-inert. We can take a look at it through the way Sartre in the same text criticizes Lefort for his conception of production by contrasting a worker producing her/himself through producing, with what he thinks Lefort is referring to, namely a worker as a producer of *products* within a system which defines her/him. For Sartre it is Engels who is speaking through Lefort here, and he comments: "Engels [...] nous montre les hommes produits par le système sans nous faire voir le système produit par les hommes" (SIT VII, p. 14-15). In other words, Sartre is here placing the stress on the point of view of the agent as an actor producing and being produced in contrast to speaking about the agent in a simple relation to the "results" of producing, to the product were it question of products as produced things or of the human being as a product. Sartre refers to this already in his *Matérialisme et Révolution* and repeats it in the *Critique*:

"Mais le matérialiste n'admet pas que le monde soit le produit de notre activité constituante: bien au contraire c'est nous qui sommes à ses yeux le produit de l'univers." (SIT III, p. 142)<sup>26</sup>

"[L]'homme [...] est à la fois le produit de son propre produit et un agent historique qui ne peut en aucun cas passer pour un produit." (CRD I, p. 61)

"De même, si le rapport humain n'est qu'un produit, il est réifié par essence et l'on ne comprend même plus ce que pourrait bien être sa réification." (CRD I, p. 180)

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26 This citation shows the perspective Sartre stresses: the one of producing; the aspect of being produced present in the *Critique* as the following citation shows, is not yet expressly present here.

For Sartre this also means that Lefort links this “producing a product” to an inevitable, automatic process of liberation (or a “finalisme honteux”, SIT VII, p. 12): “il rapproche ineluctablement l’heure de sa délivrance.” (SIT VII, p. 17). Here Sartre takes the whole problematic around the concepts of producing, of produced and of product out of the perspective of the “realm of freedom” as well as that of emancipation<sup>27</sup> which both refer to a setting Sartre rejected in order to politicize the scenery which opens from the standpoint of the agent as both producing and being produced.

Furthermore for Sartre “[l]’ouvrier se produit en produisant” and “produit de son propre produit” do not mean “[i]l [the worker] se produit en produisant son produit” (SIT VII, p. 12, 18, 17) because this would mean that the worker would not have an “outside” (*dehors*). Through the figure of the “outside” he heavily criticizes Lefort of reducing the working class to mere subjective experience and of separating subject, object and the Other, and contrasts this with his view of interiorizing exteriority and of subjectivity (see SIT VII, p. 22, 23). He also contrasts it in terms of experience:

“Mais je voulais, contre votre schématisme, contre votre fausse rigueur, contre vos conclusions doctorales et simplistes (le produit manufacturé requiert coopération des travailleurs *donc* les travailleurs intégreront la coopération à leur expérience subjective) montrer qu’une expérience est une relation vivante et agissante à Tout, d’où résulte que chaque moment s’en présente comme une ensemble brouillé de significations et d’actions.” (SIT VII, p. 32)

Experience for Sartre cannot be construed on the kind of divisions and systematics that Lefort, according to Sartre, maintains when conducting his discussion in terms of the subjective experience of the working class. For Sartre, Lefort can speak about the subjective experience only “si vous êtes Hegel et elle [the subjective experience] l’esprit” (SIT VII, p. 22, see also p. 21). Experience is not transparent, it is not its own interpretation (“l’expérience-qui-comporte-sa-propre-interpretation”, SIT VII, p. 33), but it is diffuse, experienced, but not known. Thematising the relation between experience and situation as not reducible to knowledge Sartre addresses Lefort as follows: “[m]ais vous ne voulez pas du tout qu’on vous situe: vous perdriez le Savoir.” (SIT VII, p. 34) The social structures are experienced “dans une indifférentiation première” (SIT VII, p. 33) and the world is necessarily opaque: “le réel est opaque et d’approche difficile; et s’il est tel, c’est que nous sommes situés.” (ibid.)

Experience forms here for Sartre another conceptual help-device with which he construes his views on producing and being produced: experience, excluding the dimension of knowledge as its basic attribute, means being situated, the human being is a temporal being, that is, a project in a situation. Within the perspective of producing it is the indifferentiated, non-interpreted and opaque

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27 There are, at places, in the *Critique* and in the earlier texts comments referring to “liberation” or to the “liberation of the working class” (see e.g. CM p. 174, SIT III, p. 172, SIT VII, p. 12, 13, 16, CRD I, p. 16, 57, 654, 660, 678), but these comments do not establish any coherent perspective of emancipation that Sartre would have construed and maintained.

experience which displays our being situated. And for Sartre this situatedness as experience has very definite characteristics here: it is a political space, a space where human passions enter on the scene, where struggles are fought, won and lost:

"J'y suis: ce qui manque, c'est la lutte des classes. Puisque le bourgeois n'est [for Lefort] qu'un des haut-parleurs du capitalisme, on ne saurait lutter contre lui, parer ses coups, déjouer ses ruses, esquiver, feinter, avancer ni rompre; on ne risque ni la défaite ni la victoire." (SIT VII, p. 15).

"Votre prolétariat a le droit de progresser sans cesse: il n'a pas le droit de se tromper, d'ignorer, de faillir; bref, de pâtir." (SIT VII, p. 35)

"Agir rapproche, intègre, pâtir désagrège." (SIT VII, p. 8)

"Car ce n'est rien [...] si vous ne lui donnez en même temps la *passion*, c'est-à-dire la possibilité de subir, de pâtir, celle de mourir." (SIT VII, p. 57)

All these formulations describe the political character of the situated experience, the space where politics not only is possible, but which arises as the very place where it forms an inseparable aspect of action, where the agent is displayed as a political agent. Furthermore, in this constellation the situated experience is a produced space where nothing is evident, nor clear for the producers who produce and are being produced, there are no guaranties: "[r]ien n'est élucidé, il n'y a pas de garanties" (SIT VII, p. 33) - it is the space where the contingent forms a perspective on action.

With this discussion Sartre brings in the very central concepts later developed in the *Critique*, those of exteriority, interiority, subjectivity and temporality - all in relation to the setting where production is rejected as the production of a product. Yet, what Sartre is criticizing here is not merely the discussing of production in terms of a worker producing "goods", the term "product" acquires a wider meaning in Sartre.

Henri Lefebvre, in his *Une pensée devenu monde* (1980) which summarizes his earlier views as well as introduces certain new aspects, discusses production in terms of a product and in terms of an *œuvre* with attributes homogenous and different, respectively. Moreover he construes an analogy on the one hand between the product and nature, and on the other between *œuvre* and an artefact (ibid., p. 152). This is a typical division referring to the concept of creation used in the discussion around the time of the publication of the *Critique* to signify production as understood apart from the Marxist terms of forces and mode of production. Sartre's use of the term of production is related to this discussion, but its specificity lies in that it refuses to discuss the "product" as an end-product and hence surpasses the division between these different "forms" of producing postulated by Lefebvre. This offers Sartre the possibility of stressing the agent's point of view instead of a view starting from the difference between the "products". This does not, however, mean that in Sartre the "product" which in Lefebvre forms the organizing principle of the politically produced space (see ibid., p. 152-53, 1968, e.g. p. 372-73 and also 1976-78) would not be understood as political but that the perspective is taken from the pole of producing instead of



that of the produced.<sup>28</sup>

The refusal of the product as a primary point of view in Sartre expresses the refusal of understanding action (as well as the producing of the world) in terms of a concept which refers to finiteness. For him a product is something that is finished or "ready", a concept which forms a wall across which the circular character of producing cannot be established. His stress on experience and on being situated form the perspectives within which the stress is laid even more clearly on producing seen in terms of action.

In this setting the stress laid on the situatedness of the agent offers a perspective on production in terms different from those taken through the produced product, as the agent, seen as the producer is postulated at the same time also as being produced in a situation which is postulated as being produced as well. This is where the constructivist undertone referred to earlier is displayed. What Sartre postulates is a setting which is seen from the point of view of producing and where any view introducing the produced, the natural or the fabricated, immobile, finite product is excluded in favor of a view taken in terms of action construing both the situation and the agent. Moreover, the constructed characteristic of the situation and of the agent brings in the very Sartrean perspective of *is* and *is-not* - the setting forms a limit-situation where the agent cannot be seen uniquely as a producer nor as a product, but as a player of these two conditions within the impossibility of ever entirely becoming either and the impossibility of reaching this condition as transparent within experience. In this sense, this perspective forwards production as one of the ways of expressing the agent's political condition of being condemned to freedom.

Furthermore, as the aspect of being produced, both with regard to the agent and to the situation, can for Sartre be seen only through the stressing of the aspect of producing, he sees an entire perspective lacking in Lefort: the agent is lost. To this he adds another perspective that Lefort misses, namely that of the inert, which for him plays a central role in the being produced as it introduces the "inhuman" into the relations between the agents and hence construes the Other as an adversary and brings in the perspective of struggle (see SIT VII, p. 35, 57-58, 60, 73-74, 81). These are the perspectives within which Sartre proceeds to the setting of the *Critique*, to stressing the role of the practico-inert, the already-produced, as a moment in the relation of producing and of being produced where neither of the poles (the agent - the (produced) practico-inert) can serve as a unique point of reference. From a perspective taken on the agent as *is - is-not*, and within a perspective of movement understood politically as a possibility of change, no such fixed point of reference can be established.

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28 Sartre's view here points in an entirely different direction from that later given for example by Baudrillard in his "*objet*" (see 1983) or by Haug in his "*Warenästhetik*" (see 1979, 1980).

#### 4.7 The *Critique* Revisited: Anthropology, Production and the Agent

The question of production was discussed by Sartre in texts written before the *Critique*, but it is in this work we can read how he further develops the concept. Even though in the *Questions* he repeats the overall setting of his critique of the concept of production, he does not pose the question explicitly and in so many words as a problem of “producing”. Instead, he poses it in the first place as a problem of history: the human beings make history on the basis of what has been made before. This stress in the perspective remains throughout the *Critique* and it can be seen for example in Sartre’s choice of terminology as he is much more systematic with regard to the terminology concerning history than with the one concerning production. Preparing grounds for a description of history is one of his outspoken objectives in the first volume of the *Critique*, whereas production forms merely a framework for his discussion. However, in spite of the way the *Critique* presents these questions, production forms a major background configuration to Sartre’s developing of the concepts in the first volume and also in the second one, even though history is there even more clearly present than in the first one.

This apparent contradiction supports the view that Sartre himself did not think of production as one of the central perspectives of his work, although he, through his numerous formulations and the reservations he makes in the text, seems to aim at keeping the reader from the “lazy Marxist” (CRD I, p. 86) reading, and within his interpretation of production. From the perspective of this present study the problem of One History which Sartre poses does not form a central frame for discussion. It will, however, later on (see chapter 5.2.3 below), be questioned from within the Sartrean framework. Instead, it is the perspective of producing which offers itself as an entrance point to the text of the *Critique*. These two perspectives are not entirely alternative ones in the *Critique* because Sartre implicitly discusses history in terms of production on many occasions.<sup>29</sup> However, as it is with the concept of One History that Sartre encounters problems, production offers a view from which some of these problems can be indicated. Hence, production will here be interpreted as a concept which serves for establishing a perspective within which the other concepts of the work can be discussed. It also serves as a reference point to Sartre’s discussions throughout the text - but especially in the part leading to the discussion of the produced.

In the *Critique* production is a help-device for construing what Sartre in the earlier texts approaches through the concept of class as a part of his discussion with the Marxists. As we have seen, in the texts before the *Critique* he discusses the question of the class in terms of subjectivity, objectivity and of struggle,

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29 See CRD I, for example p. 180 where Sartre points out that his formal approach to his subject matter aims at bringing forth the view that history is “made”: “[n]otre formalisme [...] consiste simplement à rappeler que l’homme fait l’Histoire dans l’exacte mesure où elle le fait.” Here also, it is Sartre’s conception of production which lies behind the idea of “making” history and being “made” by it.

failures, mistakes, victories and passion and through these refers to experience. Later on, in the *Critique*, he expands his discussion more explicitly to all social structures, further away from the class-perspective which served him as a way of entering the question in the first place. Furthermore, in the *Critique* production serves as a help-device for elucidating different "levels of experience" in the structural frame of the story and the relations construed within this frame. The world as produced is the perspective to which Sartre relates the ideas of change and of situated freedom - with a stress on the agent who produces, is being produced and who changes the world.<sup>30</sup> In all, production is a concept through which Sartre politicizes the whole setting he construes for his anthropology.

However, the perspective of production, as it discusses the position of the agent in relation to the produced and the agent as a primary point of view on production as well as on the produced, implies the presence of another perspective in the *Critique*, namely that of an anthropology where the main issue is the question about the human being. For Sartre it is the concrete human being that forms the unquestionable point of departure for his anthropology and this is a view that is carried through the entire *Critique*, where the dialectical reason and the concrete individual form the poles of one of the relations where the problems brought up in the work are discussed.

"[L]'anthropologie restera un amas confus de connaissances empiriques, d'inductions positivistes et d'interprétations totalisantes, tant que nous n'aurons pas établi la légitimité de la Raison dialectique, c'est-à-dire tant que nous n'aurons pas acquis le droit d'étudier un homme, un groupe d'hommes ou un objet humain dans la totalité synthétique de ses significations et de ses références à la totalisation en cours, tant que nous n'aurons pas établi que toute connaissance partielle ou isolée de ces hommes ou de leurs produits doit se dépasser vers la totalité ou se réduire à une erreur par incomplétude. Notre tentative sera donc *critique* en ce qu'elle essaiera de déterminer la validité et les limites de la Raison dialectique [...]" (CRD I, p. 10-11)

It is within this relation of the concrete individual and reason, which forms the limits of our knowledge of the human being, that Sartre anchors his method and hence introduces the anthropological perspective as the most immediate background to his discussions.

"Et, finalement, c'est *une* question que je pose. Une seule: avons-nous aujourd'hui les moyens de constituer une anthropologie structurelle et historique?" (CRD I, p. 9).

For Sartre "le fait humain" has to be understood as lived and produced, it cannot be reduced to abstract knowledge nor described through "son ossature abstraite d'universalité" (CRD I, p. 58, see also p. 30n1 and p. 103n1). In accordance with his view on production, Sartre interprets the world through the human being and not vice versa. This makes the *Critique* an anthropological work where the direc-

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30 See for example the interview on structuralism where Sartre still stresses his perspective: "[L]'essentiel n'est pas ce qu'on a fait de l'homme, mais *ce qu'il fait de ce qu'on a fait de lui.*" (1966, p. 95) or the other pole as expressed in the *Critique*: "ce n'est plus le moment positif où l'on *fait* mais le moment négatif où l'on est produit dans la passivité par ce que l'ensemble pratico-inerte a fait de ce qu'on vient de faire." (CRD I, p. 373).

tion of inquiry is that of starting from the question of what can we know about the human being today as both the producer and the produced.

As the point of departure here is the concrete the human being and as one of Sartre's methodological objectives in the *Critique* is the reconstruction of the "social ensembles" which form the frame for production, the aim of his progressive-regressive method is to carry out this task in such a way that the human being which is lost when considering production through the produced object is rescued<sup>31</sup> - in contrast to the Marxism which he criticizes:

"[E]xistentialisme et marxisme visent le même objet mais le second a résorbé l'homme dans l'idée et le premier le cherche partout où il est, à son travail, chez lui, dans la rue." (CRD I, p. 28, see also e.g. p. 107)<sup>32</sup>

"[I]l n'y a que des hommes et des relations réelles entre les hommes (pour Merleau-Ponty j'ajoute: des choses aussi et des animaux, etc.), nous voulons seulement dire que le support des objets collectifs doit être cherché dans l'activité concrète des individus [...]" (CRD I, p. 55)

"[N]on pas de rejeter le marxisme au nom d'une troisième voie ou d'un humanisme idéaliste mais de reconquérir l'homme à l'intérieur du marxisme. [...] [N]os exemples ont révélé, au cœur de cette philosophie, l'emplacement vide d'une anthropologie concrète." (CRD I, p. 59)

"[L]e marxisme concret doit approfondir les hommes réels et non les dissoudre dans un bain d'acide sulfurique." (CRD I, p. 37, see also p. 109, 110)

The perspective of structural anthropology follows the logic of the analysis of the "practical ensembles" through the "levels of experience". However, a configuration of the perspective of reading<sup>33</sup> from the point of view of considering production as a framework for the *Critique* shifts the focus to the conceptual constructions through which Sartre describes this object of knowledge, the human being. This takes us to discussing the agent in more specific terms.

The question of the human being placed in the world is the point from where Sartre first approaches the question of the politicization of the agent. A Flaubert, a Valéry, a Robespierre or a Bonaparte are not products of hazard (see e.g. CRD I, p. 43-44, 80, 86-89), but actors who define and are defined by the setting of their life, who play the political comedy (see CRD I, p. 39) and whose needs and projects design political action.

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31 Lucien Sève, in his Marxist oriented critique of Sartre's *Critique* considers the method as one of the most central aspects in it (1961, p. 86). But Sève's long and detailed critique repeats also the characteristics of the immediate reception of the *Critique*: the reading of it from either pro or contra marxist setting and hence the overlooking of many of the aspects, ideas and perspectives Sartre wrote in this work. See also Silverman 1978, p. 161.

32 Sartre uses the same expression a couple of years later in his text on morals for the conference at the Istituto Gramsci in Rome: "Si la morale ne se définit pas au niveau de l'homme social, dans son travail, dans la rue ou chez lui, on tombe dans une littérature parasitaire qui s'explique sans difficulté par la condition du moraliste." (DL p. 735)

33 An interesting discussion on the grounds of an interpretation which requires conceptual "rethinking" can be found in Anthony P. Cohen's *Self Consciousness. An Alternative Anthropology of Identity* (1994) in the chapter on the concept of self (The neglected self, p. 1-22). The book, and especially this article, provided me with a certain new insights with regard to Sartre's position as a writer of "an anthropology" in the *Critique*. Interesting parallels can be drawn from Cohen's concern for the reading of the self as a conceptual tool for understanding social relations to Sartre's conceptual construction of the agent as a perspective on relations within action.

“[L]’ambiguïté de l’action politique et sociale résulte, la plupart du temps, de contradictions profondes entre les besoins, les mobiles d’acte, le projet immédiat d’une part - et d’autre part les appareils collectifs du champ social, c’est-à-dire les instruments de la *praxis*.” (CRD I, p. 77)

#### 4.8 Excursion into the Vocabulary of the *Critique*

At this point it may be useful to illustrate the argument forwarded that the theme of production is present in the *Critique* also where the term production is not used. Thinking of Sartre’s well-known strategy of using a variety of expressions in his descriptions of a phenomenon, it is not surprising that the list of such variations concerning “production” would be quite long. Yet, this excursion does not pretend to form an exhaustive analysis but an illustrative look into the theme. Hence the following shows only some examples of the possibility of classifying and interpreting Sartre’s expressions from the perspective used.

As already indicated earlier, the umbrella concept for all the terms referring to production in Sartre is *faire*. However, seen from the perspective of this present study highlighting the role of concepts such as interiority and exteriority, it is a more politically neutral concept than “production” and therefore has not been taken as a central reference point for interpretation here. In this light we can read *faire* as referring to doing in a more general sense such as in: “ce sont les hommes qui font et non les avalanches” (CRD I, p. 39-40, see also p. 26, 37, 103n1). In addition, as already said, his choice of terms is not systematic, not only with regard to the term itself but also with regard to the theme - production is not a thoroughly thematized concept in Sartre. However, even a cursory reading of the the *Critique* reveals a number of different expressions which refer to “producing” but do not use the word or do not use it exclusively. Yet, Sartre’s use of the terms is not arbitrary here either. Some of the expressions refer to his earlier texts, mainly to *L’être et le néant*, some refer to his discussion in the *Questions* on knowledge and reason as produced, and some of them can be read as expressions that dramatize the text in a very Sartrean manner.

Against the background of defining production as a concept which does not refer to producing a product in terms of finiteness, the concept of work present in the *Critique* emerges as a question. It has already been indicated above that at places Sartre uses the word work (as well as worker) as a part of the vocabulary through which he relates his discussion to that of the Marxists. In this context the use of the concept is fairly clear - it refers to material production of “things”. However, as is well known, especially from the parts of the text of the *Critique* discussing the practico-inert, Sartre uses the concept in a much wider meaning.

We could take for a point of comparison Hannah Arendt’s division, from her *The Human Condition* (1958), where she distinguishes between labor, work and action (ibid. (1969), p. 5, 7) in order to shed light on Sartre’s use of the concept of work and that of production. On the one hand, the above mentioned use of the term work in Sartre in a context referring to producing material “things” as well as the use of the term production as a part of the Marxist vocabulary, is compara-

ble to Arendt's terms of labor and work which refer to both maintaining, to use a Sartrean term, the organism (labor) as well as to producing artefacts (work).<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, Sartre's use of the concept of work as it appears in his formulations related to "worked matter" (*matière ouvree* CRD I, e.g. p. 223-24, 638; *matière travaillée* CRD I, e.g. p. 250-51, 694) escapes the Arendtian division as it neither refers directly to maintaining life, to producing "things" nor to action conceptualized without reference to the mediating role of matter. Instead, in a way it marginally carries both labor and work as its aspects which refer to the conditions of action in the Sartrean sense. These, in their turn and in contrast to Arendt, refer to the material relations between people, to that which is "inscribed in matter" as well as to the playing with freedom and *freedom-exis* (CRD I, e.g. p. 375).

Moreover, the concept of production in Sartre takes yet another view of the Arendtian division as it escapes both the life maintaining and the fabrication aspects, but retains certain aspects of the Arendtian concept of action. It retains these aspects in that it does not take a perspective on the produced through matter but through the action of the agent. Moreover, it evokes the question of the produced and the worked in relation to the questions of the interiority and exteriority which form a setting for action (see CRD I, e.g. p. 247).

However, in Sartre the concept of production also embraces an aspect which points beyond the Arendtian sense of action as it also takes the perspective of the construction of the agent, the action situation and of the world. If in Arendt the concept of action in relation to the idea of plurality as a condition of human action implies the political (1969 (1958), p. 7-8), in Sartre the concept of production introduces the political as an aspect of the lived as well as a perspective taken on it.

In my view this comparison with Arendt shows an interesting feature in Sartre's conceptualization of the question and of his fashion of construing concepts - he does not operate with clearly definable conceptual divisions and where he does construe a division it is for taking different, related and parallel perspectives on the question at hand. This feature is of specific importance when interpreting concepts such as that of production which are not explicitly thematized by Sartre.

After discussing the relation of the concepts of work and production, the most obvious question is the differentiation between production and *praxis* as Sartre's concepts. Stressing production does not aim at replacing *praxis* by production - they do not, indeed, refer to the same conceptual constellation. *Praxis*, even though it is a most central concept in the *Critique*, is a term which Sartre uses as a general point of reference, or, so to say, as a unifying concept for his descriptions. Even though it is used partly in a pole-relation to other concepts (for example process) for the purpose of defining different perspectives on action, it is not a concept which would establish a differentiating stance with regard to other concepts used in the *Critique* in the way production does. The concepts of *praxis* and anti-*praxis* form a specific layer in the vocabulary of production as they take a different view of the exteriority - interiority question: production

34 On Arendt's division see for example Parvikko 1993.

expresses both poles from the point of view of action (producing and being produced) whereas praxis and anti-praxis construe a division. In other words, praxis takes the point of view of action, whereas anti-praxis brings in the question of the results of the action as they “return” to the agent: anti-praxis as the praxis without an “author” is the praxis become Other to the agent and it refers to the moment of counter-finality in action.

“[I]l faudra tenter de saisir sur le vif la liaison intelligible de l’extériorité et de l’intériorité dans cette circulation, en tant qu’elle transforme la *praxis* humaine [...] chez l’homme comme produit de son produit, en *antipraxis*, c’est-à-dire en *praxis sans auteur* et dépassant le donné vers des fins rigides dont le sens caché est la contre-finalité.” (CRD I, p. 235)

“[L]a liberté se manifeste comme organisation pratique du champ et comme se saisissant en l’Autre comme liberté autre ou *antipraxis* [...]” (CRD I, p. 689).

As the praxis - anti-praxis relation is construed on a division and not on a limit or within a perspective of change and of playing, one could say that it does not contain a specific political dimension which would offer a view of the conceptual constructions Sartre uses. Rather, it is the concept of production which brings the political to the fore as it construes a setting from which other concepts can be interpreted.

The relation between the concepts of praxis and production can also be discussed through the concept of “organic” which Sartre relates both to praxis and to the agent for example in expressions such as organic praxis, organic individual and practical organism (CRD I, p. 110, 158, 473, 511, 516). Here it is the word “organic” which Sartre calls a metaphor (CRD I, p. 517), and which, as is well known, does not imply any organistic<sup>35</sup> view of the agent or action which refers to the aspect of production. One can interpret “organic” as “constructed”, produced with a “depth” (*profondeur*) - a dimensional expression which Sartre occasionally uses (see CRD I, p. 92, 535) - and argue that it is the concept of production which brings a specification both to the more general concept of praxis and to the agent. In the present study this difference is maintained between the concepts of praxis and production, and action is analyzed from the sole point of view of production leaving the concept of praxis out of focus.

Against this background we can take a look at different formulations expressing the aspect of production. We could begin by giving an example of expressions relating the *Critique* to *L’être et le néant*. On the one hand there is the term “to engender” (*engendrer*) which is used in the *Critique* referring to the producing of an opposite term within a relation (fact engenders right, the group (as an organization) engenders an institution). On the other hand, in *L’être et le néant*, in the description of the “producing” of the being and of nothingness within a relation, Sartre uses two terms for the “process”, terms which do not, in my view, refer to the aspect of production as “to engender” does. The terms used

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35 However, “organic” does imply here “organizing” as an of to action - the agent organ-izes reality (the field of action) and acts within an organized reality (obviously Sartre’s “organization” as a group, but the reference point is wider and includes all the different structures of action, the series as well as the groups) which can both be read within the perspective of production.

are “to emerge” (*émerger*, being “from” nothingness, EN p. 53, 54) and “to secrete” (*sécréter*, the human being secretes nothingness, EN p. 61, 65). As examples of the use of the term “to engender” in the *Critique* one could give the following:

“le fait engendre le droit” (CRD I, p. 490); “les relations qui s’engendent les unes les autres [...] comme des rapports mathématiques” (CRD I, p. 493); “nous verrons, dans quelques pages, le groupe engendrer l’institution” (CRD I, p. 553); “le non-groupé engendré pratiquement par le groupe” (ibid.); “Mieux: comme il va du besoin au pouvoir pratique que le groupe lui concède et de ce pouvoir aux appareils que le groupe engendre pour lui donner satisfaction, il saisit chaque personne [...] comme spécification *a posteriori* produite par le groupe en cours de développement.” (CRD I, p. 556, see also CRD II, p. 394)

When coming from *L’être et le néant* closer to the *Critique* we can also find different uses of the term produce itself. For example in 1957 Sartre wrote:

“[L]a *pratique* colonialiste a gravé l’idée coloniale dans les choses même; c’est le mouvement des choses qui désigne à la fois le colon et le colonisé. Ainsi l’oppression se justifie par elle-même: les oppresseurs produisent et maintiennent de force les maux qui rendent, à leurs yeux, l’opprimé de plus en plus semblable à ce qu’il faudrait qu’il fût pour mériter son sort.” (SIT V, p. 54)

From producing the oppressor and the oppressed as such we can advance to the *Critique* where, while walking we produce the configuration of the terrain (CRD I, p. 292), where the pledged group (*le groupe assermenté*) and the common individual are produced by the oath (*le serment*) (CRD I, p. 505, 556), where inertia is produced (CRD I, p. 495-97), where we are produced through need (CRD I, p. 178), where we are produced by ourselves and by the group (CRD I, p. 499, 500), where values are produced (CRD I, p. 208) and where to comprehend and to produce are one and the same:

“Comprendre et produire, dans la sérialité des héritiers, c’est une seule et même chose; d’autant que, bien souvent, produire, c’est reproduire.” (CRD I, p. 723)

We can also find production expressed in texts after the *Critique* such as *L’anthropologie*:

“Nous sommes chacun des produits de ce monde, nous l’exprimons de manières diverses mais nous l’exprimons totalement en tant que nous sommes reliés à la totalité en propre.” (SIT IX, p. 92)

For Sartre also Kierkegaard is produced: “une certaine religion a produit Kierkegaard” (SIT IX, p. 172, see also p. 178). The term “produire” is at places replaced by Sartre by the term “construire” (see e.g. CRD I, p. 105, 347, 349, 377, 544) in such a manner that the choice of the latter does not refer to a choice of specific perspective but to speaking in general terms. In contrast to this the term “constituer” referring both to the constituting and the constituted which Sartre uses to describe the two different perspectives taken on action in the *Critique*, namely the series and the groups, more often than not does refer to a specific perspective taken. In Sartre it does not have the connotation of constitution in a foundational



sense but rather refers to an active aspect of construing a setting be it in terms of struggle or of individual praxis, both of which convey different aspects of action: “[c]hacon est constitué de telle sorte par sa lutte [...]” (CRD I, p. 208); “la *praxis* individuelle, toujours inséparable du milieu qu’elle constitue [...]” (CRD I, p. 178, see also p. 377, 394, 497, 532). In this sense “constituer” points to the agent producing and being produced within a particular setting implying both action and the “environment” as dimensions of the agent. In addition to this “constituer” is in Sartre a general term which at places refers to an ontological aspect of a setting, and hence is, from the perspective taken in this present study, a term which does not differentiate between the perspectives taken (see e.g. CRD I, p. 396, 557).

Other terms which are, either at places or more systematically, used with a reference to production are for example to create (*créer*) (see CRD I, e.g. p. 103n1, 173, 496) and also to become (*devenir*), which refers to the aspects of change and of temporality present in the concept of production (see CRD I, e.g. p. 30, 107, 143, 467, 519, 631).

The producing - being produced perspective, which can be enhanced through reading the aspect of production from the terms given as examples here, takes us to the nucleus of the *Critique*, to the formal description of the structures of producing and being produced, to the concepts Sartre both uses and develops in his descriptions, or so to say, in his political anthropology.

## 4.9 Being Produced

The logical “story” of the *Critique* offers as its most apparent and roughest division the division into series and groups as different forms of social ensembles. This division, however, is not very useful for an analysis focusing on the conceptual apparatus of the work because it hides several important conceptual constructions which do not follow this division. From the point of view adopted here the main problem with this division is that the perspective of production referring to the interplay of producing and being produced fades into the background because the division between the produced as practico-inert and the producing as a “member” of a group is highlighted. Sartre’s divisions into the “levels of experience” which each take a delimited view of the whole of the text do not offer a fruitful starting point, either, as they direct the reader’s view on a step-by-step construction of the overall logic of the text. Most of the concepts that will be discussed in this and in the following chapter sidestep both of these rough divisions - there are in the *Critique* underlying conceptual divisions which not only follow a logic different from these two, but also offer a possibility of structuring Sartre’s text and discussion in a significantly different manner.

When opening his discussion of the “levels of experience” Sartre starts from the abstract individual praxis as a first logical view of the setting. However, within a view of reading the work through its political aspects this starting point can be misleading: the position of the individual praxis in Sartre’s argumentation is not that of a “source” but that of a conceptual construction through which a view is taken of the already-produced world, of being produced and, through

postulating action as escape and as the possibility of breaking out from the already-produced, of producing.

In this constellation it is the produced in contrast to “wild matter”, i.e. the material world to which the agent has no relation whatsoever (were there such a thing), that Sartre presents as the first definition of reality as we encounter it. As a counterpart to this the individual praxis (in its serialized forms as well as in the groups) forms a starting point for the logic of Sartre’s argumentation which specifies the point of view of the agent - or the “producer” - as Sartre’s particular view of the setting.

“Mais c’est lui [the human being] qui a mis dans la chose, sa propre *praxis*, son propre avenir, ses propres connaissances; s’il pouvait rencontrer la matière sauvage dans l’expérience, c’est qu’il serait un dieu ou un caillou. Et dans le deux cas, elle resterait *sans action sur lui*: ou bien il la produirait [...] ou bien l’*action* s’évanouirait au profit de simples équivalences énergétiques; le seul mouvement temporel serait celui de la dégradation [...]” (CRD I, p. 248).

“Nous avons vu [...] la chose absorber toute l’activité humaine et la restituer en la matérialisant: il ne peut en être autrement. Rien n’arrive aux hommes et aux objets que dans leur être matériel et par la matérialité de l’être. Mais l’homme est justement cette réalité matérielle par quoi la matière reçoit ses fonctions humaines.” (CRD I, p. 249)

On the one hand, there is for Sartre the world of the produced. On the other hand, seriality, both in the practico-inert and in the groups, expresses the being produced which is seen through the viewpoint of the producer. There is an asymmetric relation between the world as produced and the agent both as produced and as a producer, where the differentiation between the poles of the produced and of the being produced depends on the specific point of view Sartre takes in each case. He follows this overall logic quite closely from section D (*Les collectives*) on as he has laid the grounds for it in the preceding chapters. This constellation, however, forms merely a framework and it is not the overall logic it offers which forms the specific political interest of the *Critique*. It is within this sketchy overall logical landscape that the specificity of the Sartrean view lies: his conceptual constructions and formulations describe these two views, producing and being produced, in relation to the agent.

In the text of the *Critique* Sartre changes the perspective of his description from the produced and being produced to producing continuously, depending on the “level of experience” he is describing and on the logical construction at hand. The formality of the text renders it somewhat difficult for the reader to follow the turns in the points of view, and this may result into a more fragmented reading of the *Critique* than the text actually requires. We may call the shifting of the points of view “circularity”, “dialectic” or “spirals”, however, the produced remains one of the central questions from which this shifting can be traced.

Even though Sartre’s specific view of the question remains throughout the work that of an agent and not that of the produced world, the aspect of the produced, or of the inert of the overlooking of which he criticizes Lefort for, forms an important background for his discussion. It is this background which construes the point of view of being produced as the first view Sartre offers of the agent. Hence it is starting from the being produced that the specific features of the Sartrean political discussion can be accessed when it is question of the construction of

the agent in his text. Yet, the logical priority established here is strictly internal to the point of view taken and does not postulate any priority, be it logical or temporal, of the producing or of being produced in relation to the agent. The "being produced" is not a founding attribute of the agent or of action, on the contrary, for Sartre it is, as it has been throughout his work, the freedom of the agent that forms the key perspective of action. The establishing of the being produced as a primary view taken is a configuration with the help of which Sartre places the agent into the world, (understood here as social reality), only within which can the freedom of the agent be seen in its full political character. Hence "being produced" refers to the agent as freedom situated in the world acting in a politically configured situation.

The importance of the produced as one of the central perspectives in Sartre's constructions lies in that it introduces the perspective of the exteriority into the picture. However, as we have already seen from Sartre's critique of Lefort, the produced cannot be understood as a produced object, as something finite which would be totally exterior to the agent. On the contrary, in the producing - being produced setting the produced is seen as a moment in the process of interiorizing and exteriorizing. In the pole-relation which it forms with the two other aspects of production it represents the pole of the exteriority, of the agent's being "conditioned" through the exteriority.

This is a place where one more point in the relation between *L'être et le néant* and the *Critique* can be stressed. Postulating an equivalence between the in-itself and the practico-inert would hide from view the specific place the produced in the *Critique* gains with regard to the exteriority - interiority setting, namely that of not expressing the exteriority as a concept opposed to that of the interiority but forming the "outside" which Sartre constantly uses as one of the devices for construing the space of action. In *L'être et le néant*, as we shall see later in connection with the concept of temporality, the "inside" is postulated but it is only in the *Critique* that Sartre forwards constructions which postulate an "outside" in relation to action in such a fashion which does not draw a dividing line between the two.

From this perspective we can read the numerous formulations in the *Critique* that designate the produced object (for example the Machine) as a "producer": the produced object as produced exteriority forms an aspect of the construction of the agent. However, as Sartre is not speaking about products, about finite things, the "object" that "produces" expresses the agent in relation to the inert, to the produced with a stress on the pole of the produced instead of that of producing. Hence the produced world in Sartre has no autonomous status as such but is present always as a moment in the construction of the agent. In the light of this we can read Sartre's expressions such as "l'objet comme produisant les hommes comme ses produits" (CRD I, p. 348n) as formulations stressing the dimensional character of the setting and the non-identity of the agent with the produced.

Furthermore, the object as a "producer" is not a compact "thing", an expression of the self-identity of things. Instead, it forms a part of Sartre's description of social reality as a multidimensional, contradictory construct where time is not that of advancing chronological time, but the time of the intemporality of the produced, of the discontinuities of the producing as well as of the temporal experi-

ence of the agent. Furthermore it is a construct where space is not that of a homogenous place but a heterogenous field where the agent cannot be localized, where “places” are determined in relation to temporal action either as unreachable in relation to the intemporality of the produced, or as “here” and “now” in relation to producing. It is a world where the structuring limits form landscapes and sceneries rather than Hausmannian boulevards, and where margins serving for contesting and as vantage points are construed *within* rather than at the peripheries.

In the *Critique* production is described as being “extended” or “spread” over the poles of producing, being produced and that of the produced; and cannot be considered as a concept referring to a postulation of an origin in the sense labor or work might be considered as a “source” for existence. The producer (the agent, the individual) in this scenery is an adventurer (see CRD I, p. 108) who can be a stranger and even an outcast, but is not one for whom her/his dimension of the inertia of the produced is a determining point of her/his construction as an agent or of her/his action. The agent for Sartre is not a dominated individual even in the darkest corners of the Hell of the natural habitat formed by the practico-inert. The object as a producer (or the Machine) functions as a figure through which Sartre introduces into his scenery the non-interpreted, non-translucent, indifferenced, opaque and inherently political aspect of the produced reality that we live in.

As indicated, the perspective Sartre takes is one that gives primary importance to the agent as the producer of her/his reality compared to the aspect of being produced, and he refutes any view introducing the finite product as a perspective. The early discussion on the question present in Sartre’s answer to Lefort outlines the very central perspective he uses in the *Critique*: it is the agent whose *praxis* is the carrying force, even in the practico-inert where the impossibility of action in view of change is the only perspective of action.

#### 4.10 The Agent - “Producer” and Situated Project

Book I (*De la “praxis” individuelle au practico-inerte*) is a fragmented exposition of producing and of being produced. It starts with a chapter introducing the reader to the primary Sartrean perspective, the individual as an agent (*De la “praxis” individuelle comme totalisation*) and into the way Sartre situates this acting individual in the world (*Des relations humaines comme médiation entre les différents secteurs de la matérialité*). Already in these chapters the discussion is oriented through the producing - being produced perspective, as well as in the following chapters, in each of which Sartre’s point of view of the question changes constantly from one perspective to the other. For example in the section named in the 1985 edition of the *Critique* both by Elkaïm-Sartre, and Simont and Verstræten as “Dominated Human Being” (*L’homme dominé par la matière ouvrée* and *L’homme dominé*, respectively) the changes in Sartre’s point of view are frequent. Moreover, the changes do not take place only between the concepts he describes (interest, exigence, Destiny etc.) but also within them, for example interest is discussed both from the

point of view of producing and of being produced without any explicit exposition of the change of view (see CRD I, p. 261ff.).

From my point of view the naming of this passage “Dominated Human Being”, even though it can be considered justified from the general tone of the discussion in the text, is somewhat misleading for it is in this section that Sartre presents several initial views concerning, not “being dominated”, but concerning the “*double jeu*” of producing and being produced as the very place where action plays the key role. It is also in this section where he gives his initial view of subjectivity, though briefly, almost hidden within the text.<sup>36</sup>

The rest of the chapters in Book I can be read in the same manner: Sartre’s discussion of the question of production is fragmented into the text to such an extent that the reconstruction of the views taken of the text requires the breaking down of the whole text. The basic difficulty of reading the *Critique* lies here in Book I. Sartre’s own divisions of the text are directed to a great extent by the background idea of criticizing certain Marxist views and not by his own contribution to the question at hand. Moreover, this line of Sartre’s argumentation is nearly lost in face of the descriptions and the discussions which follow closely the logic of the text. However, starting from the idea that the agent in Sartre is described as “double play” rather than as a dominated human being who “afterwards” fights this condition we can start exploring in more detail the portrait painted by Sartre.

When continuing the discussion over the refusal of the idea of the human being as a product Sartre stresses the dimension of action that escapes the being produced and refers to producing, hence changing the perspective of his description. His first description of this dimension is the human being as a project. As a counterpart to the description of the project Sartre gives the situation and the agent situated in the world.

“De toute manière, la compréhension de l’acte se fait par l’acte (produit ou reproduit); la structure téléologique de l’activité ne se peut saisir que dans un pro-jet qui se définit lui-même par son but, c’est-à-dire par son avenir et qui revient de cet avenir jusqu’au présent pour éclairer celui-ci comme négation du passé dépassé.” (CRD I, p. 160)

“Nous affirmons la spécificité de l’acte humain, qui traverse le milieu social tout en conservant les déterminations et qui transforme le monde sur la base de conditions données. Pour nous, l’homme se caractérise avant tout par le dépassement d’une situation, par ce qu’il parvient à faire de ce qu’on a fait de lui [...]” (CRD I, p. 63, see also p. 64).

“Ce projet a *un sens*: ce n’est pas la simple négativité, la fuite: par lui l’homme vise la production de soi-même dans le monde comme une certaine totalité objective.” (CRD I, p. 93, see also p. 95)

Through the pole-relation that the concepts describing production form, the view which is taken of the “producer” displays the aspects of producing and being produced as a play with the projected possibilities and with the surpassing of the situation against the background formed by the impossibilities the already-produced imposes on the agent. This is, however, an aspect which is scarcely

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36 I shall return to this question later (see p. 175ff. below).

developed in the *Critique* where these two concepts basically serve for introducing certain settings for a further description of the agent.<sup>37</sup>

In Sartre the project construes a description of the agent which expresses the variations of the encounters of the agent with the world. From the point of view of the “producer” it is established as the possibility of escaping and refusing the produced and refers to the possibility of change which is maintained on all the “levels” of materiality Sartre describes, even in the field of the passivity of the produced (see CRD I, p. 64, 95, 105, 445). In the *Critique*, however, the concept of project is given a far less central position than in *L'être et le néant* and its introduction in the *Questions* (CRD I, p. 63ff.) serves primarily for marking the shift in the perspectives Sartre takes, and only secondarily for re-establishing, to a certain extent, the respective concept of *L'être et le néant*. However, it also serves for the introduction of the dimensions of temporality, exteriority and interiority into the picture of the agent.

“La transparence même de la *praxis* (disons, pour l’instant, de la *praxis individuelle*) a pour origine l’inséparable liaison de la négation (qui totalise en *situation* ce qu’elle nie) et du projet qui se définit par rapport au *tout* abstrait - et formelle encore - que l’agent pratique pro-jette dans l’avenir et qui apparaît comme l’unité réorganisée de la situation niée.” (CRD I, p. 149, see the citation above and also p. 64)

“Le projet comme transcendance n’est que l’extériorisation de l’immanence.” (CRD I, p. 168)

As the project is always for Sartre a project in a situation with a temporal structure the agent is placed in a temporal frame. It is the situated, temporal action and experience of the agent that forms the place where the produced and the producer encounter and where the possibility of change becomes possible. This is primarily described by Sartre in connection with the groups where the point of view taken is for the most part that of the agent as a “producer”.

“Mais ces transformations ne l’arrachent [organization] pas à l’inflexible nécessité d’être *situé*, c’est-à-dire [...] d’être désignée comme un point de vue pratique et comme un ancrage défini par le monde même qu’elle veut modifier. Et pour atteindre enfin ces résultats supra-individuels, il faut qu’elle se fasse déterminer par l’unité unifiante d’une *praxis individuelle*.” (CRD I, p. 521)

Even though the concept of situation in the *Critique* largely remains as a background figure compared to *L'être et le néant* the configuration of the situation and the project in a pole-relation indicates a view which takes a step further away from the setting of the earlier work. Toward the end of the *Questions* Sartre declares as his aim the rediscovery of the human being “dans le monde social” and “dans sa *praxis* ou, si l’on préfère, dans le projet qui le jette vers les possibles sociaux à partir d’une situation définie.” (CRD I, p. 111) He also stresses the situation as a particular setting of the experience of the agent:

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37 In this connection as well as in connection with the concept of temporality Sartre seems not only to rely on the reader’s familiarity with *L'être et le néant* but also on her/his possibility of capturing the “obvious” perspectives of the earlier work present in the later one.

"[L]es conditions matérielles qui gouvernent les relations humaines doivent être vécus dans la particularité des situations particulières [...]" (CRD I, p. 166).

Related to experience in this manner the concept of situation receives in the *Critique* a wider meaning than in *L'être et le néant* as it becomes the concept which from one point of view profiles the space of action. This amplification of the concept from the setting of freedom ("il n'y a de liberté qu'en *situation* et il n'y a de situation que par la liberté.", EN p. 569), with the coefficient of adversity as its attribute (see EN e.g. p. 561-570, esp. p. 569), into a space of action<sup>38</sup> where the produced and the producer encounter is implicitly present in the discussion of the *Critique*. However, as it is the case with the project, this aspect remains in the background and forms only a loose description which in the first place underlines freedom as a political attribute inscribed into the perspective of the agent as a producer. It is, however, from this initial setting that the perspective of the agent which profiles the entire *Critique* is construed.

#### 4.11 The Perspective of the Agent<sup>39</sup>

Barbara Bender (1993) describes the political in an anthropologically oriented study through a landscape where there are perspectives, views and vistas that the "I" takes through "my" experience and engagement in the world (ibid., p. 1). This forms an apt description of the situation of the Sartrean agent as long as we keep in mind the "space" aspect of its construction - the landscape of action in which the agent is engaged as a perspective is dimensional and spread. "Landscape" here refers more specifically to the construction of this space as a landscape which is "not so much artefact as in process of construction and reconstruction" (ibid., p. 3) and which is construed in different spatial as well as temporal scales (ibid., p. 2). Furthermore, this landscape is the contrary of perspective art which according to Thomas (1993, p. 21) freezes time and fixes the relation of the subject and the object and locates the viewer outside the picture - i.e. postulates a distinct dividing line between the "inside" and the "outside" across which the agent cannot move.

In Sartre the agent's perspective breaks this kind of setting by placing the agent in a landscape "under construction" and by refusing what Thomas calls "a total view of social reality" (ibid., p. 23). Yet, if we compare this to the structure of the *Critique* we can see one of the deepest contradictions of the work: the "total view" forms a radical in contrast to the perspective of the agent. This contradiction was not solved by Sartre (it is, as we shall see, repeated in relation to the

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38 The discussion in *L'être et le néant* on "my place", "my past" and "my environment" (*mes entours*) which follows the sub-chapter on situation shows that already here Sartre related situation to temporality and to different formulations of the spatial aspects of being. "Place" and "environment" thematize roughly the view of two different perspectives: that of freedom in a contingent place and that of freedom in the world amongst other existents (see e.g. EN p. 576, 585-86).

39 In this context see also my article on the concept of organization in Sartre (Subra 1990b).

question of history, see chapter 5.2.3 below), but I would argue that it is the point of view of the agent which remains in the foreground as it emerges from the *Critique* as the guiding thread leading through the different conceptual constructions which Sartre uses for the description of the agent.

The point of view of the agent is a systematical perspective that Sartre takes in the *Critique*. This perspective, however, varies according to the context of his discussion: the postulations made concerning the series and the practico-inert on the one hand and the groups on the other, postulate the agent in a different setting of action. Furthermore, the "individual praxis" and the "common individual" as different descriptions Sartre gives of the agent in these settings form different conceptual constructions with regard to action as their relation to the exteriority is differently postulated. The individual praxis in the practico-inert where the Machine forms the organizing principle is powerless, frozen and trapped under the ice of the exteriority of the produced, but nevertheless "re-emerges" in the groups as an active view taken of the world. The "common individual" in the groups is an agent acting in a setting organized through action and only secondarily through the produced. Hence the groups contain two parallel perspectives on the agent: that of the individual praxis "rescued" through the Apocalypse and that of common praxis construed within the group.

However, as I shall show, there is a line of argumentation in the work which disregards this division and which can be seen as a perspective on the agent construed as the player and the actor in an "inside" space of action, a perspective which surpasses the logical story of the work and its division into "series" and "groups". In the frame of this setting, through postulating the action of the agent in the first place as organizing temporal activity within the frame of the exteriority and interiority, the agent's perspective can be seen as a view taken of the producing - being produced constellation. Seeing the agent as an actor engaged in organizing the world entails asymmetrically the perspective of the other pole, that of being organized as an attribute of action and of the situation of action. It is in this setting, which expresses the relation between the agent, action and the field of action, that the Sartrean agent receives some more specific descriptions.

#### 4.11.1 The Tool

If we understand, as Sartre does, the produced as a field of action (as a "practical field") to which the agent is related we can see this relation construed as a pole-relation of the agent and of the field of action. It can be described as a tension between the two poles expressing the producing of both of them at once. In Sartre it is the concept of tool (or instrument) (*l'outil*) which offers a view of this setting.

The tool is a figure which Sartre uses to describe the organizing of the field of action as well as the organizing of the agent and action. When describing the practico-inert field Sartre uses the concept of the collective object as a figure for the organized aspect of the field and the collective and the series as a figure for the organized aspect of action. This setting is repeated within a different perspective when the groups are taken into focus - the third and the pledge are tools for organizing the "already" organized.



“La totalité organique agit sur les corps inertes par l’intermédiaire du corps inerte *qu’elle est* et qu’elle *se fait être*. [...] L’action du corps vivant sur l’inerte peut s’exercer directement ou par la médiation d’un autre corps inerte. Dans ce cas nous appelons cet intermédiaire un outil.” (CRD I, p. 167)

“Mais l’individu commun saisit la technique et l’outil comme *sa souveraineté* dans le champ pratique, c’est-à-dire comme l’amplification de sa *praxis* individuelle. En ce sens, outil et technique (qui, en réalité, ne constituent qu’un seul et même objet) sont le group même en tant que l’individu commun le saisit comme sa propre puissance sociale sur la chose. Ou, si l’on préfère, l’action outillée lui découvre son historicité datée [...] comme souveraineté pratique (sur la matière inorganique).” (CRD I, p. 465)

Sartre’s logical story, advancing toward the more complex, shows in the descriptions of the tool: the farther Sartre goes in his description, the more attributes he assigns to the figure. Sovereignty as a tool in relation to the “worked” displays several different layers of attributes, whereas a simple “inert body”, for example a tool used for cutting a 2x4 serves as an example, to use the Sartrean vocabulary, of the elementary and highly abstract description of a human being producing her/himself.

In both cases the use of a tool necessarily reorganizes the field of action and the tool itself is reorganized within the same relation. The reorganizing of the tool, however, does not mean the reorganizing of a physical instrument but the reorganizing of the agent as the “user” of the tool as it construes an “extension” of the agent in action. In this sense the agent turns her/himself into a tool for changing the field of action (see CRD I, p. 167), and in this sense the point of view of the tool “changing” the agent is excluded, Sartre takes a view of the exteriority through the action of the agent.

“Entendons-nous: une activité solitaire exercée avec un outil subit des transformations dues à la nature de l’instrument choisi ou de l’objet sur laquelle elle s’exerce. Mais ces transformations dépassées, corrigées et contrôlées, n’altèrent pas la *praxis*, même si elles l’obligent à se modifier, à user de voies détournées, etc.: les métamorphoses de la *praxis* sont dialectiques et font partie de la *praxis* à titre de moments inévitables et vivants reliés par des relations d’intériorité [...].” (CRD I, p. 282)

However, the relation of the agent to the field of action and to the produced through the tool is not simply a relation where the terms of the relation cannot be postulated independently but it is a political view of the world: the choice or the changing of the tools equals a change in the agent’s perspective, the organizing of the field forms the perspective of freedom (see CRD I, p. 466). In Sartre this construction creates a space of action, a space where for example counter-finality is conceivable as a reformulation of the existing possibilities and not merely as a simple twist of fate. This is also the perspective where the limit-character of an action situation is highlighted: the impossibility of action, were it described as the powerlessness of seriality or as the impossibility of a traitor in the groups, is not seen here as a submission to the exteriority and to the produced but as a feature of the relation of action and the field of action which construes a limit with regard to action as change. It is the impossibility of change which reveals the field of action as to be changed.

“Jusqu’à ici, en effet - dans la dimension du collectif - le réel se définissait par son impossibilité. Ce qu’on appelle en effet *sens des réalités* signifie très exactement: sens de ce qui, par principe, est interdit. La transformation s’opère donc lorsque l’impossibilité est elle-même impossible ou, si l’on préfère, lorsque l’événement synthétique révèle l’impossibilité de changer comme impossibilité de vivre. Ce qui a pour effet direct de faire de *l’impossibilité de changer* l’objet même à dépasser pour continuer la vie.” (CRDI, p. 384)

Here Sartre returns to the description in *L’être et le néant* discussed earlier where the impossibility of a situation was postulated as revealed to the agent through an alternative. Here the alternative is seen in terms of need in relation to the tool used to satisfy it in a situation where the possibility of satisfaction is in danger (ibid.)

The practical field is understood here as something which expresses reality as an object of the organizing action in a relation where the agent is both a producer and produced. In this twofold relation the point of view taken is that of an agent in action - an agent that cannot be reduced to a classical “subject” or “individual”, an agent that Sartre calls the practical organism and individual praxis. Sartre’s postulation of the “passive inorganic world” serves to highlight the agent as a pole in relation to the produced world - not to a “natural” world of material things because for Sartre the world is a political world from the very first look we take at it and in it. And for Sartre this could not be otherwise: his concept of freedom forms a starting point from which a perspective that takes the being produced or the produced world as a primary viewpoint is impossible. The central aspects of action, such as project, situation, change, but also counter-finality and other figures expressing failure, would lose their radicality as attributes of action were such a turn of perspective to take place.

#### 4.11.2 Change, Failure, Counter-finality and the Impossibility of Positive Action

The agent's perspective that Sartre takes throughout the *Critique* entails seeing action as organizing the field of action through producing it, and at the same time as organizing itself as action oriented toward change: both the organization of action and of the field of action are changed. However, as change is not seen in terms of a change from “state A” to “state B” but rather in terms of rupture, it refers here to the construction of a space of action within a compact world. The background to this lies in that in the relation between the agent's perspective and the field of action there is an incompatibility which forms in the Sartrean theory one of the conditions of political action. Action can never reach the objective that was projected by the agent and the changes in the field of action as well as in action are changes that goes beyond the agent’s perspective.

The incompatibility of the agent’s perspective and the field of action as the object of action is expressed by Sartre through conceptual constructions which originate from both poles of this asymmetric relation. Sartre postulates firstly

failure which as an attribute of action refers to the "agent-pole", and secondly counter-finality which as an attribute of the produced refers to the "field-pole".

Failure, as well as counter-finality are for Sartre limit figures with which he describes action. On the one hand they express the impossibility of controlling the outcomes of action as well as action itself, on the other the possibility of change - the unintended results of action as well as the unintended changes in action form a new situation of action. Hence the lack of the possibility of control forms an opening in action that can be played with, or so to say, it forms an opportunity for a skillful actor to use the changes in the scene in her/his acting in a way which alters the original script and recreates the play.

It is here that we can reach the importance which the constructions which "create space" for action through breaking the limits have for the description of the Sartrean political agent. From the point of view of being produced the most important of them could be called a "derivation" of contingency. For Sartre there is a built-in quality in the different forms of the existence of the produced which is displayed as inconsistency, incontinuity and modification in relation to the intentions of the agent: the results of action turn against the intentions of the agent, and the objectives of the agent are "infected" with counter-finality.

"Pour nous résumer d'un mot, l'intelligibilité des contradictions matérielles au sein d'un processus en cours vient de ce que, par la négation comme unité matérielle au sein d'un champ social, toutes les finalités sont des contre-finalités et de ce que, inversement, en tant que tous les mouvements de la matière sont soutenus et dirigés par des hommes, chaque contre-finalité est objectivement, à son niveau et pour certains ensembles pratico-inertes, une finalité." (CRD I, p. 260-61).

However, the new, unexpected action situation construed by the failure and the counter-finalities of action is seen differently from the two perspectives representing the two poles. The two concepts of failure and counter-finality express the opportunity of action in different manners.

On the one hand the concept of counter-finality as a counter concept expresses in Sartre the obstacle to action seen from the perspective of the agent and construed in the pole of the field of action. As it expresses the organization of the world in a way which stands at variance with the intentions and the project of the agent, it expresses the exteriority as the agent encounters it in action. On the other hand the concept of failure is construed within a pole-relation to counter-finality. Where counter-finality expresses the "coefficient of adversity" encountered in action from the perspective of the field of action, failure refers from an "inner" perspective to an obstacle and to the impossibility of carrying out a project as projected. From the perspective of the agent this means that the project and action are always relativized and that any search for action that would in its results coincide with the projected intentions of the agent is to no avail. Action always entails a risk of losing as well as the possibility of taking advantage of the unintended results or, so to say, action is a game where losers can win.

Hence what I would like to stress here is the political perspective of action offered by the concepts of failure and counter-finality, instead of the more com-

mon interpretation which sees especially counter-finality<sup>40</sup> as mere powerlessness (Flynn 1986, p. 94-95) or even as something we can learn from in order to avoid unintended results of action (Catalano 1986, p. 122-23). In my view neither failure nor counter-finality are something to be avoided or "corrected"<sup>41</sup> - the examples Sartre gives of the concepts, such as the deforestation in China, are merely illustrations which do not take as a perspective the possibilities of "bettering" action.

Moreover, failure, understood as a limit figure, expresses the counter-position of two perspectives, that of the agent and that of the organized field of action. Seen in this light, the aspect of the concept which originates from an interpretation in teleological terms is relativized. Failure is not in the first place the agent's relation to an objective set by her/himself but a relation to the field of action. It expresses the exteriority construed within the interiority of the agent and, as such, its counter figure is not that of "success" but rather that of escape inasmuch as it expresses the "flight from freedom". In other words, failure expresses one of the aspects of being condemned to freedom and of being condemned to a neverending game played over the limit of the exteriority and interiority. Hence with failure and counter-finality it is a question about a change taking place in the situation of action in the course of action, and about the relativization of action. It is also a question about the possibilities of action opened here and about a view of the game played with the adversary (see e.g. CRD I, p. 482, 750-51 and CRD II, p. 70-72, 82, 130-32<sup>42</sup>).

The practical exigencies arising from the produced reality can be understood as complementary to these two concepts. The practical necessities refer to a reorganization of the situation of action in view of the failures and the counter-finalities. A description of a game, such as a football match or some other that Sartre uses, can illustrate this point. Adjusting action to the practical exigencies of the game forms a constantly varying perspective on the game and a good player can use the possibilities opened here. However, these concepts do not refer only to the use of the possibilities offered by the situation, but a skilled player also plays with the limits established through failure and counter-finality. A failure to kick the ball into the goal can be turned into a play with a script displaying an unfortunate player hurt in a brave attempt to kick the ball because of an illegitimately violent counterattack of a player of the opposing team, a play improvised

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40 The concept of failure is less often discussed by Sartre scholars or is discussed in moral terms. See for example Howells 1988, who apart from an interpretation in moral terms also discusses failure as a political concept in connection with the "loser wins" situation (ibid., p. 91-92, 126, 171-72, 199-200).

41 In *L'être et le néant* Sartre postulates failure as perpetual in the for-itself's quest to become in-itself (EN p. 714, 717 and also p. 721), in the *Cahiers* he sees the world as inevitably a world of failure (CM p. 488), in terms of action (CM p. 450-51), and in the *Critique* as related to conflict (CRD I, p. 301) and to action (CRD I, p. 534, 749). In addition, in the *L'universel singulier* he explicitly says: "[...] l'échec peut s'expliquer mais non se résoudre [...]" (SIT IX, p. 165).

42 In this passage of the second volume of the *Critique* Sartre effectively speaks about "getting rid of" the counter-finalities. However, this is seen as a third "stage" of action where the counter-finalities have "first" been produced as a result of action and "then" have turned against the agent. The "getting rid of" counter-finalities implies their use in the redirecting and the reorganizing of action, and not a view of the relation of the agent to the exteriority as containing the possibility of avoiding them.

on the spot according to unwritten but accepted rules of the game. This example does not express a radical leap out of the situation and of the failures and counter-finalities it includes, but the possibility of creating a temporary margin from which the situation can be reorganized.

However, placing an analogy such as this between the rules of "reality" and those of a "game" is not totally free of problems as it delimits the view on what happens on the field and hence excludes the role played by the spectators or even by the commentators and the possibilities their involvement in the action could open. Hence this example does not go beyond the mere illustration of a tactic because of the closed setting of the image offered by the example. The concepts of failure and counter-finality, as they bring in the counter aspect of control, refer to a more profound and more extended unpredictability and hence to a possibility of not only altering the script of the play but also of jumping into an altogether different play. The unpredictability and the reorganization of action and of the field of action construe the possibility and also, to some extent at least, the necessity of changing the present way of action.

A detailed description of these concepts would take too much room here, and from the the point of view taken in this work, it will suffice to point out that as a background we have here several concepts that open possibilities to highlight Sartre's postulating of the incompactness and of the fragmented character of the world. These concepts are destined to undo the opacity of reality and to describe different optional settings of the situation of action. Through these concepts Sartre calls for a political perspective: the produced world, seen from the perspective of the agent, is not "what-it-is", identical with itself, but designs a playground where change and strategies of action form a view of the relation of the agent to the field of action. As a whole this could be seen as a perspective of failure within which the above mentioned incompatibility between action and the field of action can be seen as something provoking not only a redirecting of action, but also a limit-situation implying a radical change in the whole configuration, a radical reinterpretation of action and of the world.

This is a guiding thread which runs through the entire *Critique*. Within the postulation of change as a perspective Sartre's descriptions can be read as aiming at reformulating action as the very means of taking the responsibility over the "whole world", which he postulated as his basic moral perspective already in *L'être et le néant*, as the means of contesting the Destiny prepared for us in the disguise of the all-powerful Machine.<sup>43</sup> However, Sartre's emphasis on change and action with all its moral implications does not lead to a naive postulation of any morally or politically grounded horizon of emancipation or liberation.<sup>44</sup>

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43 Approaching the 21st Century one would perhaps be tempted to use another figure, for example the Machine placing us in the universe of virtual reality or on the Internet. The most advanced technical invention Sartre discussed is the TV - he never used a type-writer to write his texts, let alone a PC (see Sartre and Sicard 1979, p. 18).

44 The few sentences in the *Critique* which clearly refer to such a horizon (see CRD I, e.g. p. 57, 678, see also e.g. CM p. 174) are, in the perspective of this work, considered as a part of Sartre's rhetoric used in his discussions with the Marxists. There is no substantial discussion in the work on this question. On the question of Sartre's abandoning of the idea of "salvation through art" see for example Howells 1988, p. 192-93, Knee 1993, p. 206ff, Cohen-Solal 1985, p. 464-65, Sartre's interview with J. Piatier 1964 and *Carnets* p. 280, 285-

Against the background of failure and counter-finality seen as limits and as obstacles designing the playground of action, a “positive” action where intentions and objectives would be identifiable with the results is not possible in Sartre. Moreover, it not only proves to be impossible but also senseless, for such an idea would be based on an untenable view of the agent's perspective as compatible with the “perspective” of the produced, or on the view that action would meet the “exigences” of the produced as the field of action.

The impossibility of positive action which emphasizes the view that the outcomes of action are colored by failure, counter-finality and contingency does not mean that no results can be obtained, but that they are always Others - already from the viewpoint that the counterplayer organizes the same field as a different field, in a different temporalization, in a different project and from different facticity. Furthermore, the impossibility of such positive action in Sartre is not only based on the “coefficient of adversity” of the produced reality, which merely forms a background setting, but also, and more importantly, on the figure of the adversary.<sup>45</sup> The adversary in Sartre is construed through different “sub-figures” and his descriptions are often presented in the frame of a game or a sport, for example chess, football or boxing. The adversary, or the Other, is the non-directly-reachable counterplayer to whom the relations are mediated through a perspective that distorts any view of a shared, mutual relation. This setting, as we have seen, has its background in Sartre's posing of the conflict as a basic relation to the Other - a politicized setting of action which is reinforced by the asymmetry of the relation. The distorting mediations (the look in *L'être et le néant*, the collective object and the state in the *Critique* - just to mention a few) structure the perspective of the Other which is the unreachable - even the unspeakable in a Lyotardian sense of a *différend* - but yet forms a part of the game. Were one to remain within the frame of Sartre's analysis of seriality the perspective of the adversary would not stand out - seriality displays the perspective of impossibility of change through its impenetrable opacity and its repetitive character. Hence it is only through breaking the logical structure of the description of the levels of experience that this perspective can be reached. The Apocalypse forms a figure for the breaking free from seriality, a figure which displays a counter horizon *within* all action. It is this counter horizon which permits a view of the Other as an adversary.<sup>46</sup>

A situation in which action does not result in a positive achieving of the objective gives us one view of the construction of the political agent in Sartre. In the following a more detailed study of the agent will be put forward. However, before advancing to it a look into the concept of temporality is required as the agent in Sartre is a temporal agent.

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88, esp. p. 288 where Sartre writes already in 1939 that “le Castor m'obligeait à renoncer à la théorie du salut par l'art.”

45 It would fall out of the scope of this work to describe the figures of the adversary in the *Critique* - for this see for example Palonen 1992.

46 Here there is another major difference between *L'être et le néant* and the *Critique*: in the former such a counter horizon that would problematize the relation of the looker to the looked-at is not thematized even though certain constellations - for example within temporality the perspective of the future as a limit-situation and in the concept of bad faith - imply it.

## 5 TEMPORALITY

The Sartrean agent is temporal, historical, situated in the world and acts in a temporally construed action situation - time for Sartre, seen from the perspective of this present work, is the time of action. As is well known, for Sartre history was a problem with which he struggled for years, a problem which lies in the background of the *Critique* where we can find an extensive, outspoken attempt to describe history. This forms one central line of argumentation in the work, but beside it there runs another line, namely that of the temporal action of the historical agent. From the point of view of this present study where the aim is not to discuss history but rather the agent on the level of micro-politics it is the line of argumentation related to the temporality of the agent and of action and hence Sartre's concept of temporality which attract attention in the first place. Temporality is the concept in Sartre which further describes both the construction of the agent and of action as well as the action situation.

However, as the two concepts of history and temporality are to quite an extent intertwined in Sartre a look into his conception of history is also required in order to reconstruct the role played by temporality in the *Critique*. In this chapter I shall discuss the concept of history from the perspective of temporality and sketch another view of the agent as a political actor. However, as the primary view of temporality was taken by Sartre in *L'être et le néant* and as the discussion of this earlier work was never explicitly reformulated by Sartre, it is from there that one must start looking for the initial formulations of the question.

## 5.1 Temporality in *L'être et le néant*<sup>1</sup>

Sartre's conception of temporality and time in *L'être et le néant* is indeed a very complex one because he treats it, as most of the other subjects he discusses, from different points of view which are not always entirely compatible in terms of concepts or even contexts used. Hence it is somewhat surprising that compared to the amount of commentaries Sartre's other themes and concepts have invited there is very little commentary literature on his conception of temporality and time.<sup>2</sup> It seems that there prevails a certain kind of silent common acceptance of a "general" interpretation of this concept - the one presenting the ek-static past - present - future constellation as the only constituent structure of the conception with a stress laid on the future as enjoying a specific place in this constellation. The specificity the future gains in this interpretation is generally explained through describing action (and being) teleologically both as a future and a goal-oriented activity. Also a reference to Bergson as well as to Heidegger, whose conception of time presented in *Sein und Zeit* (1927) is both in the immediate background of Sartre's conception and an object of his criticism, is given (see e.g. Fell 1979, p. 83-87, Manser 1989, p. 25, Noudelmann 1996, p. 66 and EN e.g. p. 169, 188, 537-38). Yet, if we do not take this most apparent interpretation for granted, we can find other ways of interpreting the conception of temporality and time which Sartre describes extensively and in detail in *L'être et le néant*. I shall try to sketch here an alternative interpretation which is related both to the discussion of the concept of temporality in the *Critique* and to the agent seen from a political perspective.

Hence my intention here is to bring out such conceptual characteristics of Sartre's conception which can be read politically. I also propose to show that in the way he construes the concept of temporality there are lines of argumentation which pose the problem from a perspective which makes it possible to start the discussion from a point of view where the past - present - future constellation is understood in terms other than those referring to a (usually somewhat modified) linear conception of time. I shall argue that already in *L'être et le néant* there are such lines of argumentation which break with this setting and that later on, in the *Critique*, Sartre's concept of temporality together with the concepts of exteriorizing and interiorizing as well as that of history form an even more complex configuration which brings forth a very specific view of the agent and action.

My primary argument here is that in order to bring out the political aspects of Sartre's conception of temporality in this earlier work, temporality and the time of the world which Sartre forwards as two modes of the existence of time should be read more clearly as different conceptual constructions and from a point of view where the linear conception of time is relegated to the background and the

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1 This chapter is partly based on my article on the concept of temporality in *L'être et le néant*, forthcoming in *Leviathan (Sonderheft)*.

2 Anthony Manser, in his article *Sartre on Temporality* comments on this, too. He also adds that in his view the discussion of temporality is of crucial importance for the understanding of *L'être et le néant*, that "[t]he chapter on temporality is the hinge on which the argument of *L'être et le néant* pivots." (Manser 1989, p. 25)



limit-character it represents for Sartre brought to the fore. From the point of view of the agent time for Sartre is not a flowing river nor instants following each other but is something that is present in action as a limit. Sartre describes this in *L'Être et le néant* for example through the concept of death which he - criticizing Heidegger's view of "Sein zum Tode" - describes as an absurd, unexpected surprise due to a hazard which represents the victory of the others over us as we are no longer there to play the game (see EN p. 615ff., especially p. 619-21, 624-25 and also p. 159, 193)<sup>3</sup>. In addition, time for Sartre is not universal in a fashion which would close out different individual perspectives of it (see EN p. 281)<sup>4</sup>, it is contingent (see CM p. 34), the cohesion of time is fantomal (EN p. 267) and it arises in the world through the for-itself (EN p. 255). All these are features which refer to the agent as a central point of reference in relation to time - the perspective Sartre takes of time and temporality is that of human reality as an ek-static construction of the for-itself, the in-itself and of nothingness, not that of the universality of time.

Furthermore, I shall discuss how Sartre's concept of temporality on the basis of the discussion in *L'Être et le néant* forms a view of the concept of history present in the *Critique* and that this is directly related to his understanding of the agent and action. This indicates also the importance of the concept of temporality compared to that of time. Already in *L'Être et le néant* temporality stands out as a more central concept than time but this is far more visible in the *Critique* where Sartre leaves aside the discussion of the formal characteristics of time and discusses temporality from the point of view of lived experience and action. However, the conception presented in *L'Être et le néant* is the one which offers a view of the question in the *Critique* as it is in this earlier work that the most complete discussions can be found.<sup>5</sup>

As Sartre's conception of time is closely related to his views on human reality, a vision of his basic ontological constructions is needed in order to gain a view of the conceptions of temporality and time. I shall give here a brief account of them without going into further detail but stressing an interpretation which highlights the aspects that play an important role in the interpretation of temporality in this present study.<sup>6</sup>

### 5.1.1 Background Concepts to Temporality in *L'Être et le néant*

In *L'Être et le néant*, as already indicated, the well-known construction of human reality as in-itself, nothingness and for-itself forms a background to the concepts

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3 See also *Cahiers* where Sartre describes revolt as a limit to time in terms of action - revolt is "le Refus du Temps" (CM p. 416).

4 Sartre is criticizing Kant's views on the universality of time. Still, Sartre does speak about universal time in connection with the time of the world. See for example EN p. 255 and also CM p. 97.

5 There are other texts where Sartre discusses temporality, too, texts where certain interesting formulations of the question can be found, see for example *Vérité et existence* (1948).

6 For a more extensive presentation of the categories of *L'Être et le néant* see e.g. Catalano 1980.

of temporality and time. In this triad the in-itself is sometimes, perhaps for the sake of argument, referred to simply as “things” and the for-itself as “consciousness”, but it should be stressed that on the one hand the in-itself means things that are in the world, including for example our bodies. On the other hand, the in-itself does not include a view on “things nothing but as such”, i.e. things outside the human being’s world (should there be such “things”) about which Sartre has nothing to say.<sup>7</sup>

This is a conceptual difference which in spite of its apparent simplicity is of importance because of Sartre’s concept of the world: there is time and temporality only in a world where the human being is present, both in the sense of being-there and being in the present.<sup>8</sup> It is also of importance because the view Sartre takes of the in-itself and the for-itself is not construed on a simple division separating “things” from “consciousness” but is formulated as a view taken from the point of view of nothingness. Nothingness is that which “separates” us as the for-itself from the in-itself that we also are and which in Sartre indicates that our self does not coincide with itself (“la coïncidence du *soi* est impossible”, EN p. 146).

In other words, we are not self-identical, the in-itself, the “thing-like” in us, is identical with itself but as we are also for-itself we are at a distance from ourselves. Being contains a rupture, a breach which is a source of movement because the for-itself is a never ending but always failing quest to become the in-itself, of reaching over the breach in being. Hence being for Sartre is something that can be expressed in terms of we *are to be*; we are not merely something that *is* there. As nothingness brings into this construction the element of negation the non-coincidence and non-self-identity of the self with the in-itself can be expressed by saying that the human being both *is* and *is not* at once.

Moreover, the construction of human reality as in-itself, nothingness and for-itself is understood here in a specific sense: the human being as not self-identical is understood as *lacking* identity with the self and it is this lack which forms the specific relation which constitutes being. To explain this Sartre describes negations which establish a relation between what is negated and from what it is negated:

“[I] est un type de négations qui établit un rapport interne entre ce qu’on nie et ce de quoi on le nie. [...] cette opposition doit elle-même se fonder sur la négation interne primitive, c’est-à-dire sur le manque. [...] De toutes les négations internes, celle qui pénètre le plus profondément dans l’être, celle qui constitue *dans son être* l’être dont elle nie avec l’être qu’elle nie, c’est le *manque*” (EN p. 129n1 incl.)

This means that there is a negation that in its being negates the very being that it constitutes with the being that it negates. In other words, “primitive negation”, or lack, establishes a relation which is both constitution and negation at once. Here we are in the presence of the construction that forms a part of Sartre’s initial conceptual devices: a pole-relation of constitution and negation, a relation where

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7 On things in “an existing world” see for example Fell 1979, p. 88.

8 This difference is of importance also because it can be found in the background of Sartre’s criticism of Engels’ conception of the dialectic of nature both in *Matérialisme et Révolution* and in the *Critique* (see e.g. CRD I, p. 124-28).

the poles can be considered only within the tension of the relation and not separately<sup>9</sup>. The same construction is repeated both in his concepts of temporality and time.

Lack does not exist in things as they are “pure” in-itself and hence mere positivity. The human being, construed as in-itself, for-itself and nothingness and the human world construed by the human being can be lack, or, in other words, are constituted within this pole-relation as the negation of “pure” positivity and self-identity.<sup>10</sup>

“Ce manque n’appartient pas à la nature de l’en-soi, qui est tout positivité. Il ne paraît dans le monde qu’avec le surgissement de la réalité humaine. C’est seulement dans le monde humaine qu’il peut y avoir des manques.” (EN p. 129)

In other words, lack is the conceptual construction which indicates the human being as “open”, as not identical with her/his self in a thing-like manner. However, this “not identical” does not only mean “not identical with” but it also means that there is a specific twofold structure in being, the structure of the relation of the in-itself and the for-itself: the human being *is-not-what-(she/he)-is* (expressing the pole of the in-itself as negated) and *is-what-(she/he)-is-not* (expressing the pole of the for-itself reaching for the in-itself). This is also the structure on which Sartre construes his concept of temporality and it is characteristically a structure which is constituted as an asymmetric relation between two poles. The asymmetry of the relation is here displayed in that on the one hand the pole of in-itself is defined as mere passivity, as the one that is negated but does not “produce” anything. The non-identity of the for-itself on the other hand expresses activity as distance, breach and lack to be surpassed; it lacks a self which would be an in-itself and hence this self is to be perpetually construed in a relation of negation to the in-itself as well as in the perspective of the in-itself it would be were it not lacking the self as in-itself.

“En tant que, dans son rapport primitif à soi, la réalité humaine n’est pas ce qu’elle est, son rapport à soi n’est pas primitif et ne peut tirer son sens que d’un premier rapport qui est le rapport nul ou identité. C’est le soi qui serait ce qu’il est, qui permet de saisir le pour-soi comme n’étant pas ce qu’il est; la relation niée dans la définition du pour-soi - et qui, comme telle, doit être posée d’abord - c’est une relation donnée comme perpétuellement absente du pour-soi à lui-même sur le mode de l’identité. [...] Ce que le pour-soi manque, c’est le soi - ou soi-même comme en-soi.” (EN p. 132)

Hence in this relation the human being is a game played between the *is* and *is-not* where this *is - is-not* construction displays the non-identity and the distance we

9 Sartre refers to this using other expressions too: “[...] l’en-soi et le pour-soi ne sont pas juxtaposés. [...] elle [the consciousness, i.e. the for-itself] s’articule avec lui [the in-itself] pour constituer une totalité [...] [i]l n’y a en dehors de l’en-soi, rien, sinon un reflet de ce rien qui est lui-même polarisé et défini par l’en-soi [...]” (EN p. 715-16)

10 Thomas W. Busch (1990) uses “self-sameness” for Sartre’s word “identité” and of the variations of “identité à soi” (see e.g. EN p. 160 “identification à soi”, p. 177 “appartenance à soi de l’identité”) which may cause a problem, because in *L’être et le néant* as well as in the *Critique* Sartre makes a difference between what is “same” and what is “identical” (see e.g. EN p. 256 and CRD I, p. 453).

are from ourselves and where it displays them as different views of this initial construction.

Furthermore, in Sartre the ontological background construed for temporality and time through the concepts of in-itself and for-itself lies in that he confirms that it is through human reality that past, future and time come to the world (see e.g. EN p. 159, 168, 255). Things which are not in the world construed by the human being (should there be such "things")<sup>11</sup> have no time nor temporality and the in-itself, the things in the world have no temporality and have time only to the extent they are in relation to the human being who "gives" time to them (see EN p. 168 and also p. 255, see also Fell 1979, p. 83). In contrast to this, the for-itself has an original temporal structure which it brings to the world when it, as Sartre says, arises, i.e. comes into being (comes to be) and "discovers" temporality already there, spread in the world in the temporal ek-stases and also "discovers" time as something that is "moving" there. Sartre describes this discovered temporality as something that is all along the in-itself and unveiled as a long, monotonous wall which has no end (EN p. 255) and where the present of time is like a lizard that slowly creeps across this wall (EN p. 265, see also CRD II, p. 31) and where a person reading a book forms with the book a relation which is like a little, "personal" lizard of her/his universe (EN p. 314).

The difference made here between time and temporality is a difference in spatial figures: temporality is seen as spread, forming a space whereas time is seen as occupying a place.<sup>12</sup> This twofold structure radically contradicts the posing of time merely in linear terms as the relation of time and temporality can be established only through the presence of human reality in the world and this presence cannot be conceived of in linear terms.

The question of how this temporal for-itself, distanced from the in-itself by the nihilating act, can arise in the world, and, at the same time, give time to it, is a question of metaphysics, and Sartre, as a true ontologist, leaves it to the metaphysicists (see EN p. 713-15 and also p. 362-63). What he does say, however, is that there is no foundation to our self except the in-itself in its identity, which is an impossible foundation, firstly because the in-itself cannot be a foundation to anything as it "produces" nothing, it just *is* there, and secondly because the for-itself distanced from the in-itself by nothingness can never become identical with the in-itself and thus cannot found itself. A being without a foundation (or rather, with an impossible foundation as the attempts of human reality to found itself are always a failure) also means a being without a beginning, without an origin, that is, a contingent being whose only foundation can be in that it puts its own being

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11 Here we should perhaps add that for Sartre things such as nature are also construed by the human being inasmuch as they are in relation to the human being. Their character of being construed does not necessarily appear as such to us but there is nothing outside the human for Sartre and nothing that would not be mediated by the presence of the human being as activity in the world. See for example his discussion on death referred to above and his example on skiing (EN p. 670ff.).

12 The terms "space" and "place" are used here, too, in the specific sense given to them in this work, "space" as in "space of action" and "place" as in "identifiable point". "Space" as usually related to the equation "space and time" is left here in the margin because Sartre's view of time and temporality forms an attempt to rethink the dividing line between these two concepts through posing temporality as a point of view to them both.

in question. This is another aspect which is of importance to Sartre's concept of temporality: the point of view which is taken of the world and of existence here is not, and cannot be chronological - as there is no "beginning" from where being could "come", there is no "before" or "after" in this construction.

"L'être est, sans raison, sans cause et sans nécessité; la définition même de l'être nous livre sa contingence originelle. [...] Mais si les questions sur l'origine de l'être ou sur l'origine du monde sont dépourvues de sens [...], il n'en est pas de même pour l'origine du pour-soi. Le pour-soi est tel, en effet, qu'il a le droit de se retourner sur sa propre origine. L'être par qui le pourquoi arrive dans l'être a le droit de poser son propre pourquoi, puisqu'il est lui-même une ininterrogation, un pourquoi. A cette question l'ontologie ne saurait répondre [...] tout processus de fondement de soi est rupture de l'être-identique de l'en-soi, recul de l'être par rapport à lui-même et apparition de la présence à soi ou conscience. [...] La temporalisation de la conscience n'est pas un progrès ascendant vers la dignité de "causa sui", c'est un écoulement de surface dont l'origine est [...] l'impossibilité d'être cause de soi. [...] le pour-soi est effectivement perpétuel projet de se fonder soi-même en tant qu'être et perpétuel échec de ce projet." (EN p. 713-14)

"Il ne faudrait pas croire que le Pour-soi existe d'abord et surgit au monde dans l'absolue nouveauté d'un être sans passé, pour se constituer ensuite et peu à peu, un Passé. Mais quelle que soit la surrexion dans le monde du Pour-soi, il vient au monde dans l'unité ek-statique d'un rapport avec son Passé; il n'y a pas un commencement absolu qui deviendrait passé sans avoir de passé, mais, comme le Pour-soi, en tant que Pour-soi, a à être son passé, il vient au monde *avec* un Passé." (EN p. 184)

In brief, the cornerstone of Sartre's conception of temporality is human reality as non-coincident with itself (non-identity) and at-a-distance from itself, i.e. as that whose constitutive characteristics are to lack self-identity and compactness. In one word, human reality is spread. Being spread, also expressed by Sartre as being decompressed (e.g. EN p. 267, see also p. 472 for "étalé"), forms a space which is not compact or identical with itself. The whole construction of being, to the description of which Sartre devotes pages and pages is destined, in a way, to show this one thing: this spread being is "broken" within, and as "broken" it is freedom and the principle which organizes being in such a way that there is a world - and time.

## 5.1.2 Time and Temporality I

### 5.1.2.1 The Differentiation of Time and Temporality

Based on the conceptual differentiation of the in-itself and the for-itself there are two different levels, or we could say, realities of time: the original temporality of human reality and the time of the world.

"[L]a temporalité n'est pas un temps universel [...] mais elle est l'intra-structure de l'être qui est sa propre néantisation, c'est-à-dire *le mode d'être* propre à l'être-pour-soi." (EN p. 188, see also Flynn 1986, p. 6)

Original temporality is, so to say, an attribute of the human being insofar as the human being is for-itself and time an attribute which the human being gives to

the world insofar as it is in-itself. For Sartre these two have an entirely different structure and it is, in my view, precisely the difference between these two concepts, and the way Sartre relates them to each other that are of special interest in his text even though his description of time and temporality is, and here I agree with Catalano (see 1980, p. 143), somewhat ambiguous at this point. For Sartre original temporality where the three dimensions of time can be studied forms a kind of background fabric to the time of the world:

“La seule méthode possible pour étudier la temporalité c’est de l’aborder comme une totalité qui domine ses structures secondaires et qui leur confère leur signification. [...] Toutesfois nous ne pouvons nous lancer dans un examen de l’être du Temps sans avoir élucidé préalablement [...] le sens trop souvent obscur de ses trois dimensions. [...] Et surtout il faut faire paraître chaque dimension envisagée *sur le fond* de la totalité temporelle en gardant toujours présente à la mémoire “l’unselbständigkeit” de cette dimension.” (EN p. 150, see also Fell 1979, p. 83)

This highlights the characteristics of temporality construed as a spread structure instead of describing it in terms of chronological time. Furthermore, the figures of nothingness, distance and lack express the relation between the two poles of the in-itself and the for-itself. These two poles, in their turn, are equal to past (the in-itself) and future (the for-itself). However, the future which is the *is-what-is-not* should not be understood in an Aristotelian sense as equivalent to a present which is “not yet here” (see EN p. 170) and correspondingly, the past should not be understood as the present which is “no longer there”.

The “not yet” and “no longer” are categories of the time of the world, not of temporality, because in temporality there is no before or after with a reference to time as a *lapse of time* as it takes a different point of view: the for-itself temporalizes itself and arises in the world with all three temporal dimensions (see e.g. EN p. 181-82, 267).<sup>13</sup> If used to describe temporality, the “not yet” and the “no longer” hide the specific characteristics of past, present and future, and especially those of the present because the past - present - future construction forms an asymmetric relation: the past and the future are not related to the present on such symmetric terms as the “not yet” and “no longer” imply. Furthermore, for Sartre there is no such thing as the present as an isolated “unit” or as a present that would neatly limit itself to what is past and future. In other words, for Sartre the present is not that which would be construed of instantaneous “nows” (EN p. 150-53, 164-65, see SG p. 9, 11 and CRD II, p. 11; see also Catalano 1980, p. 112-113, Le Huenen and Perron 1972, 567, 570).<sup>14</sup> However, even though Sartre categorically refuses the view of a present as an instant, he does not abandon the concept of instant, but gives it a different role, that of a “sudden”. I shall return to this a little later (see p. 133-34 below).

13 My view here contradicts that of some, if not most commentaries made on Sartre’s concept of temporality. It is common to see Sartre’s temporal ek-stases referred to as “no longer” and “not yet”. For an example see Yovel 1978-79, p. 482.

14 See also Compton (1982, p. 586, 587) who agrees that Sartre does not have a concept of temporality construed of instants but who at the same time relates Sartre’s conception to the creation of the meaning of time from outside time itself (a god-like creation) which in my view represents a misunderstanding of the dimensional character of Sartre’s concept of temporality.

### 5.1.2.2 Ek-static Temporality: Grammatical Figures, Presence and Objectives

In Sartre each of the three temporal ek-stases has its own structure and they form the three dimensions of the temporality of the for-itself. They are displayed in the ek-stases of the for-itself, as *is-not-what-is*, *is-what-is-not* and their synthesis at-a-distance as lack as *is-not-what-is - is-what-is-not*:

“Le Pour-soi, pour nous en tenir aux premières ek-stases [...] peut et doit être à la fois 1° ne pas être ce qu’il est; 2° être ce qu’il n’est pas; 3° dans l’unité d’un perpétuel renvoi, être ce qu’il n’est pas et ne pas être ce qu’il est. Il s’agit bien de trois dimensions ek-statiques, le sens de l’ek-stase étant la distance à soi.” (EN p. 183)

This is a structure of the being of the for-itself insofar as it is temporality. With temporality it is a question of experience and of action, or as Flynn puts it, it is a question of “ekstatic temporality or lived time” (Flynn 1979, p. 6). Instead of moving in time the for-itself generates itself in temporal dimensions.

The three ek-stases, the ambiguity of temporality, the *is-not - is* express the Sartrean categories of freedom and nothingness, and the openness of being: where the in-itself only has one dimension, that of past, the for-itself has all three dimensions, it is dispersed, spread, or as Sartre says, diasporatic (EN p. 182, see also p. 188). Should this perspective of Sartre’s concept of temporality be lost an interpretation would merely form a description of past, present and future as moments in time and could not reach the central problems Sartre raises. Such a reading would also risk hiding the characteristic of representing aspects of being which the three ek-stases have in Sartre.

Perhaps an easy way to approach Sartre’s view of the past and the future would be to illustrate the question through grammatical figures of time: past, present and future tense.<sup>15</sup> The past is something that *is* (i.e. is in the present tense) in the past tense, the present something that *is* in the present tense and the future something that *is* (again, in the present tense) in the future tense. The corresponding verb forms for us are *was*, *is* and *will be*, but all *are* (in the present tense) that tense. We repeatedly find formulations which can be read in this fashion in Sartre’s text, i.e. *au passé, au présent, à l’avenir / au futur*: “C’est au passé que je suis ce que je suis” (EN p. 161-62, see also EN p. 158, 161-64, 169-173, 190-93, 259-60, 265, 577, 583, 584, CM p. 83, 97, 479 and also Baudelaire (1947) p. 215). In addition to this he uses several different formulations including the words *être* (being) and *futur* or *avenir* (future) and expressions he creates himself, i.e. verbal forms which are not normally used in the French language (e.g. *est été*, EN p. 182, 183, 247, 712; *d’être-été*, EN p. 207, and also [une] “*être-été*” EN p. 233, see also Flynn 1979, p. 6) to express that our relation to past is not that of *having* one but that of *being* our past. In a way we could say that the past and the future are here “grammatical categories” of the present and not independent entities.

15 Gaston Berger, in his *Phénoménologie du temps et prospective* (1964 (1950), p. 131-32) discusses the insufficiency of expressing what has happened and what will happen in time only through the mere use of verbal tenses because they do not express what he is looking for, the meaning which is given to these modalities of time. In Sartre the meaning of the temporal ek-stases does not form a question and the use of verbal tenses serves first of all to differentiate time and temporality and secondly to stress the dimensional character of temporality.

In the ek-static construction of temporality the present, which is an *is* as a grammatical category of the present tense, is not an *is* in the sense of being something by itself (“le Présent *n’est pas*.”, EN p. 167, 168), but it forms a view of the past as *is-not-what-it-is* and of the future as *is-what-it-is-not*. In relation to Sartre’s ontological postulations the present forming a view of the past and the future represents the categories of nothingness, distance, lack, and, ultimately, choice and freedom (see EN p. 543).

As the present forms a view of the past and of the future it can only be present to them, not a present as opposed to them:

“Le soi représente donc une distance idéale dans l’immanence du sujet par rapport à lui-même, une façon de ne pas *être sa propre coïncidence*, d’échapper à l’identité tout en la posant comme unité, bref d’être en équilibre perpétuellement instable entre l’identité comme cohésion absolue sans trace de diversité et l’unité comme synthèse d’une multiplicité. C’est ce que nous appellerons la *présence à soi*.” (EN p. 119)

The self, construed in the three ek-static dimensions, which are in the past, present and future tense as well as constituted in the pole-relation of negation and lack and at a distance from itself, is presence to itself and all these equal to freedom. The present is negation (of the in-itself, or of the past) and projection (of the self, of the future) that takes place in the present. It is here that the very heart of the political dimension of Sartre’s conception of temporality lies: it is seen as open and referring in terms of negation and projection to the possibility of change as a constitutive aspect of choice and freedom. This openness can also be seen in terms of chance, an opportunity to play with the different aspects of temporality in terms of projections of future and (re)interpretations of the past in the present. However, with regard to the future this holds insofar as the projected future is not seen in terms of being identical to a realized possibility. Also, the choice of “project” in terms of an engagement with a possibility narrows the field where chance plays a role. The opportunity to play is present more against the background of the “impossible” than against the “possible” - the impossible being here the impossibility of being what we are-to-be.

Furthermore, the present is negation and projection in such a way that the in-itself is negated and the for-itself projected through the mediation of an end, an objective. If unproblematized, this objective is generally viewed as being *in the future*, but in my view, within Sartre’s conception of temporality it cannot be seen *in time* because original temporality is not of time and does not contain the dimensions of “before” and “after”. Furthermore the in-itself and for-itself are not categories of time, but categories of being, categories of experience (see e.g. Manser 1989, p. 30) and for Sartre all experience is temporal (see e.g. Fell 1979, p. 151). On the contrary, the objective is a limit figure with which Sartre brings forward the dimensionality of temporality, the “spreadness” of the self over past and future and its being present to itself at a distance. For Sartre the objective is a “pure esquisse qui joue une liberté devant elle-même” (CM p. 309). Hence its being a future objective does not refer to time but to the *is-what-it-is-not*, i.e. that which has to be “done” as opposed to the past which is the *is-not-what-it-is*, i.e. that which has to be, so to say, “undone”. The future is an interpretation of the



world and the past is a re-interpretation of the world - these are the differences in the quality of past and future.

Also, the objective is the reverse side of lack and as such it is not in the future but "here", in our presence to the world and to ourselves and hence not something to be achieved in the course of time.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, in spite of the stress Sartre lays on the future in terms of an objective, it has no such primacy over the two other temporal ek-stases in the frame of his concept of temporality as the general interpretation often claims - on the contrary, he gives a certain primacy to the present when arguing against Heidegger's view which places stress on the future ek-stasis:

"Toutefois il convient malgré tout de mettre l'accent sur ek-stase présente - et non comme Heidegger sur ek-stase future - parce que c'est en tant que révélation à lui-même que le Pour-soi est son passé, comme ce qu'il a à-être-pour-soi dans un dépassement néantisant, et c'est comme révélation à soi qu'il est manqué et qu'il est hanté par son futur, c'est-à-dire par ce qu'il est pour soi là-bas, à distance. Le Présent n'est pas ontologiquement "antérieur" au Passé et au Futur [...] mais il est creux de non-être indispensable à la forme synthétique totale de la Temporalité." (EN p. 188, see also Fell 1979, p. 86 and Catalano 1980, p. 122)

Still, Sartre also argues against the primacy of the present (as presence), but does this in a context where he rejects the understanding of the present as instantaneous, which according to him, would give the present a primacy over the past and make the past non-existent, forgotten - it would be a past which "glisse de lui comme un songe" (EN p. 153).<sup>17</sup> The present cannot have primacy in the sense that we would start considering time and temporality from the present; temporality has to be seen as a totality, in the relations existing between its three dimensions (see EN p. 153, see also CM p. 271).<sup>18</sup>

### 5.1.3 Time and Temporality II: Past, Present and Future in Temporality

At this point the relational construction of the three temporal ek-static dimensions of original temporality is described. From here it is possible to see more in detail what past, present and future represent within this concept of original temporality.

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16 Philip Knee comes close to this by saying "[i]l faut donc agir dans le moment, mais sans nécessairement savoir au nom de quoi." (1993, p. 2)

17 On this see also *La temporalité chez Faulkner* (SIT I).

18 In Fell's view, however, we can consider the present as having primacy: "[t]he present is the primary ekstasis in the sense that it refers us more directly to the source of time, to the original event of the explosion of being and its reconstitution as a synthetic totality." (1979, p. 87) I agree with Fell here in that we can interpret Sartre's concept of temporality as an ontological construction which gives a certain primacy to the present. This primacy, however becomes problematic when we step into the time of the world where the "direction" of action is not a "return" from the past and future to the present but more clearly toward *what-is-not*, i.e. the future.

### 5.1.3.1 Past Was - or Was It?

Past is an ex-present which has had a future (EN p. 160) and it is organized through the present (EN p. 152). For Sartre it is not the distance in time which forms the criterium for the past, but the relation to the present. For example the dead who are not a past of the present of those living, i.e. who do not “share” a past with someone still living, do not form a part of the past, but have turned to nothing (*anéantis*) (see EN p. 155-156).<sup>19</sup> What is questionable in Sartre’s view here is, to use the vocabulary of the *Critique*, “a trace inscribed in the “matter”” i.e. what about those dead, who have never shared a moment in time with any of those living, but have left “traces” (for example music) that are “used” by those living - a question which refers to that which haunted Sartre throughout almost all his work, namely the problem of history.

The relation of the past to the present is actualized through the human being and hence the past is singularized, it is always somebody’s pasts in the present. I am someone in the present who has been the present of my existing in the past. However, this does not mean that the past is placed in the present, on the contrary, Sartre’s view is the exact opposite: it is the present that is its own past:

“Le passé peut bien alors être conçu comme étant *dans* le présent, mais on s’est ôté les moyens de présenter cette immanence autrement que comme celle d’une pierre au fond de la rivière. Le passé peut bien hanter le présent, il ne peut pas *l’être*; c’est le présent qui *est* son passé.” (EN p. 156)

“L’être présent est donc le fondement de son propre passé [...]” (EN p. 158)

Our past is in the past tense for us who are present in the present tense and it is not one all-embracing universal past, but different, individual pasts which form the past - a structural unity which does not make the particular pasts “disappear”.

“Il n’y a pas d’abord un passé universel qui se particulariserait ensuite en passés concrets. Mais, au contraire, ce que nous trouvons d’abord, ce sont *des* passés. Et le problème véritable [...] sera de saisir par quel processus ces passés individuels peuvent s’unir pour former *le* passé.” (EN p. 155)

Here is another point where the problem of history enters the scene: the relation between singular pasts and the past, a problem implicitly present in *L’être et le néant* in Sartre’s discussion on the singularization of our original temporality.

Within original temporality the past and future are singularized in two ways. Firstly they are related to each other first through being mine (see EN p. 153-154), i.e. they are something the agent “has” as dimensions of experience. Secondly, the past is the past of this present or “[m]on passé [...] est originellement passé *de ce* présent.” (EN p. 154) Starting from Sartre’s concept of the past we can see that he singularizes the ek-static dimensions specifically on the level of temporality (see e.g. Palonen 1992, p. 190, 207). The time of the world is

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19 See also *Cahiers* where Sartre briefly discusses the question of historical time in terms of past and describes the dead as all having the same time, i.e. he differentiates between the dimensional temporal perspective of the agent and the time of the dead as *same*, as having only the past for a perspective (CM p. 97).

universal, but temporality is singularized and it is because human reality as temporality brings time to the world that the world is singularized, too - in the world there are things, or as Sartre says, "thises" (*ceci*) via which we orientate in the world, instead of an unstructured "something". Human reality as original temporality organizes the world into a temporal construction where the "thises" are experienced as temporal. In other words, we organize the world from the perspective of our own temporality or as Sartre says, temporality is nothing but an organ of vision (EN p. 256, see also p. 255).<sup>20 21</sup>

In addition to describing past as singularity Sartre describes it, as has been already mentioned, through making a difference between having to be one's past and having a past. Human reality does not have a past but has to be its past and this is one pole in our relation to the past while the other one is that of not being what we are, i.e. negation and distance. Hence the I, who has to be my past is at the same time the I who cannot be it - the distance construed within this relation is never overcome.

"[J]e ne suis mon propre passé [...] j'ai à l'être pour ne pas l'être et que j'ai à ne pas l'être pour l'être." and "[...] je ne suis pas ce que j'étais [...] parce que je suis par rapport à mon être sur le mode de liaison interne du *n'être pas*." (EN p. 161, see also p. 157)

I am my past in the past tense and I cannot thematize my past which I have to be as I am able to thematize my future which I am not. Instead, I am my past in terms of surpassing it: "[I]e passé c'est l'en-soi que je suis en tant que dépassé." (EN p. 162) The *is-not-what-it-is* character of the past refers to past as (my) facticity, but as contingent facticity:

"L'en-soi dépassé [...] le [the for-itself] hante comme sa contingence originelle. Il ne peut jamais l'atteindre, ni se saisir jamais comme *étant* ceci ou cela, mais il ne peut non plus

20 Sartre comes back to the theme of vision as organization of the world in his *Vérité et Existence* (see VE p. 46-47) where he also sees the end, the objective in terms of organizing ("[...] la fin est organisation éclairante des moyens.", VE p. 44) both in the context of the temporalization of truth and the possibility of an error, anticipation, action and change. His (temporary) conclusion is that "La vérité du pudding, dit James, c'est d'être mangé." (VE p. 51) This discussion is closely related to the discussion of the future in *L'être et le néant*; it sketches a field where the existing has a provisional character in the same way that truth does (VE p. 47). He also says: "[m]ais comme la vérité est illumination par un acte et que l'acte est choix, je dois décider la vérité, la vouloir, donc je peux *ne pas* la vouloir. La condition que la vérité soit, c'est la perpétuelle possibilité de la refuser. Ainsi s'éclaire la liberté de l'homme: en effet tout ce qui par lui *paraît*, paraît par temporalisation sur un fond où cette manifestation n'existait pas." (VE p. 59). This is a field where it can be questioned, where truth invites the risk of errors and error means stopping, a prolonged instant (VE p. 57), i.e. reality as an ongoing one-directional process where Truth could be established is contested and the possibility - impossibility limit-structure of this establishing is seen as a game played in the relation between the temporal being (i.e. the human being) and the world: "Ainsi la Vérité paraît sur fond d'un monde qui peut rendre la vérité impossible. Contre cette possibilité de son impossibilité elle lutte et s'affirme par son existence même. En voyant ce que je vois je fais surgir la possibilité qu'aucune vision ne soit plus jamais possible en aucun point du monde, mais en même temps je crée l'impossibilité qu'il n'y ait eu ce moment temporel (avec ses trois dimensions ek-statiques) où la Vérité éclairait le monde. Ainsi paraît un *absolu*. La Vérité est un absolu sur fond de risque suprême." (VE p. 130, see also VE p. 53-59)

21 The problem of the singular and the universal reappears in Sartre on a fuller scale after the *Critique* in his lecture on Kierkegaard (*L'universel singulier*) and in *L'idiot*.

s'empêcher d'être à distance de soi ce qu'il est. Cette contingence [...] c'est la *facticité*, mais c'est aussi le passé. Facticité et passé sont deux mots pour désigner une seule et même chose." (EN p. 162) "[...] le passé c'est ce que je suis sans pouvoir le vivre. Le passé, c'est substance." (EN p. 163)

Or we could say the same as Catalano does through characterizing the past as a context: "[...] my past is the context for my surpassings of myself" (1980., p. 115, on context, see also Busch 1990) to which I would like to add that it is a context for action, or an aspect of my being. If we see the past as a context, we can also see the future as a projected image, and consider politics something that is "acted" in the relation of this context and this image in the present tense.

### 5.1.3.2 Present Is - or Is It?

For Sartre the present *is not*.

"Car la négation porte non sur une différence de manière d'être qui distinguerait le Pour-soi de l'être, mais sur une différence d'être. C'est ce qu'on exprime brièvement en disant que le Présent *n'est pas*." (EN p. 167, see also p. 168, see also Fell 1979, p. 83, 87)

What there is, is the agent as presence construed in the dimensions of past, present and future. The present is a relation which has both past and future as its constitutive parts in the *is - is-not* relation (see EN p. 168). Hence the present is not a "there" - not a place, but presence to the world, a never achieved identity, always at-a-distance presence which cannot be formed of instants. Furthermore, the present cannot be seen as opposite to the past or future but to absence and it is disintegration of the self, lack of identity (see EN p. 165, 166, 168).

Presence as being present to the world where it is realized means that presence is situational experience, a perspective of the world (EN p. 165, see also p. 166 and Catalano 1980, p. 116n6). Furthermore, as the in-itself is facticity, and as the for-itself is present to all in-itself, it is facticity that structures the perspective where the presence is presence to the world. This means that the facticity of the world is something on which human reality as for-itself takes a perspective which in its turn brings about the organization of the world into "here" and "there" (as opposed to being simply present) in the same way the human being organizes the world into temporal dimensions (see EN p. 166). This also means that being there instead of being somewhere else is a contingent perspective on the world; the facticity of our being is at once something that is not present as presence but *is* there and construes the contingent perspective we take of the world as well as that which places us in a specific "point" in the world. The for-itself, in its turn, is presence to both of these aspects.

In a way we could say that in Sartre the for-itself forms a conceptual construction which can be seen in terms of playing with these aspects as it is presence in the mode of not-being and of distance. This as such already forms a political perspective in Sartre as the perspective of the agent embraces both the being present (presence) indicating distance and the possibility of change embodied in the contingency of the "already there" (in the world) and of the "where" (in the

world). This means, as Agnes Heller says, that contingency is not “a property which may be added to the human condition as well as not” (Heller 1993, p. 1) and it could well be described by her figure of a second-order wager which describes contingency in terms of the possibility of refusing to bet on either of the terms of the wager, i.e. in this present case either on the “here” or “there”. Refusing does not mean here avoiding betting but engaging in the situation through betting against both bets with which we are confronted (see *ibid.*, p. 13ff.).

In other words, both “here” and “there” form perspectives on the world and whichever the “here” is, there is always a “there” as a contingent possibility. The “here” is not seen as an origin or as a starting point and the “there” as something which is not “here”. In Sartre they form figures for the contingency of the perspective taken of the world and for the change it implies through the postulation of a plurality of perspectives. At the same time they form figures for the perspective taken through facticity - the condition of being in the world is twofold and we cannot place our bets on either of the terms.

Hence on the one hand, the “here” and “there” as well as temporality are qualities we give to the world and as such they are constantly in question where the for-itself as lack and distance questions its own being. “Playing”, on the other hand means here that facticity, as it is enclosed in the field where the for-itself is spread into temporal dimensions, is not a closed entity but a structuring aspect of our being which can be opened for new perspectives as the for-itself present both denies it and escapes from it. Furthermore, as presence is realized in the form of an escape (*la fuite*) (EN p. 168) “from” self-identity “toward” the future, i.e. toward that which we are not in the mode of having to be, it forms an opening toward our possibilities. Once again, this reference to the future as the direction of the escape<sup>22</sup>, is not a reference to a future which could be placed somewhere ahead of us in time, but a reference to the ontological structure of being - the future and the possibilities are in the future tense, they are “will be” “now” - a reference to the asymmetric relation between the past, present and future. Escape as an opening toward possibilities is another kind of “second order wager”: it is betting against betting either on “staying” or “leaving” through betting on both at once. The contingency aspect which is highlighted here as escape is a contingent refusal of contingency and hence maintains it:

“La fuite du pour-soi est refus de la contingence [...]. Mais cette fuite constitue précisément en contingence ce qui est fui: le pour-soi fui est laissé sur place. [...] Cette totalité [of temporalisation] n'est jamais achevée, elle est totalité qui se refuse et qui se fuit [...]” (EN p. 196).

From another perspective escape is, so to say, the reverse side of failure: the for-itself as it cannot become an in-itself, a thing-like identity, is failure and the for-

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22 Escape is one of Sartre's concepts which can be seen here as a dimensional figure to the extent that it refers to a future which is understood as the distance that the self as presence maintains to itself in the present. The expressions Sartre often uses for the future are “in” or “from the front”, and the one for past “behind”. “En tant que Pour-soi il [the present] a son être hors de lui, devant et derrière. Derrière, il *était* son passé et devant il *sera* son futur.” (EN p. 168). Also, the present is not a “time” with a certain content, but more a “name” for a certain dimensional temporal position in the open space of the diaspora.

itself as it is distance taken to the in-itself, is escape. Or, we could say that failure and escape, construing different aspects of being, form the two poles from which the relation of the for-itself to the in-itself is seen from different perspectives as not self-identical and as distance and lack. The present, then, is presence that is open, in different ways, both toward the past and future and hence temporality is not a closed entity containing a “fixed” horizon of possibilities but a “becoming” totality with a changing horizon which refuses and escapes itself (ibid.) hence rendering also this horizon contingent.

### 5.1.3.3 Future Will Be - or Will It?

The future, too, comes to the world through the human being, it is something to come, in the present tense.

“[C]’est par la réalité humaine que le Futur arrive dans le monde.” (EN p. 168)  
 “Si l’avenir se profile à l’horizon du monde, ce ne peut être que par un être qui *est* son propre avenir.” “[...] qui est à-venir pour lui-même” (EN p. 168).

The for-itself is not “attente de l’avenir”, awaiting the future as a defined future with a content that is being waited for because the future, too is a relation of negation, the for-itself cannot *be* what it would become, i.e. a determined future. For Sartre the future is a “projected meeting with a remotely distant self” (Catalano 1980, p. 118, EN p. 172), it is the awaiting of myself, or the construing of myself as “spatializing”. This “spatializing”, however, does not refer to Sartre’s description of human reality as spatializing space through temporality (see EN p. 233-34) but to its counterpart which can be found in the conceptual constructions Sartre uses to describe both the self and temporality.

The self (or the I) is expressed here in dimensional terms. It is extended, spread and this can be read politically. I may be afraid I might not be there at this very rendez-vous point in the future which I have set for myself - I might change my mind and go elsewhere, or so to say, the games I am involved in, through my choices, action and projects, reorganize the rendez-vous point, change it into a possibility it “was” not. The political in this context is about trying to change these rendez-vous points, those of others as well as our own. Seen from this perspective, we can say that politics is about changing the rendez-vous points of the past, of the present and of the future: the past is re-read and the rendez-vous point which exists as the future and forms a relevant reference point to action is “no longer” there, action is reorganized and interpretations of the past, present and future are changed and relativized.

In addition, the “spatializing” of temporality in Sartre does not express the bringing “in” of the place or the space as relations of the in-itself - given to it by the temporalizing for-itself - as such but expresses non-identity and the construction of the agent’s space of action within temporality which reaches beyond an instant in time as well as a point in space. The politics of the instantaneous is not present in Sartre but the perspective of reorganization of action which is rendered possible through the spread construction of temporality entails the possibility of

the sudden and of dramatic, such as the Apocalyptic moment in the *Critique* where the dimensions of time are also fused into a “now” and the appearance of the for-itself as the only adventure of the in-itself (EN p. 269). Hence the impossibility of the politics of the instantaneous does not exclude the possibility of the politics of “à chaud” which is not about an instant but about “fusing” the three temporal ek-stases (see CRD I, p. 410).<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, the reorganizing of action in this sense puts aside the view of temporality constructed in the dimensions of past, present and future in terms of a linear, chronological time. Time for Sartre is a limit figure through which the possibility of change within the dimensional structure of temporality is postulated. Within this point of view I agree with Manser when he states that bad faith “is a game played with the three temporal ‘ekstases’, past, present and future” (1989, p. 25) and with reservations with Vogt for whom the present is an ideal limit between the past and future where these both are played (1995, 144). The reservations I would like to make here concern the understanding of the present as a line dividing time into past and future and hence rendering it (nearly) non-existent, which is not a view Sartre advances. However, Vogt’s view does not need to be interpreted as a reference to this as he sees both time and subject as ek-static, or spread (see *ibid.*, p. 145).

In Sartre it is the “grammatical categories” which show the “direction” of this “being spread”: the present forms an ideal limit figure for the past and future which are present in the present, in the past and in the future tense. Hence the present is also a figure for change, and bad faith, to which Manser refers, is another limit figure Sartre uses to express action as change, as a possibility opened through the impossibility of coincidence with the self, through bad faith as the agent’s failing attempt to be in-itself. While the agent is construed through the impossibility of escaping bad faith and as a failure of *being* in bad faith (one *acts* in bad faith), it is also construed as the impossibility to *be* in the future, and is doomed to be a failing escape from itself toward what it *is-not*.

Here again, the future on this plane of original temporality is not a category of time - the future can only be referred to through the negative relation of the for-itself to itself which is mediated by the objective and is realized as a constant possibilization of possibilities. This is the Sartrean finality (or teleology - a “minimum” of teleology, see Palonen 1992, p. 93 and e.g. EN p. 170): a human being is always more than she/he would be if she/he were a present which is in-itself and is always a dimensional structure with an opening which equals to the possibility of change. This opening is expressed in terms of the past as a failure to be one with what I am, as lack of identity, and of the future as a failure to become one with what I am not, as lack of the possible. This means that the projected possibilities are never realized:

“Je me projette vers le Futur pour m’y fondre avec ce dont je manque [...]” (EN p. 172).  
 “Le Possible est ce *de quoi* manque le Pour-soi pour être soi ou si l’on préfère

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23 See Lenain (1987, p. 13n17), who sees this kind of politics both as dangerous because they give an advantage to the adversary and as contrary to diplomacy which implies a skill to play with time.

l'apparition à distance de ce que je suis. [...] Le Futur est le manque qui l'arrache [the for-itself], en tant que manque, à l'en-soi de la Présence." (EN p. 170)

Therefore, in order to be the future, the future is always in question, it is not *this* future (see Catalano 1980, p. 119), i.e. the possibilities which are construed as possibilities in the present. In this sense Sartre postulates two futures: the one projected and never realized and the one actually realized. With regard to this interpretation I would like to propose here a difference in stress compared to Catalano according to whom "[t]he future is possibilities opened by this presence-at-a-distance of the for-itself." (ibid., p. 118). The future, in my view, *is* not the possibilities, it is postulated as a temporal dimension construed of projected possibilities. In my view this is a difference of importance, because, precisely, it is not these projected possibilities that will be realized - all three ek-static dimensions form a three-dimensional space where chronological time is not an issue and where the three ek-stases, past, present and future, are not "determined" but are constantly subject to change, where the human being is not self-identical but always to be redefined and where the facticity of the world is contingent and constantly questioned.

This is where the political character of Sartre's conception of temporality is clearly displayed. It is a construction related to action which is not thematized in relation to the constancy or irreversibility of time and for Sartre it is through this construction only that there is time in the world. This means discussing the whole question in terms of our singular temporal experience with such constructed perspectives of time which can be contested and reformulated. The "formulation" of these perspectives of time is, according to Sartre done by what he calls "psychic temporality", an operational device he uses to link original temporality to the time of the world. He uses it in a fashion which includes an opening toward the de- and reorganizing of the perspectives through a relation where the unreflected and reflected as aspects of our experience enter into the game (see EN p. 196 ff.). This part of Sartre's conception, however, seems to be less elaborated, especially in the sense that he here takes recourse to somewhat psychologized concepts of reflection and knowledge which are not of special political interest. In my view it is especially from the two different concepts of future which Sartre construes that we can find a politically interesting way of relating the two concepts of time, the time of the world and temporality.

#### 5.1.4 The Two Futures

The first of the two futures is the future of original temporality as projected possibilities. As the projected possibilities are never realized, it is not the projected future that is realized, either. Our future here is something that *is-not*. Instead of the projected future *another* future is realized, a future which in fact is present (presence to future being, see EN p. 171), because it is "already" realized, or is there only when it turns into the present. However, this "turning" into the present should be understood here in a specific sense. A close reading of Sartre's exposition in *L'être et le néant* shows that for him the future never *becomes* present - his



point of view is not that of chronological time and hence instead of a present that "once was a future" there is a present which creates its own future when projecting the possibilities (which "will" not be realized).

"Le Futur tout entier du Pour-soi tombe au Passé comme futur avec ce Pour-soi lui-même. Il sera futur passé d'un certain Pour-soi ou futur antérieur. Ce futur ne se réalise pas." (EN p. 172-173)

"[L]e futur ne se laisse pas rejoindre, il glisse au Passé comme ancien futur et le Pour-soi présent se dévoile dans toute sa facticité, comme fondement de son propre néant et derechef comme manque d'un nouveau futur." (EN p. 173)

"[...] le Futur primitif [projected] n'est point réalisé [...]" (EN p. 191)

"Même si mon présent est rigoureusement identique en son contenu au futur vers quoi je me projetais par delà l'être, ce n'est pas ce présent vers quoi je me projetais car je me projetais vers le futur en tant que futur, c'est-à-dire en tant que point de rapprochement de mon être, en tant que lieu du surgissement du *Soi*." (EN p. 173)

Furthermore, the present is not a *previous* future as it is only contingent presence to being and hence does not have a foundation in time. The present as presence and as *is - is-not* is not derived from the other temporal ek-stases but can be referred to only as an attribute of action.

This is the point where the two concepts of time form a politically significant setting.<sup>24</sup> If we think of this construction in terms of time the present as presence which is in the future seen from a "now" is the realized future, but it is a future of which we have no knowledge about *as future* and which we cannot project - we know that it "has been" the future only because now it is present, i.e. we can know about this future only "when" it is in the world, in time, "when" it is present. In terms of temporality Sartre does not construe a continuity similar to a flux of time but on the contrary postulates temporality as broken through the breach formed by the presence - absence relation of the for-itself and construed as a dimension of action. This indicates that the future of the time of the world is not accessible to us in any way, it can only be played within the projected future as a risk.

The past as contingent facticity, the present as contingent, non-identical presence and the future as a risk structuring our experience form in Sartre a setting through which time is profoundly politicized: the agent is not related to time as pure exteriority, i.e. as something that is determined without the mediation of action. Time is a view taken from the interiority of our temporal experience and hence organized through action. Time as given or "as such" is out of our reach and it is only within the interior space construed through temporality that we have access to it. It is the projected possibilities as future that form the perspective of action, a perspective which is constantly (re)construed in action, for the future "I" is other than the present "I". By means of this construction Sartre stresses the dimensionality of the agent: the agent in the present cannot be fixed, it is extended, spread "between" the present and the future I in the context of the past I - I am not the same as I, but other.

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24 There is, in my view, a difficulty present in the Sartre interpretations which see these two futures as one as this easily leads to overstressing the future as a "goal". For example Joseph P. Fell speaks about realized and unrealized possibilities, but does not make an explicit difference between two different concepts of future (see 1979, p. 85).

"Ce monde n'a de sens comme futur qu'en tant que j'y suis présent comme *un autre* qui je *serai*." (EN p. 171)

"Le Futur est le point idéal où la compression subite et infinie de la facticité (Passé) du Pour-soi (Présent) et de son possible (Avenir) ferait<sup>25</sup> surgir enfin le *Soi* comme existence en soi du Pour-soi." (EN p. 172)

The two futures form a setting where the future is an ideal future, a limit figure indicating the impossible (for-itself existing as in-itself) that would happen - but will not:

"Par exemple ma position finale sur le court [tennis] a déterminé du fond de l'avenir toutes mes positions intermédiaires et finalement elle a été rejointe par une position ultime identique à ce qu'elle était à l'avenir comme sens de mes mouvements. Mais précisément ce "rejoignement" est purement idéal, il ne s'opère pas réellement [...]" (EN p. 173).

The future as a limit figure expresses a contingent horizon against which we project the possibilities of our present action, but it does not give us the realized meaning of our action. The future as an ek-stasis of original temporality, then, is but another figure for freedom (and all the other figures it equals) - the projected future equal to realized future would refer to what I would be were I not free (see EN p. 173).

As a limit figure the future refers to action. The projected future is a "design" (*design, cadre*, e.g. EN p. 173) for present action: the projected future and the future realized as present are related to each other through a tension where the agent is constantly playing with two futures. Hence the future is a constant game where we are playing with the possibilities which *are* and *are not* and it is a game we are playing in the present. The future is the aspect of temporality and time that we can use strategically when playing about what we are (or the world is). If the past is politicized as a reinterpretable context to our action, the future is politicized as a constant opening in the present which we can freely interpret even when there are no options. The future has no being, it is possibilization of possibilities in the perspective that these possibilities will not be realized (see e.g. EN p. 173-74).

Furthermore, the future does not gain its importance in *L'être et le néant* from a future being that we are headed for, but from the constellation where the future is and can only be a dimension and a limit where we argue over the present, the space where there can be argument over the meanings of present, past and future which are different from each individual's perspective; argument over possibilities, argument over what-is-there, because the what-is-there is never really "there" as it is always non-identically at-a-distance as lack, spread in three dimensions of temporality. Hence the question that can be asked here is not only what the past, present and future actually are, but also whose past, present and future

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25 Notice here the verbal tense: "ferait" is a conditional form and refers here to what will not be. In *Being and Nothingness* the translation reads "will [...] cause the *self* to arise" (BN p. 128) which would mean that the for-itself would eventually become the in-itself, which, of course, is impossible in Sartre.

it is a question of because temporality is a singularized aspect of time<sup>26</sup>. Furthermore there is an asymmetric pole-relation between the two futures, too: one realized, the other not, i.e. there is a playground where we are playing both on a "private" ground of our own (the projected future) and on "common" ground of the world (the realized future). This perspective becomes more profiled when we place the "time of the world" into the same context with original temporality.

### 5.1.5 Time of The World

The concept of the time of the world that Sartre develops in *L'être et le néant* is to some extent less elaborated than the passages concerning temporality. However, there are some points which offer a relevant view within the perspective of this present study, namely the passages where Sartre discusses time from the points of view of a break and of a difference between place and space.

For discussion of the break in the homogenous continuity of time Sartre develops as help-devices concepts such as statics, dynamics, separation, multiplicity, "nows" as "little nothingnesses", apparitions and abolitions (see EN p. 175-76, 180-83, 255-59) which are all directed toward discussing the problems of permanence as identity and the possibility of disappearance. The latter forms a counter-figure to the former through the postulation of a factual but yet impossible coincidence of the past of temporality and that of the time of the world. Separation and multiplicity in relation to continuity and unity form a setting where human reality is postulated as taking a view of time as exteriority from an interior construed of temporality. On the one hand time for human reality exists only through this view and on the other, temporality forms a "break in being"<sup>27</sup> through which time enters the world.

The identity-character of the past is contingent facticity and it serves Sartre as a figure expressing the experience of time. Time is disaggregating, fragmented into homogenous instants in an exterior relation and we experience it as the impossibility of the possibility to escape it - as identity. This construes a limit-situation where the playground is construed as a break between the impossible permanence and the impossible separation of "nows".

Apart from the presence of a limit-situation in this construction what is of importance is the postulation of the interior and the exterior as dimensions of being or of action. The temporality which arises, to use the Sartrean expression, in the world with human reality forms the interior which construes the perspective on the exteriority of time. The image of the interior is strengthened through Sartre's description of the difference between place and space where place is seen as a feature of the exterior in terms of occupation and space as a feature of the

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26 Manser (1989, p. 28, 30) aptly calls this the ""narrative self", the story which each of us has to tell".

27 Thomas W. Busch describes temporality aptly as a "break in being", but, however, sees this break merely as a "sharp dichotomy", a conceptual construction he maintains Sartre uses in *L'être et le néant* (1990, p. 65).

exterior construing an “inside”, a space of action. In other words, place refers to identity and facticity and space to action as the organizing aspect of place (see EN p. 260-65).

In connection to temporality and time Sartre has three different concepts of space which each reveal its different aspects: firstly, the diaspora-space of original temporality, spread in all three temporal dimensions, secondly, space as facticity, as a place with a relation of occupation and thirdly, space as the organized aspect of the factual place which does not form an interior in the same sense as temporality but forms an interior within the exterior. This latter interior-feature of space which forms the conjunction of temporality and time of the world is set forth by Sartre through the concept of movement: the relation between place and space is an asymmetric pole-relation where the perspective of break and of non-identity is brought “into” place through the postulation of space as movement in contrast to place as occupation.<sup>28</sup>

The interior - exterior constellation of this setting is the one which also describes the present of time, in Sartre’s terms as an “announcement”, as “sending an image”, as “hesitating” (see EN p. 265), i.e. as not compact, as presence to exteriority, as singularized temporal experience of the world instead of being construed as exteriority of time. We are temporal but we are “outside” related to time which we have given to the world and this time, in spite of its facticity and identical character is broken and forms a scene of action in the same sense that the scene can be conceived of elsewhere in Sartre: as an inseparable part of the game, as something that is played. The aspect of play in connection with time is highlighted further through the discrepancy of the two concepts of future.

In the time of the world we have a past, present and future that appear to us as coherent time, but this cohesion of time is a pure ghost (“un pur fantôme”); we experience time through our temporality, but the temporality of time is different from original temporality, it is not something which one “has to be” (*a à être*) but something that “is been” (*est étée*) (EN p. 267), something we experience passively simply through being there. Therefore change is attributed of original temporality and the movement which relates the present of original temporality to the present of the world, is a formal movement, not change, in the same manner as the future as probabilities is something that “is”, but that is not yet there, whereas the future of original temporality is possibilities possibilizing themselves.

It is the “distance” between the two futures that in my view is the most interesting part of Sartre’s theory of time and temporality. The future remains open, and this openness is a counter figure to a linear concept of time. In my view it also makes it impossible to reduce Sartre’s concept of future into a simple (future) objective that would either be reached or that would somehow determine our action. On the contrary, this openness of the future builds it as a limit-situation, i.e. as an impossible situation: our possibilities will never be realized and the probabilities of the world are “outside” our reach. The game must be played inbetween, within this situation and its impossibilities. Time forms a horizon for my being my own possibilities, but it is an impossible horizon both because time

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28 It is worth noticing here that the same construction is repeated in the *Critique* when Sartre describes the relation between the practico-inert and praxis.

is not just time but has a twofold structure of being both temporality, which is a structure that keeps me from being myself identically (and hence keeps me from becoming my possibilities identically) and time, which is a structure of identity that haunts me by its ghostly existence. This makes the future in Sartre's conception the very place for the politics of time, not only in the sense that we can ask what and whose future (and also past and present) but also in the sense that an argument over which modality of time it is a question of can be raised against this constellation as the futures of the two "times" do not coincide.

However it is, at least to some extent, the same with the present, too. Present as presence is never fixed or determined and it is related to the other dimensions of time and temporality asymmetrically. All the strategies for the future and the struggles over the future-to-be take place in the present even though the direction of this construction is "toward" the future. In addition the past can be changed or reinterpreted only as far as it forms a present part of the presence. The game played in the present as presence (i.e. not closed as past or open as future but spread, extended) is the game over the possibilities that are here and now and it is not impossible to say that the game is played about the present, not so much about those future possibilities that will never be realized, nor about probabilities that will be realized but are unreachable exteriority, but about the relating of those two within the impossibility of becoming one with either. In this sense Sartre's conception of time in *L'être et le néant* could be said to contain to a certain extent elements which point to a modern understanding of time as Giddens sees it: the future is drawn into the present (1991, p. 3).

Furthermore, for Sartre time is nothingness, it only seems to have a being where the for-itself uses it.

"[L]e Temps est pur néant en-soi qui ne peut sembler avoir un être que par l'acte même dans lequel le Pour-soi le franchit pour l'utiliser." (EN p. 267)

This postulation seems to match Berger's claim in his *Phénoménologie du temps et prospective* (1964 (1931-1960)) with which he urges us to abandon the myth of the reality of time, of seeing it as construed and to oppose any substantializing view of time (p. 117, 120, 140, 166). Politically speaking time as nothingness is unreal in the sense that it cannot be reached and therefore for the agent there is always a certain part "of" time that has already been played, also with regard to the future. However, as it is the agent who plays the role of the one who changes, time can be, as Sartre says, used and it is this using which can be played for in action.

## 5.2 Temporality and History in the *Critique*

### 5.2.1 From *L'être et le Néant* to the *Critique*

Should we wish to have a rapidly drawn picture of the difference in the conception of temporality in *L'être et le néant* and in the *Critique* we could use a division that Gaston Berger gives in the above mentioned work. For him time is construed

by the human being (1964, p. 138-39) and it can be described through the following divisions: personal time and historical time (*ibid.*, p. 115), the existential, lived time of dreams and the historical, operational time of action (*ibid.*, p. 193-205). These could easily lend themselves to a description of Sartre's earlier work in the former and the later one in the latter terms, for the change from a perspective of (individual) temporal experience present in *L'être et le néant* to that of action and history in the *Critique* is obvious. However, the obvious character of this description turns to less obvious if we add to it Berger's view that there is an equivalence between the time of action and the time of project (*ibid.*, p. 171). In Sartrean terms this refers to certain parallels between the two works: project and action do, indeed, form here similar perspectives on the question of temporality, even though with different stress, a stress which could also be described through Berger: for him what is of importance is not in the first place that the project "joue "au futur"" but that it is related to action (*ibid.*). Within this view the apparent opposition of Berger's "personal" and "historical" is relativized and it is possible to relate the conceptions of temporality of Sartre's two works from the point of view of the agent in a more detailed discussion than one offering merely an overall view.

Temporality in *L'être et le néant* configures a setting where all three ek-stases are seen in a politically relevant frame through the postulation of human reality which, within its being, generates its own being temporally in a space where the dimension of temporality does not form a closed or a fixed structure but a setting for acting within all three dimensions of time. There is a conception of temporality in the work which according to Lichtheim (1963/64, p. 231) "constitutes a genuinely philosophical idea" through the postulation of the "presence of future". This is certainly true, but Sartre's conception is at the same time one which underlines the political aspect of temporality through the postulation of future as well as of past through limit figures, impossibility, break and change.

In *L'être et le néant* temporality is not described in the first place as a situation of action, but as a situation of being, i.e. impossibility is seen as a constituent aspect of existence, of being a human being: our fundamental project forms a situation which we cannot escape but which through a break offers us a view of a liberating instant. This "liberating instant", however, is not a possibility for breaking totally free nor an emancipatory moment but forms a view where the *sudden* is placed in the foreground. Sartre describes this through past as that which is to be surpassed. Where the future is a play with two futures and as such offers a perspective of action, the past is facticity as a challenge to action.

In *L'être et le néant* Sartre describes the past as challenge firstly in the frame of a critique of Freudian psychoanalysis which sees the past as a source for the present and as a setting for changing an impossible present situation. For Sartre this impossible situation is the "original project" which can be changed only by a sudden surpassing of it in the present, not through the "changing" of the past. The possibility of surpassing it derives from the quality of the original project: it is contingent and as such forms a pole-relation with freedom. But as neither of these attributes refer to an "after the fact" - we are condemned to freedom - the possibility of surpassing the past and of the sudden are not possibilities which we can take or leave. In other words, if the surpassing of the past and the sudden are

called, as Sartre does, conversion (see EN p. 554-55), we are condemned to conversion. The past is surpassed by making arise a liberating instant which makes it the past (Sartre's word is *passéifier*, EN p. 555) and it is the conversion which is seen as a radical change of the original project. This, in the context of temporality, lays the stress on the sudden as an instant which marks a break with the past which cannot, for Sartre, be a "source" of our present in the sense that it would create a cause for our being or acting. We *are* our past, but as a free project we are condemned to break with it constantly.

Hence it is only by a radical change in the original project, a change which is not founded on any earlier project that a human being can be "delivered" from the past, i.e. from what she/he has to be in the past tense (EN p. 554). On page 542 of *L'être et le néant* Sartre gives an example of walking, where the walker "receives" the heat (i.e. the impossibility of going on walking) as a motive to stop walking and can go on only if a radical conversion takes place:

"Cela n'implique pas que je *doive nécessairement* m'arrêter, mais seulement que je ne puis refuser de m'arrêter que par une conversion radicale de mon être-dans-le-monde, c'est-à-dire par une brusque métamorphose de mon projet initial, c'est-à-dire par un autre choix de moi-même et de mes fins."

In this context the radical conversion loses the manichaeist burden often assigned to it as one of the central moral concepts in Sartre and is related to a change in action in a temporal frame. This is also the context which in the first place relates the concepts of temporality in *L'être et le néant* and in the *Critique*.

The sudden seen as described above is one of the central lines of argumentation that carries over from *L'être et le néant* to the *Critique*. The sudden of the conversion in the former is reformulated in the latter in the rise of the group from seriality as the moment which postulates temporality as a central attribute of action. The idea of a "liberating instant" is taken up in the *Critique* in one of the most visible figures of the work, namely the Apocalypse and also in the concept of the group-in-fusion. But, here again, liberation is not liberation in an emancipatory sense but refers to a rupture, an opening for a game played with the two possible futures, the one of forming a group and the one of falling back into seriality. Furthermore it does not form an emancipatory moment because the Apocalypse is not construed in terms of advancing time - it is not a question of seriality that would have existed "before" and groups that would come "after" - but as a temporal ek-stasis marking the rupture. As such the Apocalypse forms a description of the limit-situation bringing about the possibility of change.

From this point of view the radical conversion is seen here as a "resetting" of the situation within a temporal setting. In the following I shall take this as a background for Sartre's conception of temporality and of history in the *Critique* and also as a point where the difference of perspective he takes in these two works is clearly displayed: the figure of Apocalypse points to action far more than the concept of radical conversion. In the following I shall also argue that both Sartre's concepts of temporality and of time of the world as construed in *L'être et le néant* are rethought within the framework of the *Critique* and have received dimensions that are not discussed in the earlier work. But before going on to this, a set of conceptual devices needs to be reconstructed.

Inbetween *L'être et le néant* and the *Critique* Sartre takes up the question of temporality only occasionally without introducing any important changes to the conception (see *Matérialisme et Révolution*, SIT III, p. 179ff. and 204ff.) and in the *Critique* he refers to his exposition of the subject "elsewhere" as a basis that he proposes as valid for his discussion in the work (CRD I, p. 143). To a certain extent we can agree with Sartre here, as he uses the basic conceptual apparatus of *L'être et le néant* in his discussion of the question, but on the other hand there are significant reformulations of the concepts as well as of the context of discussion - reformulations which are not explicitly discussed by Sartre. In other words there are certain tracks taken and certain questions taken up as problems which give a different coloring to the use of the concept of temporality in the *Critique* compared to the earlier text. This coloring is initially introduced by Sartre through formulations set forth in the *Questions* such as "la détermination dialectique de la temporalité réelle (c'est-à-dire du rapport vrai des hommes à leur passé et à leur avenir)" and "le temps, comme caractère concret de l'histoire est fait par les hommes sur la base de leur temporalisation originelle." (CRD I, p. 63-64n1) Sartre, according to his own words, moves to the "real" relation from the ontologically described one, and postulates time as dialectic (ibid.). In the *Critique* proper Sartre's own short formulation implicitly specifies the change of perspective compared to *L'être et le néant* and confirms the postulation of time as dialectical:

"Fonction organique, besoin et *praxis* sont rigoureusement liés dans un ordre dialectique: avec l'organisme, en effet, le temps dialectique est entré dans l'être puisque l'être vivant ne peut persévérer qu'en se renouvelant; ce rapport *temporel* du futur au passé à travers le présent n'est rien d'autre que le rapport fonctionnel de la totalité à elle-même: elle est son propre avenir par-delà un présent de désintégration réintégrée. En un mot l'unité vivante se caractérise par la décompression de la temporalité de l'instant; mais la nouvelle temporalité est une synthèse élémentaire du changement et identité puisque l'avenir gouverne le présent dans la mesure où cet avenir s'identifie rigoureusement au passé." (CRD I, p. 167-68)

The repetition of the thesis presented in *L'être et le néant* that it is with human reality that time arises in the world and the postulation of time and temporality as dialectical which we can read from this passage are occasionally repeated in the *Critique*, but not discussed in so many words. Hence the line of argumentation that sheds light on Sartre's construction must be sought for elsewhere.

In order to look at Sartre's conception of temporality in the *Critique* we must start from the initial limit figure of the *Critique*, namely from scarcity. The quotation above where the future is identified with the past is a description of the characteristics of cyclic temporality which Sartre takes as a starting point in his description of temporality. Here the time perspective is that of repetition in the "renewing of the organism" and does not construe a perspective beyond the mere movement between change and identity. This pattern is broken through scarcity which makes the perspective of mere repetition impossible, as within the perspective of the agent taken through need, there is not "enough" for everyone (see CRD I, p. 204).

"Cette interruption [by scarcity] est vécu *comme négation* en ce simple sens que le mouvement cyclique ou fonction se reproduit à vide, niant par là même identité du futur au passé et retombant au niveau d'une organisation circulaire *présente* et



conditionnée par le passé; ce décalage est la condition nécessaire pour que l'organisme ne soit plus le milieu et le destin de la fonction mais sa fin." (CRD I, p. 168)

The "not enough" forms the nucleus of scarcity as a limit figure which in relation to need brings forth the possibility of the impossibility (ibid.), parallel to that of the impossibility of the realization of the projected future in *L'être et le néant*. The future is lived in the present as the possibility of the impossibility of the "organism" (at the limit death<sup>29</sup>), the present of the "organism" is threatened within the perspective taken "from" the future as it is menaced by the possibility of the impossibility of the projected objective. Hence the future forms an opening which carries the possibility of being closed, the possibility of being is given at the same time as the impossibility of being. Already from this initial setting we can see that the future for Sartre is not in the *Critique*, either, a point at some distance from the present on a linear scale of time where the agent would "continue" to be, but that it is configured as that which is what it *is-not*. The "organism" whose future *is-not* acts against the limit formed by this *is-not* by projecting a possible future as the presence of that which lacks, and at the same time reveals the present as the absence of that which lacks (see CRD I, p. 65).

The possibility - impossibility and presence - absence poles are, however, played here in a frame that differs from that of the two futures in *L'être et le néant* for the concept of negation is brought into the picture by Sartre through scarcity. It is in this setting that scarcity, effectively, forms for Sartre the possibility of history. However, it forms this possibility as a formal perspective, not as a fact of reality. Here as well as elsewhere in the *Critique* scarcity is a conceptual device with which Sartre designs the setting which allows him to construe the perspective of the agent. Seen from the perspective of action scarcity is the formal condition of the rupture in repetition which brings in time and it is contemporaneous with temporality as an attribute of action.

This strengthens the view of the radical contingency of the agent, for contingency is displayed here also as a temporal relation: it is through the temporalization realized in action that contingency is construed as an attribute of action - brought into the world as an inescapable condition which is reproduced in action. Outside temporality contingency would be mere hazard and as such not an organizing principle of the lived experience as it is within the temporal perspective. Through the temporality of contingency an aspect of time is highlighted: it is a contingent perspective taken from within our temporal experience<sup>30</sup> - hence

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29 It is interesting to notice that even though Sartre discusses death at some length in *L'être et le néant* and also in the *Critique* he does not enter the discussion on time in either work from the finiteness of human life, from birth and death, as quite many writers do. See for example Gadamer (1977, p. 33) who takes birth and death as beginning and end in an essay on time as inner experience. A different way of approaching the question is used by Ricœur who starts his introduction to a collection of essays by asking what is said about time (1977, p. 13). Sartre's use of cyclic time as a background for indicating the construction of dialectical time is a setting where the concept of scarcity is not considered as indicating a "beginning" but merely used as a figure of rupture from which a discussion on temporality can be started.

30 Agnes Heller distinguishes between "cosmic contingency" and "historical-social contingency" but yet refutes the idea of the temporality of contingency (see 1993, p. 1ff., esp. p. 2, 6, 8, 22). However, she also discusses contingency in terms of having been "thrown into freedom" (ibid., p. 16-17, see also p. 22).

the perspective of the agent is not that of time but that of temporality. In this sense time and temporality are both, within different perspectives, expressions of the contingency of the agent.

This is the initial setting which Sartre postulates as the setting for an agent situated in the world where temporality is one of the perspectives of action. This setting, in spite of its apparent simplicity, contains one of the key formulations with regard to Sartre's concept of temporality, namely that of "*décompression*" (CRD I, e.g. p. 167-68). Already at his starting point into the discussion in the *Critique* Sartre takes up the attribute familiar from *L'être et le néant*: the "spread" as a characteristic of temporality is here expressed as "decompressed". The compactness of an instant is broken and there is a space postulated within temporality, a space which is here, much the same as in the earlier work, construed in terms of the three ek-static dimensions of past, present and future and in the frame construed through concepts such as possibility and objective.

In addition to the perspective of impossibility the initial setting with regard to temporality in the *Critique* maintains also a second key characteristic of temporality in *L'être et le néant*: past, present and future can be seen expressed as a relation between different verbal tenses - the "au passé" construction is repeated here, too (see CRD I, e.g. p. 472, 473 and CRD II, p. 14, 455) In the later work this construction serves for the same purpose as in the earlier one, namely to create a distance to a linear conception of time and highlighting the dimensional construction of the concept of temporality.

If we think of Sartre's words that he takes the concept of temporality of *L'être et le néant* as a basis for his discussion of the question in the *Critique* we can see that to quite an extent this is the case. He re-evokes most of the central conceptual constructions rather straightforwardly. However, there are also significant differences. With regard to the overall frame the most obvious is perhaps the absence of the clear division into temporality and the time of the world and the presence of the concept of history in the later work. A second and even more significant difference is brought about with the concept of scarcity. Not only because it is a new concept but also because of the position it holds in the *Critique* as one of the most central figures through which Sartre forms a setting where the concepts of temporality, history, interiority and exteriority as well as subjectivity are bound together - all this in the frame of totalization and temporalization.

## 5.2.2 Temporalization: Back from the Future

Within the framework of the *Critique* it is the concept of temporalization which forms the point of departure for Sartre's concept of temporality. For him temporalization is a totalizing movement, characteristic of praxis and it expresses the new in relation to the already-existing, the producing of the already-existing as organized - or as Sartre puts it, "[l]e *neuf* c'est la trace laissée par une temporalisation totalisante sur l'absolue dispersion inerte qui représente l'espace." (CRD I, p. 151n) The central question on which Sartre takes a perspective here is how it is organized (in the present tense). The perspective on this present organizing is taken "from" the future as Sartre describes the future-figure he uses from the

point of view of totalization: the future totalizations "c'est-à-dire [...] opérations qu'on effectue par la seule indication qu'il faut les effectuer" (CRD I, p. 152n) are - in the line of the postulations of *L'être et le néant* - that which *is to be done*, not that which should be *reached*. The conditioning function of the future in view of the present is that of a provisionally projected whole as opposed to undirected, scattered actions and not, here either, a future state of things to be reached, imposed on or directing the present action or a totality which would be produced in the "course of time" from the present to the future - for Sartre temporalization is "permeable":

"En ce sens, la temporalisation même d'une entreprise est perméable puisqu'elle se comprend à partir de l'avenir qui la conditionne (c'est-à-dire du *Tout* conçu par la *praxis* comme à réaliser)." (CRD I, p. 149)

Hence in the *Critique* the future cannot be seen as having the sense of progression or substantiality in the form of a "content", nor as something that is "not yet there" (or that "will be there"). In other words there is no linear sequence of the dimensions of temporality, no "departure", no "arrival". Sartre writes:

"Le marxisme a pressenti la vraie temporalité lorsqu'il a critiqué et détruit la notion bourgeoise de "progrès" - qui implique nécessairement un milieu homogène et des coordonnées permettant de situer le point de départ et le point d'arrivée." (CRD I, p. 64n).<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, as the totalizations within the perspective formed by the present where the future figures as a limit for the comprehension of movement, are seen as provisional, not permanent, or produced once and for all and as subject to changes - they are to be retotalized:

"A partir de là toutes les démarches de l'agent pratique se comprennent par l'avenir comme retotalisation perpétuelle de la totalité provisoire." (CRD I, p. 149-50)

The provisional present totalizations embracing the future as a perspective of the present, are produced by negating the existing situation (CRD I, p. 149) and retotalized in action which means that they are not totalizations identical with themselves. This means that the future never becomes the future of the provisional totality which served to condition action in the first place. Therefore there is no such unity of perspective from the present to the future which would imply that it is a future situation that negates the present situation. On the contrary, future as a dimension of temporality forms as a provisional future in the present situation a constantly interrupted perspective on the present - or as Manser (1989, p. 25) says, there is no objective temporal order. Hence the limit-situation construed in the relation between the projected possible (future) and the realized possible (future) of *L'être et le néant* is maintained here in the relation between the provisional totalization and its retotalization: the future is *is-not* in the *Critique* as

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31 Even though Sartre refers to a Marxist view of temporality and time there is quite a difference between these two views. For a comparison see for example Askin 1977.

well and hence the meaning of the present is not acquired *from* the future but produced in a space of action where the future serves as a limit figure. The perspective of the *Critique*, however, as it stresses the aspect of contingency both as contingency temporalized in action and time as contingent politicizes this setting further.

As Juliette Simont (1990b) has shown, contingency in Sartre is something which is reproduced in the "*jeu de miroir*", in the inescapable and failed escape present in the relation between the poles of the totality of being and of nothingness of the relation-in-itself - for-itself (ibid., p. 95). Hence it is not something that qualifies being but something that is constantly played, as being is always at stake. As contingency is temporalized and reproduced in action it forms a central political attribute of action, not as an external feature but as an internal attribute which implies the possible - impossible relation as a counter-pole to the possible - necessary relation - both of which, in their turn, are attributes of the "realizing" of the future in a setting where no certainties or automatic processes of carrying out a project are present. Simont expresses this aptly by saying:

"Mais pour Sartre seul, peut-être, nous sommes condamnés à la contingence sans être en rien condamnés à la jouer *de telle manière, dans tel cadre prédéfini*, pour lui seul peut-être elle est une ouverture neutre et opératoire, l'espace d'un jeu variable et plurivoque dont la seule règle est l'absence de légitimité des figures ou des registres de sa variation." (ibid., p. 126)

As such contingency highlights the absence, or rather the refusal of order as an organizing principle in Sartre<sup>32</sup> and it forms the counter-figure to being *derived from* (see EN, p. 34 and Simont, ibid., p. 93). As contingency is temporalized and time is contingent the agent cannot be derived from temporal attributes but on the contrary it is the agent that "gives" these attributes to the world and to action. Hence in a sense we could say that temporality in Sartre forms a defence against the ordering perspective of time through the organizing perspective of the temporal agent.

The perspective of uncertainty and of provisionality in its turn, is strengthened further through the figure of counter-finality. The provisional totalizations retotalized are the other pole in an asymmetric relation to the negating of the existing situation, and the future is a figure for the dimensional relation here present. The space construed within this relation is the space of action where the counter-finalities as well as the action of the others break the continuity-perspective of the agent, deny any form of determinism and construe the Sartrean teleology as a very particular one: it is present orientation toward an objective within a frame of the future seen as a figure for "return" to the present, to reorganizing the present within the frame of contingency. Here action is not postulated as reaching "beyond" the present except as lack and as exposed to the counter-effects and to the contingency of both of the future and of the present world. The future as *is-not*, as we have seen, is left open, left to be struggled over in the present. In this sense the future for Sartre is not only the horizon of the

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32 Sartre himself says: "L'histoire, ce n'est pas l'ordre. C'est le désordre. Disons: un désordre rationnel." (Sartre 1966, p. 90)

possible (see e.g. Pieri 1979 p. 400) but also the horizon of the impossible (see e.g. "cet avenir refusé" CRD I, p. 65), not positive possibilities, but an impossibility of realizing present possibilities as such.<sup>33</sup> Possibilities do not exist as "already-there" but are schematic (the future is and is not "true", *ibid.*) and the present is the tense where they are acted on and where the agent is defined in her/his present reality through these possibilities which are construed within the interplay of the possible and the impossible<sup>34</sup>:

"Il [the future] se présente donc comme possibilité schématique et toujours ouverte et comme action immédiate sur le présent. [...] il définit l'individu dans sa réalité présente [...]. [T]out homme se définit négativement par l'ensemble des possibles qui lui sont impossibles [...] Ainsi, positivement et négativement, les possibles sociaux sont vécus comme déterminations schématiques de l'avenir individuel." (*ibid.*)

The status of the future as an orienting principle or as having primacy over the other temporal ek-stases in Sartre which is commonly held as a valid guiding thread of an interpretation of Sartre's conception of temporality (both concerning *L'être et le néant* and the *Critique*, but especially concerning the former<sup>35</sup>) is put further into question if the future is seen as an *is-not* which forms a dimension of action: "planning" the future in a goal-oriented manner does not form the guiding thread in this constellation, the future is not open in the sense of being totally indeterminate or as structured by the existing possibilities open for choice but it is a fabric of projected futures which acquire a deep coloring of contingency and which are rendered both questionable and liable to be reorganized at any moment as action produces new determinations. Failure and counter-finalities form a part of this fabric where the future as *is-not* is constantly reorganized in the present. This is the setting where the multiple possible futures are played for and at stake within action at the crossroads of the projections which represent the negation of the present situation and which "return" to us through retotalization in the form of a negation of the projected future. For Sartre the future is not projected positively as a future-to-be but negatively as something that *is-not* and that must be

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33 This is expressed by Simont in terms of *L'être et le néant* as follows: "[I]e possible est mode d'être d'un être dont le régime d'être n'est plus simplement d'être, mais de n'être pas ce qu'il est et d'être ce qu'il n'est pas." (1990b, p. 94) The *is - is-not* structure is not of simple positive possibility and contingency is not simply a contingency in relation to possibilities but in the first place to impossibilities, to that which is "refusé par principe" (EN p. 33, see also Simont, *ibid.*, p. 95). As Simont says, Sartre refuses to approach contingency "via la mobilité du possible" and considers that all attempts to surpass contingency are contingent themselves (*ibid.*, p. 97, 98, see also p. 104-05 on Sartre's critique of Heidegger's concept of contingency on the basis of Heidegger's attempt to give contingency a foundation).

34 On the impossible - possible relation see also Rouger (1986) for whom impossibility is "l'unique mode possible de la possibilisation" and "inhérent à toute aventure individuelle." (p. 195, 238, see also p. 243)

35 See for example Martin-Deslias 1972, esp. p. 137-38, Catalano 1986, p. 95, Rouger, 1986, esp. p. 190ff. and 240ff., König 1988, p. 379 and for a somewhat different view see Desan 1960, p. 39-40 and Palonen for whom "[d]ie Prioritätsdebatte ist [...] unfruchtbar" (1992, p. 209). For a view of how politics is concerned with time and with the future in particular see for example Maier 1987 and Osborne 1995. See also Fell discussing the primacy of the present (1979, p. 86-87). Sartre himself comments on this also by referring to the future as conditioning the present but only as a possibility of going beyond it, not as a completed and determined possibility which would be there (see *I'm no longer a realist* (1972) p. 98).

produced in action where there is no certainty over the future-to-be, but a contingent setting where others, or adversaries and counter-finalities change the setting of the action situation constantly.

However, counter-finality intervening in the realization of a projected future should not be understood here in terms of "results" of action as for example in Detmer (1986, p. 53) or in Barnes who says that "[a] "counter finality" is a result opposite to that which I expected" (1973, p. 159-60, cited in Detmer, *ibid.*) but rather in terms of action constantly redefined, as counter-finalities are not something awaiting for us ahead in time but present in action. Sartre's example of deforestation in China (CRD I, p. 232-34), perhaps the most commonly used when discussing counter-finality, is later followed by remarks on counter-finality as a "champ magique" where the "slightest new fact" changes the setting acting at a distance ("à distance") (see CRD I, p. 283). This refers to the dimensionality of the temporality of action and not to a future in time which is implied if we interpret counter-finality as something *in* the future. This is rendered even more evident when Sartre specifies "action at a distance" as passive action of the produced which has an "inert future" and says: "[l]'avenir vient à l'homme par des choses dans la mesure où il est venu aux choses par l'homme." (CRD I, p. 246).

The future is a perspective on the present as well as a perspective on the relation of the producer and of the produced - the "inert future" of the produced is not *in* the future but "here" as a moment in the organization of action. Hence counter-finality in relation to action indicates an opening in action through its dimensionality - the perspective of time in terms of a future-to-be that surfaces for example in the example of Chinese deforestation is the time of the "story", not that of the concept of counter-finality. This does not mean that counter-finality is outside time, but that it is not described in terms of linear time where action is given first and counter-finality as a future result, but where they form contemporaneous perspectives of the agent. This construction follows the construction of future in *L'être et le néant* where the present is not an ex-future and where the future does not turn into the present but where the present is presence to the world which creates its own future from the perspective of that present. Hence the counter-finalities of action are not results in the future from the perspective of temporal action but only form the perspective of the story of history. Counter-finality as an attribute of temporal action is yet another expression of contingency, of that which Michael Oakeshott aptly describes as distinguished from "the sort of interdependence which the components of a teleological, an evolutionary, a mechanical, an organic or other such process or system enjoy in virtue of the regularities which constitute the process or the structure which constitutes the system" (1991 (1975), p. 101).

Furthermore "future-oriented" describes Sartre's position only to the extent that the future is not understood as existing in time or as realized on the basis of the presently existing possibilities. It does not describe his position when the future is seen, using the formulation of *L'être et le néant* already referred to, as the rendez-vous point where we wait to encounter ourselves (EN p. 73) but where we can only encounter a stranger not identical to ourselves, or as Manser puts it: "[l]'angoisse est la crainte de ne pas me trouver à ce rendez-vous, de ne plus même vouloir m'y rendre." (1989, p. 25) Hence the objective projected in the light

of the future is not an objective to be reached but a structure that displays the organization of the present acting-situation. The society, as Sartre says (see CRD I, p. 183), defines our possibilities and our objectives "now" and the future is played for in terms of the possibilities, as well as of the impossibilities the situation imposes on us, but always in the perspective of the contingency of the future: all action can turn "against us" (see Sartre's example on the pilot and racism, CRD I, p. 65-66).

Moreover, the future is construed in Sartre also in terms of knowledge and understanding: projecting a possibility and an objective are structures of capturing the meaning of the present and that of the actions of the others. These structures include "competence" and "ignorance" describing the agent's perspective (CRD I, p. 184n1) and aspects of reality that escape us (CRD I, p. 183n1) as attributes of our fragmentary knowledge and understanding of the present situation. In this sense the future in a situation "Pierre is going to open the window" is not automatically the future where Pierre has opened the window but can be the future where Pierre - even though I projected the future as "Pierre having opened the window" - might have done something else. The projected future does not exercise power either on the future to be realized or the present, it does not construe an order to be followed.

Sartre's concept of future includes also here an undeniable aspect of a refusal of order in terms of a refusal of the possibility of planning a future as that which will be realized and hence underlines the condition of being condemned to freedom - also to that of the others. Or as Simont indicates: contingency implies freedom (1990b, p. 111). This is described in Sartre's somewhat parodical example of the intellectual looking at two persons from his window<sup>36</sup>: the two others "have" a world Other than mine (as the on-looker), they are the perspectives of escape in the sense that they in their project construe a world Other than mine.<sup>37</sup> These aspects of reality which Sartre describes as "stolen" from me are like holes in the scenery I build from my point of view (see CRD I, p. 182-84). It is in this scenery that Sartre's description of the future as projected should be taken to the letter: it is a projection in the present situation and as such it sheds light on the present and on our understanding of it.

*"De toute manière la compréhension de l'acte se fait par l'acte (produit ou reproduit); la structure téléologique de l'activité ne se peut saisir que dans un pro-jet qui se définit lui-même par son but, c'est-à-dire par son avenir et qui revient de cet avenir jusqu'au présent pour éclairer celui-ci comme négation du passé dépassé."* (CRD I, p. 160)

The provisional totalities form the scheme within which the future appears as a figure to temporalizing praxis as it produces its own understanding in action. This means that the future as a figure is produced in action and therefore carries no determining features but on the contrary is colored by Sartre with a political aspect - not only as being produced in action but also as produced by a multiplic-

36 For a detailed analysis of this example see Fretz 1992.

37 For an interesting description of the "worlds", mine and those of the others see Heller 1993, p. 226ff. This description takes a perspective different from Sartre's but relates to contingency and to the perspective of the agent analogically.

ity of agents all acting within a space of action that is open to the others as well. The Others as the holes in the scenery act as the possible adversaries both with regard to my organizing of the present through the projections of the future and with regard to my understanding of the present. This is what the Sartrean expressions such as “en fonction de l’avenir”, “du fond de l’avenir” and “à partir de l’avenir” (CRD I, p. 169, 468, 469) describe: the temporal scenery is conceived of as dimensional relation, as a space for action, the “fond de l’avenir” is a distance taken from the present to which Sartre gives the figures of projection and objective, a distance which makes both comprehension and action possible. Just as the agent is not an object produced and as the produced object as an end-product is not the perspective Sartre takes, the future is not a totality produced but an opening in the present which construes the perspective of a non-identical presence.

In this sense the future does hold a key-position in Sartre’s conception of temporality as it poses the agent as an actor in the “interior” space which is temporally produced as the present embraces both the perspective of future and that of past. This “interior” which, as we shall later see, is construed both of interiority and of exteriority is the space where the agent is displayed as a political actor with regard to time: past, present and future as already-there, as determining are excluded as the dimensions of time are to be constantly reorganized in action and hence reinterpreted by the agent. In this constellation time is not evident but questioned, it is not a structure where we just simply “are” but which we produce in action.

“On doit comprendre, en effet, que ni les hommes ni leur activité ne sont *dans le temps* mais que le temps, comme caractère concret de l’histoire, est fait par les hommes sur la base de leur temporalisation originelle.” (CRD I, p. 64n)

Here there is another continuity of perspective between *L’être et le néant* and the *Critique*: we are not in time in the sense of passively receiving it but temporalize the world.<sup>38</sup> In this light with regard to the question of time it is the concept of temporality that stands out as a politically important concept in Sartre for it describes the aspect of time concerning action in which the facticity of time is played in the same sense as the facticity of our body is played: we do not live *in* our body or *in* time, we live our body and we live time.

Moreover, the future related to action - when seen as “en fonction de l’avenir” - describes the integration of the present viewpoints (possibilities and objectives) into present action: one “must” pose an objective (and a future) in order to comprehend the present situation and the obstacles and impossibilities it presents (the “resistance” of the world), or in Sartre’s words, future totalization is present every moment as a detotalized totality (see CRD I, p. 169). Therefore, within temporality the time perspective is not that from present to future nor that from future to present but that of a dimensional relation where the future is seen as an

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38 Gaston Berger, in the collection of essays already mentioned describes temporality as a system of relations and not as a particular being or a milieu where the beings are situated (1964 (1931-1960), p. 116, 124, 133, 141). This underlines here, too the constructed characteristic of time.



aspect of temporality in the present. Hence the perspective here is not that of construing the future totality from what there “is” in the present, but that of the detotalized present which is seen in the movement of totalization - the perspective of a future totality as something achieved is excluded through the negating of the present situation.<sup>39</sup>

“[L]a négation se définit comme *force opposée* [...] par rapport à la totalité future comme destin ou comme fin du mouvement totalisateur.” (ibid.)

Hence, unlike “provisional totality”, a “future totality” which would imply a future “state” as a constitutive part of temporality is not a temporal attribute, but a logical one marking a difference between the whole and its parts and between the totalizing perspective and an “atomistic” one.

“[L]e présent se comprend à partir du futur, le mouvement singulier à partir de l’opération entière, bref le détail à partir de la totalité.” (CRD I, p. 183)

Within totalization the future for Sartre has also been characterized as a horizon - I agree to this inasmuch as this horizon is drawn as a horizon within the present as a dimensional temporal space of action, as a horizon which draws an “interior” with temporal dimensions within which action takes place and not as a horizon to be reached.<sup>40</sup> For Sartre, the future within the temporality of action is a horizontal spatial construction as opposed to history which indicates the vertical space of the movement of totalization in a quite Hegelian sense. The future as figure is not used here by Sartre solely for construing the temporal interior as a space of action but as well for marking a space for the movement postulated within totalization as history. Where within temporality that which is projected is the provisional totality, from the perspective of history that which is produced is the “practical transformation” of the field of action “into a totality”:

“[L]a *praxis* [...] est une totalisation dont le mouvement vers sa propre fin transforme *pratiquement* l’environnement en une totalité. (CRD I, p. 170)

This Hegelian perspective of totalization, on which Sartre construes his views on One History<sup>41</sup> is in this setting undermined by his conceptualization of temporal

39 In fact one could speculate even further here: in a sense the future in Sartre’s constellation is at the same time (as in *L’être et le néant*) *past* future: the view of the present “from” the future could be said to be that of a totality which “has been” detotalized - the “order” of time is reversible here.

40 An “interior” is construed through the concept of *L’être et le néant*, too, but not quite in the same sense. In the earlier work temporality is postulated as an internal feature of the For-itself temporalizing itself: “il n’y a de temporalité que comme infrastructure d’un être qui a à être son être, c’est-à-dire comme infrastructure du Pour-soi. [...] La Temporalité n’est pas, mais le Pour-soi se temporalise en existant” (EN p. 182). Hence the space of action as an “interior” is not rendered here as evident as in the *Critique* through the concept of totalization which refers us to the production of this space and of temporality.

41 “One History” is a central view in Sartre in the discussion on history. In *Matérialisme et Révolution* when criticizing Engels Sartre says: “Mais d’abord il est clair que la notion d’histoire naturelle est absurde: l’histoire ne se caractérise ni par le changement ni par l’action pure et simple du passé: elle est définie par la reprise intentionnelle du passé par le

ity. Temporality is not conceived of as an "advancing" process even though described in terms of totalization - as already mentioned there is no unity of perspective from present to future. This receives its counter pole in that future is not considered here as the culminating point for unity which would form the "next starting point" in time. At the "same time" as the present situation is negated, the future as destiny, as a characteristic of the facticity of time is negated and time is rendered playable. Hence we can say that the role of the future as a perspective *determining* the present action as a unifying principle is quite strange to Sartre and that the freedom of the agent is the concept which in the first place excludes this possibility and construes the future as a limit figure for deciphering the present as a situation of action - within the perspective of One History, as Kruks says, the view of a situation disappears (see Kruks 1990, p. 177-79).

The future in Sartre is a conceptual construction which, as we have seen, serves in the first place to postulate an opening in the present reality - a space within which action is possible. It also serves to draw the line which configures an "interior" where action takes place through the fabric of projections, objectives and possibilities which do not construe the future as an existing reality in time.

Because of all this the future is a concept through which it is not possible for Sartre to develop his views on One History, the temporal ek-stases do not form a "narrative" as Manser (1989, p. 28) claims but different perspectives on action and this forms one of the points from which the problems Sartre encountered with his postulation of One History originate.

### 5.2.3 Temporalization: the Past and One History

As the future cannot serve for Sartre as a concept on which a totalization into One History can be based we must turn our attention to the concept of past which is, eventually, the one which Sartre takes for a starting point for his attempt at establishing History. The concept of past in the *Critique* withholds two aspects. Firstly it is a temporal concept which displays the characteristic of "being acted on" (we *are-not* what we *are*) and secondly it refers to time. This very same constellation, as we have seen, is present in the *L'être et le néant* under a different formulation: the past is the ek-static dimension where temporality and the time of the world coincide. In the *Critique*, however the setting has been altered so that the past is presented as the dimension where temporality and history encounter. The key-concept for uncovering this setting is the concept of facticity.

Compared to *L'être et le néant* in the *Critique* there is a new characteristic

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présent: il ne saurait y avoir qu'une histoire humaine." (SIT III, p. 148) In the *Critique* the same is formulated in terms of truth: "S'il doit y avoir une Vérité de l'Histoire (et non des vérités - même organisées en système) il faut que notre expérience nous découvre que le type d'intelligibilité dialectique [...] s'applique à l'aventure humaine tout entière ou, si l'on préfère, qu'il y a une temporalisation totalisante de notre multiplicité pratique et qu'elle est intelligible, bien que cette totalisation ne comporte pas de grand totalisateur." (CRD I, p. 151-52, see also p. 156, 160-61) However, Sartre admits a plurality of meanings of history within the temporal structure of action: "Ainsi la pluralité *des sens* de l'Histoire ne peut se découvrir et se poser pour soi que sur le fond d'une totalisation future [...]" (CRD I, p. 63). For yet another formulation see *Itinerary of a Thought* p. 58-59. See also Kruks 1990.

through which the facticity of past is described, the one relating it to history: temporality is discussed as institutionalized time. Institutionalized time, which should not be understood as a renamed time of the world, is the lived experience totalized from outside the "interior" construed through temporal action in an encounter with other temporalizations or, if you prefer, with the temporalizing action of the Other.<sup>42</sup> This is the point where Sartre introduces duration<sup>43</sup> as a mediation between two acts, as a characteristic of time into his construction, first as an inner, reciprocal relation of a gift mediated by a "third". This brings the two dimensions of social relations into the picture, the dyad and the triad which display the aspect of being already-in-the-world-amongst-others (CRD I, p. 188-89). This is the rethought version of the time of the world of *L'être et le néant* where being-in-the-world of "time" was represented as coexistence with the "ceci" encountered already in the three dimensions of temporality. However, as the world Sartre paints for us is not a harmonious world of exchanging gifts but a world of struggle against scarcity and of conflictual relations this initial setting is given further aspects.

The reciprocity of the relations between the agents is not a model of "good" or "human" relations but designs merely the interiority of the relation: the Other is recognized as freedom constantly present and there is no escape from this condition (see CRD I, p. 189-91). Reciprocity appears in an already produced social configuration of the institutions and instruments - of the inert, or of the facticity of past actions where one appears as already Other and with a fixed place "dans une société par les significations gravées dans la matière." (CRD I, p. 189). In this setting the agent, as Sartre postulates, wants to change this world where she/he has a "fixed place" and can do so only through turning her/ himself into an instrument.

Here the agent is designated as Other not only with regard to the past but also with regard to the future: being an instrument within projected action is realizing oneself as Other. At the same time the present is postulated as impossible in view of action: the agent cannot take its present as an objective (CRD I, p. 191). This setting politicized through the presence of the Other and through the impossibility which construes the present as a limit-situation is where action takes place. It takes place in the world which is facticity of the past, a conflictual playground for the agent as an Other as well as for the Other, in the world where action as change within the setting of a projected, provisional future takes a view of the present:

"N'allons pas croire, en effet, que nous sommes entrés dans la cité des fins et que, dans la reciprocité, chacun reconnaît et traite l'Autre comme fin absolue. [...] l'homme est un être matériel au milieu d'un monde matériel; il veut changer le monde qui l'écrase,

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42 Institutionalized time is discussed in the *Critique* only passingly within an example on "primitive groups". This probably explains why it has not emerged as a concept in the commentary literature.

43 In *L'être et le néant* duration is introduced into the setting through choice: "Choisir, c'est faire que surgisse avec mon engagement un certaine extension finie de durée concrète et continue, qui est précisément celle qui nous sépare de la réalisation de mes possibles originels. Ainsi liberté, choix, néantisation, temporalisation, ne font qu'une seule et même chose." (EN p. 543)

c'est-à-dire agir par la matière sur l'ordre de la matérialité: donc se changer lui-même. C'est un autre *arrangement* de l'Univers avec un autre statut de l'homme qu'il recherche à chaque instant; c'est à partir de cet ordre nouveau qu'il se définit à lui-même comme *l'Autre qu'il sera*. Ainsi se fait-il à chaque instant l'instrument, le moyen de ce futur statut qui le réalisera comme autre; il lui est impossible de prendre son propre présent pour fin. Ou, si l'on préfère, l'homme comme avenir de l'homme est le schème régulateur de toute entreprise mais la fin est toujours un remaniement de l'ordre matériel qui *par lui-même* rendra l'homme possible. [...] La fin, c'est la production d'une marchandise, d'un objet de consommation, d'un outil ou la création d'un objet d'art. Et c'est par cette production, par cette création, que l'homme se crée lui-même [...]. En conséquence, dans la mesure où mon projet est dépassement du présent vers l'avenir et de moi-même vers le monde, je me traite toujours comme moyen et ne puis traiter l'Autre comme une fin. (CRD I, p. 191-92)

This is perhaps the most significant difference between the concepts of temporality in *L'être et le néant* and the *Critique*. Where in the former the time of the world was represented as the encounter of facticity of the past that is constantly reformulated through the opening formed by the future, in the latter there is a significant shift of point of view. The facticity of the past as institutionalized time gains much more importance as it is postulated as the "environment" of action and as it defines the agent and the other as Others. Furthermore, the concept of freedom gains here a more stressedly conflictual aspect as the agent with a "fixed place" encounters the freedom of the Other not only as a limit to her/his own freedom as in *L'être et le néant* but as a constitutive part of being-in-the-world - the condition of being Other is common even though not shared. Inscribed in materiality, as already there in relation to others through institutionalized time the agent encounters the Other as a stranger with whom the relations are not established through any common agreement but who is already there integrated into our project (see CRD I, p. 189). The Other is recognized through the "passivity" of this "fixed place" implying both institutionalized time and the produced as one who is "obliged by needs" to do something (in Sartre's example to sell oneself as a worker, see CRD I, p. 190) or to be something (likewise in an example, a slave, see *ibid.*). It is only through this negative perspective that freedom is encountered: "pour traiter un homme comme un chien, il faut l'avoir d'abord reconnu pour un homme." (CRD I, p. 190)

In the *Critique* the introduction of history into the picture through the past and institutionalized time offers a view of freedom as something to be struggled for instead of maintaining the perspective of *L'être et le néant* where freedom is more stressedly related to the future as possibility. This aspect of the future is, however, also present in the *Critique* and this is another point where Sartre's concept of history meets with problems. The agent is postulated as a player of freedom and choice at the same time within a frame of dimensional temporality and within that of institutionalized time as the facticity of the past where freedom is an impossibility of the present. The conflictual setting these two perspectives form is to quite an extent incompatible with the One History which Sartre postulates as totalization which temporalizes itself (see CRD I, p. 144) and which implies an unpolitical functionalization of history as continuity opposed to the singularized and broken play as the view taken through the agent. Temporality and temporalization are attributes of the action of the agent "within" time which

is a perspective of the agent of the world and hence History without a totalizer but nevertheless temporalizing itself is a contradictory postulation.

However, even though the introduction of history into the picture creates a problem here, the setting as such offers an interesting view of the agent. Apart from the twofold concept of freedom described above the perspective of the Other can be discussed further.

The agent is described here as encountering her/himself "in" the future as Other in a political perspective of changing the existing world and encountering the other as Other as that which construes the exteriority within the interiority of the temporality of the lived experience. The Other in the world where one's "place" is fixed represents a challenge of the exteriority within the interiority of the agent as already forming a part of it. It is, in the first place, through the Other that the exteriority is interiorized and this is an inescapable condition as the relations to the other are not based on common agreement but on the mere fact that the Other is already there. This construes the scene for the encounter of the agents wearing a mask imposed by time and concealing freedom - a mask that should be understood here more in the sense of the word person as an agent who *is* a mask than in the sense of an actor who wears a mask underneath which a true person might be discovered. As a player of the twofold freedom of struggling and of projecting the agent is not an identifiable person but a construction Sartre uses to describe action in its temporality in a world construed both in the perspective of this temporality and of the inert, institutionalized time. The agent forms the point of encounter of these two aspects of time and as such also forms a "perspective of escape" for her/himself. This is a construction that can be found in *L'être et le néant* only as a remote echo because temporality and time are discussed in it more in terms of being than of action.

The stage where the encounters of the agents take place and where the conflictuality of relations between the agents is played postulates the adversary, the Other as a counter-player<sup>44</sup>. The counter-player is construed here in the tension of the poles of the relation between possibility and impossibility in the frame of time postulated as duration inscribed into the institutionalized organization of practices. On the one hand possibility represents here action and change within the aspect of temporality and on the other, impossibility represents the impossibility of things to be anything else than what they are as encountered in institutionalized time - the exchange of gifts in Sartre's example is "obligatory", it forms an inescapable moment in the construction of the relations with the others. This relation is asymmetric in two senses, firstly because the stage is postulated through duration as an attribute only of institutionalized time and secondly because this institutionalized time is nevertheless lived in a temporal perspective where the impossibility of things *having been what they have been* is brought to the fore as our past within temporality is constantly reformulated and not the inert past of institutionalized time.

In a relation to the Other as a counter-player the possibilities construed within the perspective of temporality appear as impossibilities as the Other

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44 In *L'être et le néant* the adversary is not as overtly politicized a figure as in the Critique, also in the second volume. See for example the example of boxing (CRD II, p. 26ff.).

represents the exteriority (see CRD I, p. 159n1). Or in other words, in the game played here the choices, acts, strategies and tactics taken and followed are changed “afterwards” by the action of the Other.<sup>45</sup> The perspective of time of the Other to my temporality is that of the impossibility of my possibilities. It is a conflictual perspective from the past in the sense that the Other as a counter-player and representing the institutionalized time of exteriority construes a challenge to action, to my temporal experience but not in the sense of construing a conflictual perspective with my *projection* of objectives. Hence, from the perspective of the agent, the Other’s perspective from the past does not refer here to the past in time but to past within the temporal relation of the Other and of the agent - there is a discrepancy in the times of the agent and of the Other: the time of the Other is not the same as my time<sup>46</sup>. This is a construction which repeats the setting of freedom as struggle and as projection.

With this constellation the discrepancy between the agent as an adventurer of the temporal (“[e]n effet - je l’ai montré ailleurs - la seule temporalité concevable est celle d’une temporalisation comme aventure singulière.”, CRD I, p. 143, see also p. 165, 217) acting in the interior space of temporality and One History as totalization without totalizer and as a perspective taken from the past as institutionalized time becomes even more evident. The postulation of a circularity (“I” am the Other as well) does not bridge the gap between temporality as an attribute of action and the perspective of the historical agent on time as One History because History remains here an aspect of the inert facticity of time. It remains an aspect of the institutionalized time postulated as the past where the I as Other appears as a *product* of History representing solely the perspective of exteriority. In this setting it is only through temporality as interior space of action that the agent can be seen as a producer and as that which is being produced. Hence within the perspective of One History temporality is captured into institutionalized practices of the social reality and history risks losing the aspects of change and freedom inherent in it - time escapes the agent.

The postulation, later on in the *Critique*, of *common* as an attribute of group praxis in opposition to the circularity of the I and the Other does not change the constellation, either. The praxis-processus (as history) which Sartre describes as “ma production de moi-même à partir du commun comme *praxis*-processus en cours” (CRD I, p. 549) in fact repeats the problem: the *common individual*, i.e. the agent seen as an actor in group relations is a construction that maintains the agent’s perspective and this does not establish a bridge from the temporalizing action of the agent to One History with no agent. The “common” is another mask worn, a role played by the agent acting “as if” and as such it does not embrace the perspective of Heidegger’s *Mitsein*, it is a strategy of action in a situation where the action of the agents does not take place in a relation of direct confrontation but

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45 The “afterwards” is to be understood here out of the context of linear time: it is a contingent possibility and facticity inscribed in being in this world, it is “already there”- as in relation to temporality the dimensions of past, present and future do not form any preestablished chronological order, they are literally *dimensions*.

46 I owe the insight on the different times of the agent and of the Other to Juliette Simont’s paper *La conception sartrienne du néant est-elle “classique”?* read in the colloquium of the Groupe d’études sartriennes at the Sorbonne in July 1995.

is mediated by the organized politics of the action of the many. This is explicitly expressed by Sartre, too:

“C’est à ce niveau, je crois, qu’on peut saisir cet étrange conflit circulaire et sans synthèse possible qui représente l’indépassable contradiction de l’Histoire: l’opposition et identité de l’individuel et du commun.” (ibid.)

This separation of the agent as a temporal actor and of History is highlighted further in that the Other remains a temporal perspective on action on all “levels of experience”. In an example on Taylorism and on automation (CRD I, p. 549ff.) Sartre describes how the nondialectical time of a machine (of the produced) as a passive and external feature separates the agents and “steals” their acts and their temporality producing a “seal” [*le sceau*] representing a false unity of the heterogeneity of time. Within this, however, individual praxis, as it forms the only constituting instance in the praxis-processus, is maintained. In other words, the “processus” aspect with its characteristics of inert intemporality of time representing the exterior as the time of the Other remains the qualification of History and the individual agent is postulated as a temporal actor within this processus: the interior of the temporal agent is limited by the exterior of History and this limit cannot be crossed as the circularity “I” am the Other does not open a view for the agent “from” History. The bottom line here is that in Sartre One History remains exterior to the agent as a temporal actor and that the concepts of totalization of envelopment and incarnation of the second volume of the *Critique* are conceptual devices with which Sartre attempts to develop this setting.

The circle closes when Sartre comes to the sovereign as the incarnation of freedom, temporality and the action of an agent. The sovereign represents Sartre’s attempt at reconciling the perspectives of the agent and “of” One History as it is postulated as the mediating limit between the agent and the Other (see CRD I, e.g. p. 589, 593, 595 and also p. 673). However, the concept of sovereign in Sartre is twofold in such a way that this postulation is undermined. Firstly, there is the agent as the sovereign in terms of freedom and action and secondly, there is the institutionalized counterpart to this (in terms of institutionalized time and action), the quasi-sovereign which forms a limit to sovereignty and, so to say, “acts in “our” name”. (see CRD I, e.g. p. 253, 563, 588 and 599ff.<sup>47</sup>) Hence this division of sovereignty, instead of surpassing the division between the agent and One History merely maintains it.

In brief, on the one hand Sartre maintains temporality as an attribute of the individual agent forming the interior as a space of action and as a view of the exteriority of time, on the other he postulates the exteriority of time represented by the Other as internalized. This setting introduces time into the agent’s temporal action but it is the time as diverse institutionalized practices *as lived within temporal action*, not the time of One History and Truth. This construction does not allow for a vision of a unitarian History of all - at least not without excluding the temporal perspective of the agent and making Truth timeless. However, this does not exclude the perspective of history understood as the historical aspect of

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47 On the sovereign in the *Critique* see Palonen 1992, p. 72ff.

existence as Sartre's analysis shows, to use George Lichtheim's words, that "human existence can be shown to be of such kind that it *necessarily* sets the historical process in motion." (1963/64, p. 245)<sup>48</sup>

In all, the problem of the discrepancy between temporality and time in view of history as totalization without a totalizer is maintained in spite of Sartre's outspoken postulation that the past can serve as a symbol of the totalization of individuals into History:

"Si la totalisation doit être découverte comme totalisation en cours, cela ne signifie seulement qu'elle devient et deviendra mais aussi qu'elle *est devenue*. Cette fois, *ma* vie, dans son mouvement singulier, est trop courte pour que nous puissions espérer saisir en elle l'aventure diachronique de la totalisation sinon en tant que le lien totalisant au passé qui constitue l'individu *peut* servir de symbole à une totalisation des individus." (CRD I, p. 143)

Furthermore, temporality as the "depth" of history remains captured in the past as institutionalized time through the postulation that History as a synchronic dimension has an internal relation to temporality as a diachronic dimension. The "absence" of the internalizing agent of One History is prominent as the interiorization of History is postulated through the singular action of the agent which, in my view, implies far more a possibility of a conceptual construction of different histories told from the point of view of the agent than One all-embracing History which as such forms a strange point of view in Sartre's otherwise anti-unitarian portrait of the agent:

"[J]e me trouve conditionné dialectiquement par le passé totalisé et totalisant de l'aventure humaine. Cela signifie que ma vie même est millénaire puisque les schèmes qui me permettent de comprendre, de modifier et de totaliser mes entreprises pratiques (et l'ensemble des déterminations qui les accompagnent) sont *passés dans l'actuel* (présents par leur efficace et passés par leur histoire devenue). En ce sens, l'évolution diachronique est actuelle (en tant que passé - et, nous le verrons plus tard que future) dans la totalisation synchronique; les liens de l'une et l'autre sont d'intériorité et [...] la profondeur temporelle de l'aventure totalisante se révèle dès le moment où j'interprète réflexivement les opérations de ma vie singulière." (CRD I, p. 144-45)

#### 5.2.4 Space and Temporality - Another View of the Problem of History

The problem of History can still be discussed a little further without going into the discussion of Sartre's concept of history in detail (a subject which falls out of the scope of this work). On the one hand, as we have seen, the problem of One History or the totality of history as Lichtheim puts it (1963/64, p. 225) can be

48 Lichtheim also comments on Sartre's quest for One History by saying that "he remains haunted by the Cartesian problem of relating the outside world to the solitary individual while at the same time his intellectual conscience tells him that he ought to be thinking about the on-going historical process." (1963/64, p. 240) This is somewhat doubtful as the problem of relating the interior and the exterior is one of the important settings that the *Critique* offers. Instead we might say, as Leo Fretz does, that one of the originalities of the work is the combination of the Cartesian and the historical-materialist method (1992, p. 89, see also 1988). On views on history in relation to Sartre see for example Hincker 1966, Catalano 1986, Flynn 1992.



expressed through the incompatibility of the individual agent and the all-embracing totalizing perspective, which originates from the radical claim of the primacy of the temporal agent. For Sartre action is synthetizing and History takes the profile of the synthesis of all the synthetizing actions which have the agent as a perspective, and this results in an unsolved discrepancy.<sup>49</sup> It could even be said that the "Hegelian spirit" does not succeed in overriding the central position given to the agent but on the other hand also another view of the problem can be opened starting from Sartre's conceptual constructions. If one reads Sartre from a perspective which emphasizes the central role of temporality the question can be posed in terms of temporality and temporalization instead of posing it in terms of the agent and of history as "totalization without a totalizer".

First of all we should notice that Sartre's outspoken attempt at defining History as a synthetic totality (e.g. CRD I, p. 10) meets its conceptual limits in a perspective where production plays a central role. The agent as a perspective on production is a limitation which contests the "Hegelian" perspective of systematizing "everything" in the sense of the following citation where Sartre sets the task for himself in view of history:

"[N]ous avons [...] les instruments, nous pouvons établir la méthode: notre tâche historique, au sein de ce monde polyvalent, c'est de rapprocher le moment où l'Histoire n'aura qu'un seul sens et où elle tendra à se dissoudre dans les hommes concrets qui la feront en commun." (CRDI, p. 63)

In the face of this objective Sartre's description of the (produced) social reality is a limiting perspective - and also a fragmentary perspective which efficiently keeps him from reaching his objective and leaves an interesting set of unsolved problems which refer beyond the unitarian perspective. However, while working on the *Critique*, Sartre did not push this line of argumentation further, on the contrary the unfinished second volume of the *Critique* is partly an attempt to systematize the fragmentary and partly contradictory perspectives of the first volume.<sup>50</sup> It is for this task that Sartre makes use of the already mentioned "new" concepts - or rather, conceptual help-devices for they were never entirely developed into the concepts their use in the work implies - with which he postulates a new perspective on the issue of History, for example the totalization of envelopment (*totalisation d'enveloppement*) and incarnation (*incarnation*).<sup>51</sup>

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49 On this see for example Aronson 1973, p. 82-84.

50 It should be noted here that we cannot consider the second volume uniquely as an attempt to solve the problems that have arisen from and as a result of the first, for the simple reason that at least a part of the second volume, as I have already indicated, was written before the first was finished. The two volumes are at least to some extent contemporary and the lines of investigation taken in them are to a certain extent parallel, too. I contain myself here to simply indicating this, for from the perspective of this work the conceptual apparatus of the second volume is - basically because it has remained largely unfinished - incomplete and does not offer as good a ground for conceptual research as the first volume. A comparison between the two volumes would require a perspective that would take into consideration the different conceptual status they have, and that would exceed the perspective of this work.

51 Neither of these concepts is actually new, incarnation is familiar from many of Sartre's earlier texts, and even "enveloppement" is passingly mentioned (see e.g. Noudelmann 1996) but in the *Critique II* they are redefined and developed further.

These two concepts are construed for the purpose of discussing the problematic relation of the individual agent to the totalization of the totalizations and indicate a pole-relation construed between enveloping as a perspective of the exterior and incarnation as a perspective of the interior. Yet, as the examples dealing with the boxing match and especially with Stalin show Sartre's discussion moves around the pole representing the interiority to such an extent and in such a manner that one could even speculate with the possibility of reading here a perspective minimizing to some extent the political role of facticity and contingency to the profit of an unpolitical view of necessity. However, as the plans for the contents of the work show (see CRD II, p. 436-441) many aspects of the question remained unexplored and we are left with a work where the most interesting discussion from a political point of view is that of the concept of struggle (*la lutte*).<sup>52</sup>

At this point I shall limit myself to pointing out the questions that can shed light on the perspective taken here.

The starting point could be formulated as follows: temporality is a structure of lived experience and action, history is lived time institutionalized and these two perspectives coincide in the past. However, here Sartre is confronted with the problem of the agent: how is the temporal agent's relation to History construed as totalization without totalizer. Yet, there is also another line of argumentation in the *Critique* used to describe the point of encounter of the agent and history: that which postulates this encounter as a crossroads of interiorizing and exteriorizing. Hence the postulation of the past as a view of History discussed above is not the only perspective from which Sartre's concept of temporality can be interpreted.

With a reference to the singular - universal setting (CRD I, p. 145) Sartre relates the past and history through the concept of totalization and sees the past forming a view in the present as the past is reinterpreted in action. It is this "actual past" which brings the dimension of history into the setting. The past is not only the (already) produced situation reorganised and reproduced, but it is history reproduced in the present through present possibilities and means. The perspective taken here of the past is that of the "present agent" and not that of the Other forming a perspective of past. On the one hand this refers to a design where the future is seen as limiting an interior, a space of action and the past as a limit figure toward the other dimension. On the other hand it refers to an opening toward history where the opening, however, is not postulated in terms of a game of possibilities and impossibilities within a view "from" the future as *is-not* but, on the contrary, as history as past *is*, it is the present action which takes over history here and now and carves the perspective of the possibilities - impossibilities as the past as history is acted on and as it acts on in the present.

"[...] la *praxis* reconstitué (elle construit la réalité passé, c'est-à-dire dépassé, en la retrouvant à travers le dépassement présent qui la conserve - et elle [*praxis*] est elle-même construite par ce passé ressucité qui la transforme dans la mesure où elle le restitue). En outre, elle [the past reality] fait - comme passé dépassé - nécessairement parti de notre *praxis* présente comme sa profondeur diachronique." (CRD I, p. 146)

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52 For a discussion of "incarnation" see Noudelmann 1996 and on "lutte" Palonen 1992.

From this point of view the past does not remain "outside" but forms another dimension besides that of the future for the construction of an "inside". Hence the past-present-future construction refers here to a space of action which is construed in action in a temporal frame, an internal space of action where the already existing is negated and the "new" produced. This is the "decompressed" space of temporality where the pole-relation of identity and change (of *is not what is - is what is-not*) is construed. In other words, this is the space where the exteriority and the interiority are brought "together" without the mediation of the Other as representing the exterior seen from the viewpoint of the temporal action of the agent.

### 5.2.5 Change, Permanence and "Here" and "Now"

It is through the view offered by this temporal landscape where the agent has access to both the exteriority and interiority through temporalizing action that "change" and the "inert" can be read as political perspectives on action. "Inertia" as the impossibility of change, the insurpassability of the permanence (see CRD I, p. 445) represents the resistance of the produced producing the agent and of institutionalized time. "Change", on the other hand, represents the temporal agent producing in a temporal space of action and it is the clash of these titans in the asymmetric relation where the agent is construed in both poles which sketches the Sartrean political universe in terms of temporality. It is a universe where the agent is in relation to the exteriority as well through temporal action extended both toward the future and toward the past in terms of possibilities - impossibilities as through the Other representing the inert and the exteriority of the "outside" brought into the space of action. The encounter of the agent with the produced, the past and institutionalized time is twofold, presented in Sartre both from the point of view of the exterior (i.e. the agent's encounter with the Other) and of the interior (i.e. the agent's encounter with the past through temporal action).

This line of argumentation representing the play of the producing and of the produced as a play of change and of the inert postulated from the perspective of the temporal action of the agent reaches its point of culmination in the *Critique* in the transformation of a series into a group where the Other representing institutionalized time and the produced as a perspective of the exteriority receives a new aspect as it is postulated as the "same".

It is against this background that the agent seen in the context of the group-in-fusion displays yet another aspect of Sartre's concept of temporality. On the one hand in the practico-inert field temporality is exclusively an attribute of the action of the agent seen as individual praxis and it is not activated because the practico-inert represents the intemporality of the inert, of the produced. On the other hand in the group-in-fusion where the temporal perspective is activated, temporality also becomes an attribute of group action (see CRD I, p. 409-10). The actualization of temporality in the groups is described by Sartre in terms of "here and now" ("*ici et maintenant*", see CRD I, e.g. p. 409) which refers to spontaneous action where there is no permanence in the guise of the produced, only change in

the guise of producing. This is a setting where the ek-static temporal dimensions are construed in a specific way.

The group-in-fusion, the Parisians taking over the Bastille because of the impossibility of going on living the impossibility of the situation (see CRD I, p. 385, 391ff.), configures in the *Critique* a space of action which differs from other landscapes of action in the work. It forms a scene where space is construed as an “everywhere” with many centers where the multiplicity of agents temporalize both action and place. The “here” and “now” and the “everywhere” construe a setting where the only perspective of action is the temporalization of the action situation.

“[L]’opération [...] “A la Bastille; courons!” [...] se fait par chacun sous un triple aspect: enchaînement pratique d’évidences abstraites [...]; liquidation par le remaniement totalisateur de son séparatisme idéologique; réalisation du champ pratique commun [...]. Cette liquidation constructive se fait à travers les trois ek-stases temporelles: passé et futur se déterminent réciproquement et le présent pratique [...] se produit comme détermination régressive des médiations qui unissent cet avenir au passé. A partir de là, on peut dire que l’opération a lieu *Partout* [...]” (CRD I, p. 529)

However, temporalization as the only perspective of action where the spatial attribute is an “everywhere” brings along a break in the logic which postulates the exterior, the inert, the produced as a frame of action and the interior as a space of action: the produced is bracketed in the rising group-in-fusion and the “everywhere” does not construe an interior space of action. This means firstly that there is no such institutionalized structure in the “same” acting “everywhere” which could be postulated as the carrier of the past: the group-in-fusion has no past and no history in Sartre and hence it carries no perspective on time. Secondly, it means that the space of action to which the Other has no access except through the produced ceases to exist as a differentiating perspective between the agent and the Other.

The agent as the “same”, “here” and “now” forms a conceptual construction which describes action as shared in the sense that everyone has access to it, which excludes the possibility of the existence of the Other. Furthermore, this means that in the group-in-fusion the agent is not specified as this particular actor on the scene, but can be anyone entering the scene - also the stranger. Hence the agent does not need to be assigned a place in the setting to gain the right to be an actor, on the contrary, the contrary applies: the actor cannot be denied access to the scene.

Moreover, in this setting the limit between the interior and exterior as designed by the limiting of temporality to institutionalized time and by the twofold view of the agent as produced and producing is broken as the past is broken here, the exterior as the field of the Other and as the field of being produced is destructurized and melted into a field of action accessible to everyone. In the light of this it is no wonder that Sartre describes the action of the group-in-fusion through the figure of an Apocalyptic moment because it is here that history “ends” as institutionalized time and the agent becomes the creator of history (the “historical agent” see CRD I, p. 155). However, this Moment, in a certain sense outside of history and outside the divisions which organize action, seems to a

certain extent to be the least political moment in the *Critique* as the adversary, the Other has vanished from the scene in order to yield room for the "sames". This is, however, only that which is displayed on the surface of the story of the *Critique*, for the political aspect here is displayed through the temporal ek-stasis of the future.

The group-in-fusion and Apocalypse as figures of change and of the perspective of the temporalization of action represent a perspective of escape with no reference to a possible future institutionalization of practices nor to a "getting together" in order to obtain some objectives given to action. As escape it is a contingent event which can be lived only in terms of *carpe diem* and as such it represents a counter-image to the organized reality and the institutionalized time it carries. Hence the Apocalyptic moment is the counter figure to a certain rationality and order as it represents the "here" and "now" but does not reach beyond that to anything that could last. This is where the limit-situation as an ideal situation of action is taken to its furthest in the *Critique*: spontaneous action in an impossible situation where the temporal dimensions melt into a "here and now" and where the exterior and the interior are fused into an "everywhere" - all the coordinates of action are bracketed in view of change. This is the "Moment" of political action in Sartre to such an extent that we may almost see it in terms of self-irony.

The story of the *Critique* advances from a description of the group-in-fusion to the gates of History through a perspective where the temporal aspect of action is discussed in terms of exteriorizing and interiorizing.

The dividing line between the interior and the exterior which fused into the "everywhere" in the Apocalypse is re-established in the pledge - the Other is back on the scene and the "future development" of the the group freezes time in its aspects of temporality and history into institutions and with further serialization the timelessness of the practico-inert is brought back into the picture. When the State as the "ultimate" form of groups is reached we are faced with institutionalized time from which temporality is expelled as the "here and now" and "everywhere" are replaced by a division into "here" and "elsewhere" (see CRD I, p. 610) and as the objectives become destiny (CRD I, p. 631).

"Ainsi le développement temporel du processus objectif auquel le groupe a donné naissance lui échappe entièrement à mesure qu'on s'éloigne du moment où une *praxis* l'a réalisé." (CRD I, p. 634)

This is, in my view, the most important point in the *Critique* where the logic of Sartre's "story", or of the "levels of experience" tends to lead to separations and where it enters his conceptual constructions: the postulation of One History as already "reached" and as displayed in the existence of the State as the eternalizer of repetition. Sartre's problem of the relation of the temporal agent and of History without totalizer is finally displayed as a problem of the agent versus the State. However, before getting to this, certain new aspects of the question are discussed by Sartre.

The different stages of groups, pledged group, organization, institution and finally state, display in Sartre different perspectives of temporality and time as if

they were different qualities of different kinds of action and it is only through following the individual praxis, the agent in action that we can reach the view of the landscape of crossing roads that is sketched here: it is the agent that represents different time perspectives as a dimensional time landscape, the Sartrean temporal universe is not divided into different paces of time parallel to each other and embodied in different social ensembles that the agent would follow, but the agent is spread into the different times, produced and producing in different time perspectives at the same time. Hence, for example, the Apocalypse, grandiously described by Sartre as the revolutionary moment in his History-perspective is but one of the temporal perspectives in this landscape - it is a figure for the time of change as compared to the intemporality of the practico-inert or the state as the form of groups most corrupted by seriality and as representing the time of the produced as inert repetition and permanence. Therefore it is possible to trace certain constructions which reveal these differences in time perspectives in the different group forms as well.

In the pledged group the inert, the produced which re-enters the space of action as permanence in the guise of the past is described by Sartre as follows:

“Le groupe vient *se voir* dans sa victoire déjà passée, c’est-à-dire qu’il se prend lui-même pour fin [...]” (CRD I, p. 435)<sup>53</sup>

As the group takes its past “victory” over seriality as a figure for its constitution it takes itself as an objective and takes a pledge to conserve itself, a pledge understood as a guarantee against the uncalculable future (see e.g. CRD I, p. 443), i.e. as a guarantee of the permanence of the group.<sup>54</sup> Here the future is read in terms of the present permanence as a threat whereas in the group-in-fusion the temporal dimensions have no structure of permanence.

However, as the stage of non-permanence is, within the “story” Sartre construes, only a temporary perspective, the further stages of the group form grounds for the reappearance of permanence in a stronger sense than in the pledged group. This permanence could be described as an eternity-perspective or the reappearance of the intemporality of the produced - or as the impossibility for the agent to abandon common praxis which construes the time perspective of the group in its corrupted forms (see CRD I, e.g. p. 451-52).

The relations of inertia - action / intemporality - temporality / permanence - change are played in the group turned into an organization as a game of function and capacities, of the rights and duties, the demands of the group and the individual as the carrier of the free future possibilities (see CRD I, p. 473). The common individual maintains the permanence of the group, but, still, individual praxis as representing the temporal action of the agent is not lost but remains the perspective of change within this play (see CRD I, p. 469, 493).

53 Here one should bear in mind, as I already mentioned earlier, that for Sartre the present (as displayed for example in the group-in-fusion) cannot be taken as an objective.

54 The pledged group is also described by Sartre as “the beginning of humanity” (CRD I, p. 535) which can here be read as another way of expressing permanence. On the “beginning of humanity” interpreted in terms of the birth of a human being as non-contractual self-creation see Noudelmann 1993, esp. p. 57-59.

Further "on", the organization freezes the temporal space of action into a place as an object of action and as its framework, as well as partly as its contents: the organization needs to be kept up, functioning so that it can provide the permanent place the non-identifiable-to-a-place agent cannot ascribe to. It is the organization which also provides the physical image of the place: a bank as a collective object is an image of the exteriority of serial relations, a bank as an organization is an image both of the "outside" and of the "inside". Moreover, the setting of action changes also in the sense that the limit-situation as a perspective to action which is present in the group-in-fusion and which is still maintained in the pledged group through the postulation of the condition of being "brothers" and facing the possibility of becoming a "traitor" - both figures for a constant redefinition of the limit formed by the encounter of the exterior and the interior - disappears in the organization as does the perspective of temporalization: stability connected to place overrides the temporal aspect of action as non-located change.

Even though the problem of the linkage between temporality and history was never "solved" by Sartre it is obvious that he does not operate with conceptions of history and time as two faces of the same coin: time is a background figure, a factual perspective on the lived, history is the aspect of existence produced in the producing of temporality in action. However, the question which remains unanswered in Sartre with regard to History is that of the agent here as well; totalization without totalizer vs. temporalization within the action of the agent seem to form an impasse in the *Critique*.

This is an impasse which Sartre attempted to open up through the concepts of the universal and the singular in his texts subsequent to the *Critique* (*L'Idiot* and *L'universel singulier*) in order to construe a setting where the singular agent plays both temporality and History as One. This - as one might speculate - leaves us with histories that are both "debatable" and "playable" in the same manner as possibilities. Both "future" and "past" possibilities are to be reinvented in the present because identity with the past or future is impossible. In this sense History is impossible for Sartre, too.

## 6 THE AGENT AND THE POLITICAL ACTION SITUATION

The concepts of production and temporality discussed in the previous chapters describe the first conceptual constructions through which the political agent can be approached from the perspective of this work. In this chapter I shall discuss further descriptions through which Sartre thematizes both action and the agent. These descriptions will be divided roughly into two lines of argumentation which can be interpreted from the *Critique* and which form different, but parallel perspectives on the initial setting construed through the postulation of the agent on the one hand as producing and produced, and on the other as temporal.

The first line of argumentation sets forward some of the central figures of the *Critique* - for example need, scarcity and seal - from a point of view which relates them to the concepts of production and temporality. The second one discusses Sartre's concepts of interiority (interiorization) and exteriority (exteriorization) in relation to these figures as well as to some others, such as seriality, practico-inert and the different forms of groups etc., and culminates in a discussion on the concept of subject. In the following I shall suggest that through these two lines of argumentation we can paint in more detail the portrait of the Sartrean agent as an actor in a political action situation.

### 6.1 The Figures of the *Critique* Revisited

#### 6.1.1 Need and Scarcity

There are several figures in the *Critique* which are used by Sartre to describe the relation between producing and the produced. They all take different viewpoints



with regard to the agent and form a complex web of relations which lays the grounds for a further discussion. It is commonplace practice to start describing this web from the concept of need and from that of scarcity (see e.g. Stack 1970, Aronson 1973 and Catalano 1986). This is also in my view a legitimate starting point for a discussion, because these concepts are Sartre's initial formulations of the conceptual setting he brings to the fore after the *Questions* in the beginning of the *Critique* proper, that is, before entering the description of the diabolic world of the produced, the hell of the practico-inert (see e.g. CRD I, p. 286).

However, my intention here is not to proceed into an exegetic reading of these two concepts, or of the others that I shall take up. Instead, I shall argue that they serve in Sartre's argumentation as limit figures for bringing forth certain central aspects of the conceptual construction which has in this present work been called the space of action, and which is of central importance for understanding his view of the agent and action. These concepts are interpreted here more as formal operational devices in Sartre's argumentation than as having a substantial content which, especially concerning scarcity, does not seem to be the evident interpretation in commentary literature. Scarcity in particular, is understood here as a concept which does not make any claim to explain an "original" starting point through the postulation of a beginning to the social and to the historical. Following Leo Fretz, it is understood as a concept which does not discuss the "Stand der Dinge in der Wirklichkeit" (1988, p. 256). Furthermore it is not understood as a "source of evil" as some commentators tend to see it (see e.g. McBride 1991, p. 109<sup>1</sup>). It is not understood as an economic category either, as one referring to the primacy of the economic or simply to the scarcity of products (see e.g. Cranston 1972/73 and Paci 1973, esp. p. 9). Rather, it is understood as a concept which forms, together with need, the conceptual background against which Sartre construes his other concepts and through which he introduces the view of an "interior", already present in his conception of temporality, into his discussion of "social reality" and of action.

Scarcity is used here to describe a turning point where certain initial conceptual devices are activated and taken into use as a skeleton for analysis, as points of reference and as ideal figures beyond which Sartre does not take us. Hence scarcity is not a figure that would refer to some sort of natural state from which

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It is unquestionable that the concept of scarcity displays both a political and a moral aspect (see e.g. Saint-Sernin, 1984 p. 292), but the manichaeist perspective of the division between Good and Evil (see CRD I, p. 689) does not postulate scarcity as its "source", but rather forms a setting which can be used to describe the encounter with scarcity. Evil as well as violence - which is another figure Sartre uses to describe scarcity (see Fretz 1988) - are human practice which cannot be described as having a "beginning". Sartre writes: "[e]n réalité, la violence n'est pas nécessairement un acte [...] elle n'a pas non plus un trait de Nature ou une virtualité cachée. Elle est l'inhumanité constante des conduites humaines en tant que rareté intériorisée, bref ce qui fait que chacun voit en chacun l'Autre et le principe du Mal." (CRD I, p. 221, see also p. 208-10) See also the previous sentence where Sartre ironically comments on Dühring and calls the human being "cette méchante créature". Note here that the word "acte" is used in the quotation as differentiated from "praxis". This is a differentiation which offers a view of action as exteriority (*acte*) and as interiority (*praxis*). See footnote 13 below.

the human then arises<sup>2</sup> either, it is merely a device Sartre uses to delimit his analysis. Moreover, it is a figure he uses for establishing an analytical starting point which is described in terms of the encounter between the agent and Nature. This figure does not form, however, a dividing line placed between “nature” and “human being” but, within action, refers to a limit-situation construed through the impossibility of the possibility of being *de trop*.<sup>3</sup> From a political point of view this shows a radical negation of any such perspective on reality that would take a dividing line between “nature” and “human being” as a constitutive part of political argumentation - be it question of human nature or natural rights. On the other hand what it does not deny is a political game played with the unidentifiability of this division at a fixed place, and the possibility of using the limit it construes strategically for example in contexts such as calling animals human or evoking animal rights.

### 6.1.2 Need and Scarcity - Further Definitions

Throughout the *Critique* Sartre’s conceptual systematics construe a field where the points of view shift: the agent is construed through different positions in relation to the world. In the present context Sartre’s discussion starts from totalization as a perspective of unification and the setting is presented in the form of pole-relations. Scarcity as a constituting feature of the world as it is known to us is described in a pole-relation with need, and it forms one of the points of encounter in a multidimensional field of action. In relation to scarcity need has a logical priority as a concept which reveals facticity as one of the initial figures describing the agent’s politically read relation to the world: our body (the need to maintain the “practical organism” alive) is a limit condition both for the existence of the world and of the agent. However, need has no ontological primacy because ontologically freedom “precedes” it, the human being is freedom and in her/his practical relation to the world she/he acts construed as need.<sup>4</sup> Need forms the point of view of the agent as well as the pole representing action, and scarcity the pole of the field of action, or, in other words, need represents the pole of the

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2 Referring here to a comparison between Sartre and Hobbes would be problematic. It is evident that Sartre’s figure of scarcity cannot even remotely be identified with the classical interpretation of Hobbes in terms of “war” - and an extensive reinterpretation of Hobbes from a “Sartrean” perspective is, as far as I know, still undone. On Sartre and Hobbes, see e.g. Mészáros 1979, p. 226, Roy 1982 and Delannoi 1987. On Sartre’s “anti-naturalism” there is a short passage in Kail (1993, p. 9-10) where he refers to matter as “hazard”, to nature as “order” and to Sartre’s concept of “worked matter” as irreducible to either of these.

3 See also Sartre’s sketch on nature in the *Cahiers* (CM p. 13-14) and on the relation between need and nature (CM p. 71-72), and also his comments on Marx’ use of the concept of scarcity on page 220 of the *Critique* where he stresses the interior point of view against Marx’ exterior one.

4 Needless to say, this relation is also at the same time a moral relation - the political and the moral in Sartre are both attributes of action within this world.

“practical organism” and scarcity that of the material world.<sup>5</sup> Hence the agent is characterized as surpassing of the situation thus configured:

“Pour nous, l’homme se caractérise avant tout par le dépassement d’une situation [...]. Ce dépassement nous le trouvons à la racine de l’humain et d’abord dans le besoin: il est ce qui rejoint, par exemple, la rareté des femmes marquiennes, comme fait structurel du groupe, à la polyandrie comme institution matrimoniale. Car cette rareté [...] exprime une situation dans la société et renferme déjà un effort pour la dépasser [...]” (CRD I, p. 63, see also p. 105n1)

At a starting point need and scarcity are figures which express the possibility of action through the organizing of action as a surpassing of a situation, and of the field of action as a situation (to be) surpassed. This is seen in relation to production: we produce what we need and the production takes place in the milieu of scarcity which forms an attribute of the relation between the produced and the producer who is, of course, also produced (see CRD I, p. 168 and also p. 545). The relation between the two poles is asymmetric also in that the “producing” and the “produced” do not enter into a relation on equivalent terms as they refer to different temporal perspectives: the “present of the producing” is seen in terms of the future and the “present of the produced” in terms of the past.<sup>6</sup>

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5 One should bear in mind here that the “practical organism” and the “material world” are not separate entities in Sartre. The conceptual construction of a pole-relation serves specifically for highlighting these two figures designating different points of view taken of what Sartre mostly calls “social reality”, or simply “reality”. As such they form conceptual devices through which certain aspects of Sartre’s argumentation can be discussed. This and other similar divisions (organized/organizing or exterior/interior) used in this work are hence to be read strictly as devices and not as postulations with regard to a dualistic nature of reality - as we shall see later in this chapter one of the important postulations Sartre makes in the *Critique* is that a configuration which claims that a strict division between “subject” and “object” cannot be made. From this point of view I would be critical of interpreting Sartre starting from reading *L’être et le néant* in dualistic terms based on the division of the “in-itself” and the “for-itself”, and of claiming that a similar configuration can be found in the *Critique* for example in terms of practico-inert and individual (or group) praxis, or even of the somewhat modified points of view which consider practico-inert as the introduction of the in-itself into action (see e.g. Flynn 1986, p. 93). On the contrary I consider that there is a certain logical affinity between the constellation of need as lack and that of the in-itself - for-itself relation as lack: the in-itself can be read as the agent’s relation to the world, not only to things as such in the pure exteriority. This makes it possible to read the in-itself - facticity relation as a political relation of the agent to the world. This is clearly displayed in the concept of bad faith, which reveals the political aspect of this relation (see the café-example in the chapter 7.5 below).

6 One should note, however, that - as we have seen in the chapter on temporality - this is not a temporal construction within a linear conception of time. The past and the future form different perspectives to the present and should not be understood straight-forwardly as “was” or “will be” but as forming a dimensional space where the temporal order is “reversible” according to the point of view taken. The situation “to be surpassed” designates as well the future as the past of the agent, or paraphrasing Sartre, it refers to what we make out of what has been made of us (see Sartre 1966, p. 95). On the other hand the surpassing of the situation refers to action with no specific reference to time. It only refers to the project, or to the posing of the objective for surpassing the situation. Hence the “producing taking a perspective to the present in terms of the future” refers to organizing action in terms of a projected objective (a future as *is-not* which “shall not be” realized), and “the produced taking a perspective to the present in terms of the past” refers to the already-produced and organized reality as that which “is not what it is”. In fact there is a

The produced and producing are described here, as elsewhere in Sartre, as circular and hence they apply to both poles (“cette rareté [...] exprime une situation [...] et renferme déjà un effort pour la dépasser”, see the quotation above) and the discussion is conducted in terms of changing the point of view taken of the relation. However, this relation also displays a second asymmetry Sartre construes into his description. The agent is postulated as the primary viewpoint of the setting, and however limited and conditioned, need remains an expression of action and a moment of freedom in an asymmetric relation to the world and to the exteriority. In relation to need the field of action, labelled with scarcity understood as a feature of exteriority, is the world where the agent exists as need.<sup>7</sup> Yet, even though exteriority is a characteristic of the field of action as well as of the world, they are not identical or synonymous for freedom is placed “inbetween”. It is through the aspect of freedom in the agent’s action that the political character of “being in the world” is maintained by Sartre. The agent acts in the exteriority, in the field of scarcity, but this field is not closed, there is a space “between” need and scarcity. This is a pattern which is present throughout the *Critique*. However, in the course of the text the description of this schematic setting is rendered more complex by further definitions to an extent that where these concepts are discussed in connection with the groups, the initial setting they design can only be reached as a distant echo. On the “level” of the group need and scarcity are described in terms of figures such as danger in relation to fraternity-terror (CRD I, p. 503), or as the distant, but ever present setting for the encounter of producing and being produced (see e.g. CRD I, p. 639, and being produced as “rare” and “precious” CRD II, p. 431).

Apart from underlining the postulation of a space of action it is possible to profile this setting in more detail. Firstly, the two figures of need and scarcity serve for introducing the perspective of conflict familiar from *L’être et le néant* into the scenery (see EN p. 502, and also p. 312-13).<sup>8</sup> The “simple fact of not having enough”<sup>9</sup> makes it possible for Sartre to establish conflict as one of the key figures

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double asymmetry here: the poles represent different temporal perspectives with regard to the future and past, but also with regard to the construction of the concepts. Even though the past is seen in terms of “is-not-what-it-is” the future is seen in terms of that which “will not be” realized as well as in terms of that of “is-what-it-is-not”. The postulation of two futures as a limit-situation which Sartre makes in *L’être et le néant* forms a constant asymmetry in the setting where the poles of producing and produced are in question.

7 See e.g. CRD I, p. 105 where Sartre describes need as “être-hors-de-soi-dans-le-monde” (see also p. 166).

8 For a similar perspective in the *Cahiers* see e.g. p. 19-20 and for a discussion on conflict in terms of violence e.g. 178ff., 219-20.

9 The question of absolute and relative scarcity is to quite an extent irrelevant here. However, it is a very ambiguous question in Sartre. On the one hand Sartre makes remarks on the possibility of surpassing scarcity, on the other he sees it as a permanent characteristic (see CRD I, e.g. p. 225 and CRD II, e.g. p. 22, 23, 60). It seems possible, however, to interpret this ambiguity as different perspectives taken to the question. One could venture to say that there is a tendency in Sartre to see absolute scarcity representing the temporal perspective and relative scarcity the historical one, i.e. referring to differences produced over a lapse of time. This interpretation would relativize the whole question of absoluteness and relativity of scarcity as they would be seen as concepts describing conceptual constructions which are incomparable. However, as the temporality - history discussion was never com-

for the political in the *Critique*.

In connection with the figure of scarcity Sartre describes conflict within the relation of the poles of need and scarcity as a revolutionary situation, an antagonistic relation of everyone to the others and as struggle (*la lutte*)<sup>10</sup>:

“Le départ est simple: le peuple souffrait terriblement de la crise des subsistances, il avait faim et voulait manger. Voilà le besoin, voilà le mobile; et voici le projet de base, général encore et vague, mais immédiat: agir sur les autorités pour obtenir une amélioration rapide de la situation. Cette situation de base est révolutionnaire à la condition de trouver des instruments d'action et de définir une politique par l'usage qu'on fera de ces instruments.” (CRD I, p. 78)

“En fait, la lutte a pour origine en chaque cas un antagonisme concret qui a la rareté [...] comme condition matérielle [...]” (CRD I, p. 192, see also p. 753)

“La rareté n'est pas seulement le milieu: en s'intériorisant dans l'homme de la rareté, elle constitue d'abord une première relation antagonistique de chacun à tous et à chacun.” (CRD II, p. 431)

The conflict as a constituting relation of the agents<sup>11</sup> is not radicalized by Sartre only in the form of a conditional revolutionary action or struggle, but in this relation the pole of need represents also “the danger of death” (CRD I, p. 166 and also 689, CRD II, p. 41-42) and the pole of scarcity the radically Other in a setting of an elementary stage of morals, that of a manichaeist division of Good and Evil:

“Dans la réciprocité modifiée par la rareté, le même nous apparaît comme le contre-homme en tant que ce même homme apparaît comme radicalement Autre (c'est-à-dire porteur pour nous d'une menace de mort). [...] C'est, en même temps, le premier stade de l'éthique, en tant que celle-ci n'est que la praxis s'éclairant elle-même sur la base de circonstances données. Le premier mouvement de l'éthique, ici, c'est le constitution du mal radical et du manichéisme.” (CRD I, p. 208, and also p. 85, 206, and CRD II, p. 442)

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pleted by Sartre it could be difficult, if not impossible to establish this claim in detail from the text of the *Critique* where Sartre's perspective is, apart from a few passing remarks, that of relative scarcity, i.e. scarcity seen from the perspective of action. In this context see also CRD I, p. 202, 213 and CRD II, p. 17-19. See also De Waelhens 1962, p. 86 and Bergoffen 1982, esp. p. 23-24. See also CRD I, p. 32 where Sartre citing Marx discusses the possibility of overcoming scarcity in terms of a margin of freedom outside the material production of life, and rules this possibility out as impossible to conceive of. See also Flynn who considers that scarcity must be overcome “for permanent brotherhood (*fraternité*) to be achieved” (1986, p. 185), a view which in my opinion is untenable against the background of Sartre's discussion of scarcity and conflict.

10 In the *Cahiers* Sartre describes struggle as “jeu de cache-cache” (CM p. 72) and as “coupure” (CM p. 470) which indicate a political view of action as playing and as a break. As already indicated, in the second volume of the *Critique* struggle is developed extensively as one of the central concepts in relation to History as Sartre considers conflict “le moteur de l'Histoire” (CRD I, p. 115, see also 155). This forms a certain contrast to the *Cahiers* where he writes that alterity is “le vrai moteur de l'Histoire” (CM p. 61). See also CRD II, esp. p. 22, 42, 443, Noudelmann 1996, p. 88, and also Aronson 1987, p. 3-4.

11 The idea of a conflict as a relation between human beings is generally accepted in literature on Sartre (see e.g. Mészáros 1979, p. 222, 226, and also 240, Flynn 1986, esp. p. 82, Catalano 1986, p. 33-35, 267 and Howells 1988, p. 19-20). However, there are differences in the direction that the analysis is taken. A different direction from mine is for example that of Anderson's (1993) who reads conflict as “hostility” (p. 27) and looks for the possibilities of “deliverance from this conflict” toward “a less antagonistic behavior toward others” (p. 35). Needless to say, in my view this perspective undermines the political aspect of the concept.

Conflict as a relation established by Sartre through the figures of need and scarcity receives a dimension of morals as an attribute of action. Action and morals are thus anchored into the same constellation. The initial political picture has been painted and in this picture, too, Sartre uses the description of a limit-situation as an entrance to the scene as he poses the agent as living her/his own impossibility as a possibility:

“Le besoin comme négation de la négation c’est l’organisme lui-même se vivant dans le futur à travers les désordres présents comme sa possibilité propre et, par conséquent, comme la possibilité de sa propre impossibilité [...]” (CRD I, p. 168)<sup>12</sup>

The picture of the political situation of conflict is not only painted through need, scarcity and impossibility here, but Sartre also sketches the dimension of temporality and assigns it to the setting as one of the central attributes. One’s impossibility in a setting where there “is not enough for everyone” is lived in the present from the perspective of the future as it is lived as a possibility of being the one for whom “there is not enough”. Hence it is in the frame of need and scarcity that conflict, morals and temporality form for Sartre the three aspects of action through which the picture is politicized. Furthermore, an important role in this setting is played by contingency which adds the final stroke of the political into the picture - scarcity is a contingent frame of all experience (CRD I, p. 312, see also I, p. 223).

It is in the first place the contingency of scarcity which makes it impossible to take a view establishing “natural” as a perspective to this initial setting. The focus here is on the aspect of the produced (see e.g. CRD I, p. 85, 167-68) approaching the sense of artificial in contrast to natural. In addition to this, the relation of need and scarcity form a first perspective on the exteriority in the *Critique*. Need is the relation of the agent to the exteriority to which scarcity forms a constituting attribute. The “there is not enough for everyone” does not only construe the possibility of conflict but also designates the field of action as exteriority.

In the discussion of the *Critique*, as mentioned, it is the relative scarcity instead of the absolute one which Sartre keeps in focus and distinguishing between these two aspects is to quite an extent irrelevant to his argumentation. However, when discussing scarcity in relation to the concept of exteriority, distinguishing between them serves a purpose. Sartre writes:

“Ainsi l’histoire de l’homme est une aventure de la nature. Non seulement parce que l’homme est un organisme matériel avec des besoins matériels mais parce que la matière ouvrée, comme extériorisation de l’intériorité, produit l’homme, qui la produit ou qui l’utilise en tant qu’il est contraint [...] de réintérioriser l’extériorité de son produit [...]” (CRD I, p. 158)

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See also the *Cahiers* where Sartre writes: “[...] la possibilité de la violence surgit dans le monde par l’Autre puisque l’Autre crée pour certains hommes l’impossibilité per-manente d’être homme.” (CM p. 419)

What we can read from this citation is a twofold view of "matter". Firstly, the first part of the sentence postulates the human being as a material organism with material needs and as such "an adventure of nature". This describes the agent in relation to nature as exteriority. The second part of the sentence describes the agent as both producing and being produced by the "worked matter" through the process of interiorization and exteriorization. What is of special importance here is that Sartre distinguishes between two exteriorities, that of nature and that of the "worked matter". If we relate this distinction to the two aspects of scarcity we can reconstruct a setting where absolute scarcity expresses the relation of the agent to nature as exteriority, and relative expresses scarcity the relation to the "worked matter" as exteriority. This division is not, however, a division that would express a view on "the origins of humankind" but merely a conceptual construction through which Sartre initiates his discussion on the interiority - exteriority relation.

Within this perspective scarcity is the concept which in Sartre serves as a limit figure for postulating an "inside" exterior to the agent. This is done by him firstly through postulating nature as the possibility of absolute scarcity and hence as absolute exteriority. This forms an image which serves as a background against which Sartre describes his concept of "worked matter" as exteriority in the "inside", *within* the world and as differentiated from the exteriority, pure and simple, of nature. Secondly, it is through the figure of relative scarcity that Sartre introduces to the picture the exteriority of the "inside", the "worked matter" as interiorized by the agent in action.<sup>13</sup>

In other words, the concept of absolute scarcity serves for drawing the line between the "pure" exteriority and the exteriority of the "inside". Furthermore, in the passages of the *Critique* where scarcity is discussed but where this nature-as-pure-exteriority is not in question it is the concept of relative scarcity which is focused on as the limit differentiating the exterior from the interior in this "inside". One could even express this by saying that it is with the concept of scarcity that Sartre "creates" the world through limiting it against "pure" nature which has no room in this human world and through postulating exteriority as an internal feature of this world.

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13 Joseph S. Catalano, when discussing scarcity and need, does not make this distinction between two concepts of exteriority. However, he distinguishes between two forms of action "acte" and "praxis". According to him there is a "non-historical" action which "is purposeful behavior directed toward goals that exist in nature" and needs which "are not in the world". On the other hand there is "historical action", called "praxis" where the "goal is not given in nature; the need for profit is a goal we establish in the world." (1986, p. 95) This division maintains a view of the agent as existing also outside the world, as some kind of natural entity which is something Sartre in my view never postulated. The relation between need and scarcity is a construction in the world. The example of climbing a mountain which Catalano gives as an example of non-historical action (because the goal (reaching the peak) "is given in nature") is nevertheless action within the world - action within the exteriority of which nature, *as we encounter it in the world*, forms a part. This holds even if action were interpreted as "movement of our body" (ibid.) - there are no "bodies" outside the world as pure relations of nature. In Catalano's interpretation the political aspect of Sartre's distinction between two exteriorities and also the political aspect of the body disappear. The agent's relation to nature is not *in* the nature as such but in the world, and it is a relation of interiority produced and organized in action (see CRD I, p. 223 and also p. 105, including the note, 168-69 and 384).

On the other hand Sartre carries out a similar twofold operation with the concept of need, but from the perspective of the other pole of the relation scarcity - need, from the pole which could be described as internal if the pole of scarcity is seen as external. Firstly, need as an internal relation to nature forms a "primary tension" (see e.g. CRD I, p. 384) within which the absolute exteriority is "closed out" and the "inside" of the world is postulated. Hence the concept of need also forms a turning point as it at the very encounter of the "pure" exteriority, "transforms" it into the exteriority of the "inside". Secondly, at the same time, need is construed as an internal relation to the exteriority of the produced, of the "worked matter" in the "inside". In other words, this concepts also draws a twofold dividing line separating the pure exteriority from the "inside" and the interior view of the agent from the produced exteriority of the "inside". The "first" political act of the agent has been described.

Undoubtedly there is, at places, in the description of this initial setting a tendency in Sartre to use vocabulary which evokes ideas of a certain kind of foundationalism and of an establishing of a "beginning". However, if what Vattimo says about Heidegger holds to Sartre - and in my view it does - the absence of the permanence of identity, and the Being understood rather as an "event" than as a structure (Vattimo 1991, p. 284-85), exclude the possibility of keeping this characteristic of the description in focus.<sup>14</sup> This "creation" of the world is rather an "event" than a historical structure. Furthermore, from the perspective of this work this setting serves as an entrance into a picture which is *already there*: the world as an "inside", within which both the exteriority and the interiority are postulated, forms a view from *within* the picture.

Apart from construing the elements which bring forth this view, the concepts of scarcity and need are to quite an extent irrelevant in this context: politically seen they are not used for giving a context to the picture, but on the contrary for pushing certain contexts, such as "natural", outside, or to the extreme limits of the picture. Nature as absolute exteriority is a limit figure, not a reality postulated. This can be seen more clearly through the concept of seal which Sartre uses to express his point of view here: the exteriority of nature as a limit is postulated "from the inside" beyond which there is no "outside".

### 6.1.3 Seal, Collective Object and Machine

The seal is the figure Sartre uses when describing the exteriority of Nature (as pure exteriority) seen from the "inside", from the space of action of the agent.<sup>15</sup> Hence it forms a pole-relation with the concept of scarcity used as a limit figure differentiating the exteriority of Nature and the exteriority of the "worked mat-

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14 In this connection see also Vogt 1995, p. 129-30 and Martinot 1995, and for a criticism of foundationalism e.g. Rorty 1990 (1980).

15 Sartre gives an early description of the seal in *L'être et le néant*: "[l]a matérialité met son sceau sur notre communauté solidaire et nous nous apparaissions comme une disposition instrumentale et technique de moyens [...]" (EN p. 491). The point of view taken here is exactly the opposite of the one in the *Critique* where in this initial point *we* put a seal on the exteriority.



ter". However, this is not the only function of the figure. It also takes a view of action, for it is in this setting that Sartre construes the seal as a figure expressing the constructed character of the exteriority as "worked matter". Hence also this figure is used by Sartre in a twofold fashion.

Firstly, the limit that the figure of the seal construes is that between Nature as pure exteriority and nature as inertia that we encounter in the world. Sartre discusses this limit through an example taken from natural sciences. Natural sciences are dealing with the pure exteriority, Nature as such. However, we cannot think of this exteriority as such, because we cannot think in terms of the pure exteriority or have knowledge of it as such, and therefore it must be approached through a "model". The seal represents this "model", for example a metal construction showing the planets (Sartre says: "un modèle mécanique", CRD I, p. 161n1)<sup>16</sup>, made by a human being. The seal, in this sense, draws the limit against Nature as pure exteriority from the "inside" and shows it as constructed by the agent. The purpose of this figure is not to establish a mechanistic view of nature as representable through a "model" but that of establishing the conceptual limit of the *world* as a constructed "inside". The exteriority within this world is produced by the agent and hence is not "natural" in any naturalistic sense, and for Sartre Nature and its laws are constructed through the seal. The purpose of this figure is also to stress the perspective Sartre takes here: it is that of an "inside" - there is no "outside" to the world, in this theater there is no stranger who would be an outsider.<sup>17</sup>

The second function of the figure of the seal is to differentiate between inert nature as exteriority as we encounter it in the world, and the produced exteriority of practico-inert. The metaphor of seal as carried by wax that Sartre uses (CRD I, e.g. p. 207-08, 601) describes the "changing" of the inert nature into practico-inert through action: we put a sign on wax and change it into a seal. It is a figure for distinguishing the nondescript inertia from the produced practico-inert.<sup>18</sup>

Within the "inside" the produced exteriority displays one of the same characteristics as the pure exteriority of Nature which Sartre uses as an analogy here: it cannot be thought of as such. Hence here, too, the seal is a produced "model", through which we approach that which cannot be reached as such, which is neither comprehensible nor intelligible (see CRD I, p. 160ff.) - the produced exteriority is interiorized through the seal. The exteriority forms a limit against which the seal is produced and, to put it in Sartrean terminology, discovered within our temporalization and history as the aspect of exteriority that escapes us, as we are both produced by the seal and those who produce it. This is the aspect of the world that Sartre calls inhuman - a limit designating action within the relation of interiority and exteriority.

16 One cannot but wonder here what Sartre might have thought in this respect about some more advanced models such as simulation programs, chaos theory or about fuzzy logic.

17 This has a bearing on Sartre's denial of the existence of any outside "Grand Standardiste" (CRD I, p. 186).

18 In the second volume of the *Critique* Sartre describes natural sciences as activity which is diametrically opposed to this. Where we through practical activity change the inert nature into the practico-inert, the natural sciences "dissolve" the practico-inert into inertia through seeing it in terms of quantity (CRD II, p. 427).

“Mais puisque la matérialité inorganique en tant que scellée par la *praxis* se présente comme *unité subie*, et puisque l’unité d’intériorité qui est celle des moments dialectiques de l’action se retourne en elle et ne dure que *par extériorité* [...] il est *nécessaire* [...] que l’histoire humaine soit vécu - à ce niveau de l’expérience - comme l’histoire inhumaine.” (CRD I, p. 200)

Our interiority (or, as we shall see, subjectivity) is lived in the exteriority of the “inside”, in the world where the seal as our own product escapes us. Furthermore, comprehension and intellection are for Sartre counter figures to the seal as a figure defining the limits of understanding the world as our own product and ourselves as produced within it. It is with these that Sartre introduces temporality and history into this constellation.

“Or, nous l’avons vu, l’intelligibilité dialectique est définie par le degré de transparence de la totalisation en cours et l’agent pratique ne peut temporaliser une évidence intelligible que dans la mesure où, situé à l’intérieur de cette totalisation, il est lui-même totalisant et totalisé.” (CRD I, p. 160)

This is to say that the “évidence intelligible”, i.e. knowledge produced as comprehension and interiorized by an agent situated within temporal totalization, as far as it is produced as transparent, is something that can exist and be reached only within history.

“Je nomme donc *intellection* toutes les évidences temporalisantes et dialectiques en tant qu’elles doivent pouvoir totaliser *toutes* les réalités pratiques et je réserve le nom de *compréhension* à la saisie totalisante de chaque *praxis* en tant que celle-ci est intentionnellement produite par son ou par ses auteurs.” (CRD I, p. 162)

“De toute manière, la compréhension de l’acte se fait par l’acte (produit ou reproduit); la structure téléologique de l’activité ne se peut saisir que dans un pro-jet qui se définit lui-même par son but, c’est-à-dire par son avenir et qui revient de cet avenir jusqu’au présent pour éclairer celui-ci comme négation du passé dépassé.” (CRD I, p. 160, see also p. 176-77)

Intellection refers to temporalization as totalization with reference to history, comprehension refers to practice as temporality, as intentionally produced by an agent.

Apart from this distinction made between temporalization in history and the temporalizing aspect of action the distinction between intellection and comprehension refers to the seal from a specific point of view. The seal, as produced in action, is the figure through which Sartre establishes a difference between the intentional in action, as referring to the future non-being (*non-être futur*, CRD I, p. 176) and action as captured in the opacity of the world. Or in other words, paraphrasing Sartre, it is a question of the practical affirmation of the permanent condition that I am that which I have produced, which escapes me and constitutes me as Other (CRD I, p. 286n). The seal (as that which is inscribed into matter, see CRD I, e.g. p. 189, 200, 390, 433, 437, 537 and also 167) is encountered as the impossibility of the things to be other than what they are - we cannot think of the seal as produced, or so to say, the temporal agent is enlightened by her/his objectives but nevertheless living blindly. Hence comprehension as temporal action is a limit-situation from which there is no escape.

Intellection, on the other hand, as it refers to comprehension gained in the course of history, is mediated comprehension which remains outside the agent's reach in the immediateness of the world which remains this obscure place of witchcraft that Robert Denoon Cumming named it (1979, p. 181). All we can reach is the produced as sealed inertia as the wax shows "le faire comme pur être-là" (CRD I, p. 231-32).

Furthermore, apart from designing the exterior and the produced, the seal is also "read", i.e. within the "inside" the sealed exteriority is interiorized by the agent in action inasmuch as it is comprehension. The seal is used by Sartre as a figure marking the limit of the exterior and of the interior in action, which again, as far as it is comprehension, is a constant play with the seal, with the limit of the exteriority and the interiority. Hence this limit cannot be seen as fixed and no permanent dividing line can be drawn between the exteriority and the interiority.

A further example of this can be taken from the collectives. The collectives (such as a church or a bank-note, see e.g. CRD I, p. 56) in the Critique are the expression of the space of action as exteriority, which is produced in action, and in which the seal as a limit is interiorized. The most prominent figure Sartre uses for the collectives, or for the "collective/ social objects" (CRD I, p. 337), for the practical seals as interiorized by agents, is, no doubt, the Machine. This figure is a second level example which Sartre uses to show how the produced and sealed exteriority is interiorized and re-exteriorized. All these three moments are present, though Sartre's descriptions vary throughout the *Critique* as he very often takes for granted that the reader bears in mind that it is a question of a continuous movement and not a two-way process from in to out and back. The interiority is a moment, a mediation between "exteriorities" in the different schematic forms Sartre describes them. This shows the movement in its circularity which does not correspond to any linear conception.

The collective object as a seal forms an image for reaching what cannot be thought in its exteriority. This means that it displays an important political aspect here: it is through this image that the exteriority is interiorized and re-exteriorized, and it is through this image that the world is produced. This image can be "a machine", "a bank-note", "an ad", "a woman" or it can, in the 90's, be the machine running the Internet. It is this atemporally displayed image as exteriority which forms the nucleus of seriality, this image which cannot be changed or contested within the serial relations which are in focus here. It cannot be contested because it is our product in the exteriority as we encounter it in our interiority and because seriality forms a situation construed in terms of separation (see CRD I, p. 337).

The atemporal collective object, the image, can be reached only inasmuch as it is reached from within temporality which it does not "possess". Image is eternal and it is the agent temporalizing the world who can break this eternity from within a different space of interiorization and of exteriorization: that of the group. The group which is in formation, in fusion, is a gathering of agents which contest the eternity-perspective of the sealed image by spontaneous action with a temporal perspective of "here and now". In the practico-inert the relation of the agent to the field of action is construed "elsewhere" (CRD I, p. 339) in temporal terms of eternity and repetition. In the group-in-fusion temporality is an attribute of action, not of already existing (produced and reproduced) relations.

As this image itself is an organized and a produced limit, it can be reached in action as that to be changed when it appears in a limit-situation which is temporally construed as the impossibility of continuing living the impossibility of the present. Hence the collective object as an image is an object of politics in the sense that it is through it that we interpret the produced. It is an object of playing as it is the "mark" the agent leaves "in the matter", a kind of painting on a rock with which we orientate ourselves, or a constructed landscape where only a skilled wanderer can walk outside the marked routes or reorganize the setting from a lost point not indicated on the map.

When discussing the seal and the collective object as images one is bound to consider in more detail the figure of the machine in terms of an image. For Sartre the Machine is poetry of everyday life<sup>19</sup> and it could also be called the archfigure amongst all Sartre's figures. The figure of the machine shows the image as produced - the bank-note as well as the church, which Sartre gives as examples, are merely opaque expressions of the exteriority and of the agent's relation to it.

On the surface level of Sartre's text this figure functions against the background of the relational concept of seriality as an image for work and for the workers gathered together by the Machine in order to produce both the products and themselves. In this context Sartre paints one of the portraits of the agent in a description of a working woman in a factory (CRD I, p. 290-91). Erotic day-dreams in the rhythm of the movements required by the Machine which do not correspond to "l'attitude sexuelle" of the woman, but on the contrary form an impossible escape from her condition where her interiority becomes the means of realizing herself as "extériorité totale". For Sartre this forms a temporal contradiction, an ambiguity of the present, a contradiction which can be revealed only from the perspective of the future. However, the future does not refer here, either, to a future-to-come in terms of linear time because for Sartre "nous sommes toujours à la fois ceux qui viennent avant et ceux qui viennent après" (CRD I, p. 291).

The dimensionality of temporality offers a view of the present condition but that view is not emancipatory, but two-pronged: on the one hand the agent "entre en conflit avec la situation qui lui est faite", but on the other she is "complice en dépit d'elle-même". The Machine forms the image of this ambiguous situation, the image of the impossibility of solving contradictions through action in seriality and the image of political powerlessness (see also CRD I, p. 278 and CRD II, p. 362-64, 387-88).<sup>20</sup> If we take a little closer look at this from a political point of view we can see that the Machine is the Monster on the stage, the political animal the status of which Sartre denies a human being - for he uses it to describe the organization of reality politically. For him the human being has been thrown into a political world where the Machine serves as an image for conflicts and the impos-

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19 I am referring here to Noudelmann's (1996) analysis of the image in Sartre. See also Sartre's *Baudelaire* where he writes: "[c]haque poète poursuit à sa manière cette synthèse de l'existence et de l'être que nous avons reconnue pour une impossibilité." (p. 219). See also Knee 1993, esp. p. 185, and chapter II for a more literary view of the imaginary in Sartre.

20 For an earlier view see *Cahiers* where Sartre describes a similar constellation as follows: "C'est plutôt un jeu de cache-cache où l'on se bat toujours contre un adversaire invisible et supposé, qui n'est jamais où on le cherche." (CM p. 72)

sibility of relations, for they are the only fashions in which relations can be expressed in the exteriority.

The Machine as a figure gathers together the descriptions Sartre gives of being produced in the exteriority marked by the seal, such as people waiting for a bus (CRD I, p. 308-10) or racist language (see CRD I, p. 344-47n, see also I, p. 230 and II, p. 447). The agent is described here as powerless, at the mercy of the Machine which as our Destiny takes the place of the human being: “[l]a machine est fait pour remplacer l’homme” (CRD I, p. 269-70, see also p. 271). The Machine is the very Enemy of the human being in this constellation, it represents all the characteristics of the produced world and of the exteriority, and threatens to replace the “human” by the “non-human”. This represents in Sartre an eternal political condition of the human being in face of a reality which is Other-than-us. It is the Machine which defines the human being as the impossibility of living (CRD I, p. 269).

However, following the interiority - exteriority constellation, the agent is not simply objectified in the Machine, also the Machine is objectified in the human being: “[l]a machine façonne son homme dans la mesure exacte ou l’homme façonne une machine” (CRD I, p. 269), the exteriority represented by the Machine invades the interiority of the agent. Hence the Machine is another limit figure for playing the limit of the interior and of the exterior. The political perspective in this constellation is that of playing with the margin present in the relation of the interior and the exterior (see e.g. CRD II, p. 391). However, it is not played here in the Hell of practico-inert as an intentional object of organized political activity, but as an insurpassable condition of exteriority where we are united into collectives where the Machine rules also by its absence as a “terrible collective force” (see CRD I, p. 327-28) which we search for to no avail: it escapes us as an adversary.

The picture Sartre paints us of this exteriority where all interiority is invaded by the Machine and where no possibility of resistance can be found, changes when he brings into the scene the agent with an interest.

#### **6.1.4 Interest and Exigence or the Interiority in the Exteriority**

Apart from the figures discussed above Sartre also uses the concepts of interest and exigence to construe the scenery of interiority and exteriority. These two form a pole-relation through which Sartre relates action and the agent to the practical field and they are both used by Sartre to further his argument on the agent as an actor in the exteriority (once again, within the “interior” of the world). Where interest represents the pole of the agent relating her/himself to the practical field, exigence represents the pole of this field as the “demands” it sets the agent (see CRD I, p. 444 and CRD II, p. 396). As the point of view taken here is that of the agent the question will be discussed in the first place through the pole of interest.

From the point of view of this present study interest cannot be seen as reduced to an attitude of an individual in a (quasi)moral sense, it cannot be seen in terms of all human beings having some common, basic interest. On the contrary, interest, also, is an attribute of action and whatever its contents, it is con-

strued contemporaneously with action. Furthermore, a discussion of interest in terms of “natural” is also excluded (see CRD I, e.g. p. 277). Therefore interest forms a view of the organizing of producing and of the relations with the Other, it is not a “positive” orientation to the world but one manner of being conditioned. Therefore any references to interest as an economic category are excluded as irrelevant. In Sartre’s argumentation the economic figures serve as examples and little light can be shed on his conceptual constructions using economy as a reference point. From the perspective of this present study the central issue concerning interest as a figure is the manner the question of exteriority and interiority, as related to the questions of production and temporality, is discussed further by Sartre.

For Sartre, interest as the agent’s relation to the produced practical field, is a negative relation because it is through interest that she/he is construed as “a thing” in the exteriority:

“C’est [interest] un rapport négatif et pratique de l’homme au champ pratique à travers la chose qu’il est dehors ou, dans l’autre sens, un rapport de *la chose* aux autres choses du champ social à travers son objet humain.” (CRD I, p. 267)  
 “L’intérêt, c’est la vie négative de la chose humaine dans le monde des choses [...]” (CRD I, p. 266).

or expressed using terminology closer to *L’être et le néant*:

“[...] son être-dans-l’inerte (c’est-à-dire son intérêt)” (CRD I, p. 309).  
 “L’intérêt, c’est l’être-tout-entier-hors-de-soi-dans-une-chose en tant qu’il conditionne la *praxis* comme impératif catégorique.” (CRD I, p. 261)  
 “L’intérêt est un certain rapport de l’homme à la chose dans un champ social. [...] il existe sous une forme plus ou moins développée partout où les hommes vivent au milieu d’un ensemble matériel d’outils imposant leur techniques.” (CRD I, p. 261)

In the light of these passages we can see that interest is a perspective which the agent takes from the interior and, at the same time, a perspective which is realized in the exterior, one which places the agent in the exteriority, in the produced. As we have excluded any such perspective on production which forwards the idea of producing a *product* we can postulate the practico-inert (as produced) as a setting for interpreting interest. It is a setting where the human being as a “thing” in the exteriority is produced as “worked matter” for realizing the interest.

“L’origine d’intérêt [...] c’est donc le rapport univoque d’intériorité qui lie organisme humain à l’environnement. Mais l’intérêt se découvre dans le moment practico-inerte de l’expérience en tant que l’homme se constitue dans le milieu extérieur comme *cet* ensemble practico-inerte de matériaux ouvrés tout en installant dans sa personne réelle l’inertie pratique de l’ensemble.” (CRD I, p. 261)

The aspect of interest which displays the agent in the exteriority as a produced “thing” or as “bewitched materiality” is for Sartre a reversed and a passive image of freedom (CRD I, p. 279). It is a limit-situation where the impossibility is presented in terms of the produced wearing a mask of Destiny from which there is no escape, and where the agent is defined as wearing a corresponding mask of freedom lost.

However, as we can read from the quotations, interest, apart from forming a picture of the agent as a prisoner of the produced, reveals another perspective at the same time. Interest is also a relation of interiority through which she/he "installs" her/himself into the inertia of the produced. The agent, as construed in the exteriority, does not form a composite shot of the exteriority and the interiority. On the contrary, the interiority as the interiorized re-exteriorized is "placed" in the exteriority as the facets in a Picasso, all this forming, so to say, the world. It is with the concept of interest that Sartre places the agent "out there" in the world. The interiority as interest can only be found and reached in the exteriority, in the practical field as an object to us - an object which presents itself as evident, as already-there, as a "categoric imperative" which conditions us to the extent interest is "entirely-outside-itself-in-the-thing".

The conditionality of this construction, an example of typical formulations in the *Critique*, lets the reader understand that this being-entirely-outside-of-itself is not a compact "thing" as a produced object, but is exteriorized in action and hence contains an opening. Therefore the "categoric imperative" is not that categoric, for there is room left for contingency and freedom. We encounter ourselves in the exteriority but it is our interiority which separates us from things. The "exterior reality", the world, is the only one there is and it is a world where the free and contingent agent encounters her/his freedom and contingency, as exteriority is mediated by interiority. Hence the exteriority and the interiority are postulated as relational concepts which indicate that the political perspective of "world" is maintained in the postulation of Destiny.

Moreover, from this perspective counter-finality and failure also form perspectives of rupture and the setting is described as a construction where the "inside" refers to a space of action containing a margin left for change, and the "outside" refers to the passivity of the produced. The "passive activity" of the serial relations as well as the "active passivity" of the group relations refer to different perspectives taken of the organizing relation of the agent to the produced and to being produced.

The view that forms a politically differentiating moment with regard to these two relational concepts of "serial" and "group", in relation to the internal and external, is that of the "serial" taking the point of view of the exterior and "group" that of the interior. In the perspective of interest, against the background of serial relations, the encounter of the agent with freedom and contingency is, as indicated, an encounter to no avail. In the atemporal field of the image there is no perspective of confrontation, the agent "misses the point", does not reach the field of action as it is being produced in action, or the Other as a carrier of interest, as an adversary (see CRD I, e.g. p. 265-66). The agent is construed as failing to take hold of the world, as a stranger in her/his own world.

Furthermore, it should be stressed that the interiority is a mediation, not a "place" besides another "place" called the exteriority: the world according to Sartre is One. This is one of the conceptual constructions where the dimensionality of Sartre's concepts plays a crucial role. The stage the actor is *in*, is pluridimensional and is also pluritemporal and the different temporal attributes given to the produced and to action occupy the same stage contemporaneously. This forms a further description of the space of action that has already been described as an

“inside” containing the limit between the interiority and the exteriority: in this space this limit cannot be assigned a “place”, it uses all the dimensions at the same time. This is a central characteristic of the agent: action takes place in a world where Sartre, through the use of interest as a conceptual device, places the interiority and the exteriority on the same side of the fence. Starting from this perspective it is not a mere chance that the further description of interest in the *Critique* takes a certain direction (CRD I, p. 261ff.).

Sartre starts by saying that on an abstract plane the human being does not have interests but spontaneous ends discovered in praxis without any recourse to subjectivity (“à des visées subjectives”, CRD I, p. 261). On the plane where scarcity enters the scene, the limit-situation (“une menace de mort”, *ibid.*) is not lived through interest either. Interest is not a relation to the other, or through the other to myself, but a relation to a “thing” in the practical field, both of which are construed in the frame of need and scarcity. Interest is the human being’s asymmetric relation to this constructed and organized field from the pole of the interiority, i.e. it is a relation where the objectivity of the exteriority is focused on from the point of view of the subjectivity of the interiority.

Further on, Sartre, inspired by the idea that we are what we own, writes that he considers it possible that interest can be fully exposed only in “propriété réelle” (*ibid.*), but underlying this we can trace another aspect of the setting. As interest is a conceptual device for bringing out the construction of the interiority as exposed and reachable in the exteriority, the relation of property described by Sartre indicates this construction as well. Sartre’s example which follows the initial formulation of the concept of interest indicates clearly here the play of the interiority and of the exteriority.

The first specific feature of interest with regard to property is the identification of the being of the owner with the thing possessed. However, this is not discussed as an identity that the owner would somehow adopt from the thing owned, nor as a “power” that a thing owned could “exercise” over a person, but it is discussed from a very specific point of view: that of the interiority. For Sartre, a person who owns a garden, or a house, gives to that possession, to that thing “l’intériorité humaine”, human interiority (*ibid.*). He describes this attributing of the interiority to things by the raising of walls for hiding ones goods from the world. The wall as a dimensional image dividing space closes the possessed “thing” inside and forms a *within*. In this *withinspace* the modern bourgeois of Sartre’s example exteriorizes all her/his memories, puts them on the tables and the walls; the “interior life” of the agent is exteriorized and becomes “life in the interior” (of the *withinspace*). Hence this interior which is exterior to the agent becomes her/his interiority in terms of exteriority as an absence of internal relations in the guise of a respect given to the owned and to privacy:

“ [F]inalement elle [memory] est partout, comme aussi bien l’ensemble de ses pratiques et de ses mœurs; au moment où tout est hors de lui, à l’abri derrière les murs, dans des chambres dont chaque meuble est la matérialisation d’un souvenir, on peut constater que la vie intérieure n’est absolument rien d’autre que la vie d’intérieur et que ses pensées sont définies par les rapports inertes et changeants des meubles entre eux. Mais dans le même temps l’extériorité de la chose devient sa propre extériorité humaine. [...] c’est en effet la négation absolue de tout rapport d’intériorité sous l’apparence positive du respect mutuel des biens (et par conséquent de la vie privée). ” (CRD I, p. 261-62, see



also CRD II, p. 447 where Sartre refers to the same idea: "[i]dée de propriété (pratico-inerte intérieur): quelqu'un pénètre chez moi pour m'insulter."

The example in the second volume of the *Critique* appears in a connection where Sartre writes about the television invading the interiority and forming a scandal of "l'apparition du spectacle chez soi". Here Sartre relativizes the "interior" as a figure he uses to separate the interiority from the exteriority, and to see the interiority as a reference point for the subjective, for identity as well as for the private as opposed to public. The subjective, identity and the private do not form closed entities but are relativized as they are placed in the exteriority where both the interiority and the exteriority are, as indicated, on the same side of the fence.

Furthermore, the picture of the agent outside of her/himself, but behind the wall where her/his interiority is placed into the exteriority of the memories and of the furniture forms a description which further specifies Sartre's construction of the interiority as subjectivity. It "is" in the exteriority which is lived as the interiority of this private "place", a modern bourgeois home, behind the walls built around the property, the possession. And it is also in the exteriority, where the agent's interiority can be found, where interest as a relation to a thing "takes place" - the interiority is not a "place", for the "place" of the interiority is an interior which is exteriority.

As we have seen earlier, this construction can be found in several plays Sartre wrote as a construction of an interior with a problematized relation to the exterior. A most obvious example was *Huis Clos* where the exterior does not exist, (for people in hell there is no exit and hence no "outside", either). Another example was taken from *Les séquestrés d'Altona* where Frantz's room is the interior filled with memories<sup>21</sup> which forms the exteriority of his interiority behind the walls that hide his world from the others. The theme of the interior is described in the play in temporal terms as the characters live in a time of their own and only a few references to the time of the outside world are made.

What is important here is that interest can be seen as a concept construed to introduce the play of the interiority and of the exteriority into the discussion of the collectives and also of the groups. However, interest is not the only concept Sartre uses here. It has been construed as an asymmetric pole-relation to the practical field, but it does have a counter concept too, namely exigence, which forms the other pole.

Exigence, as indicated before, is an expression of the exteriority of the produced, of the field of action in relation to failure and counter-finality and it encounters interest as an expression of the interiority-in-the-exteriority. Exigence is "then" construed as the exteriority interiorized as a counter-pole to interest. Exigence, i.e. "demands" that the exteriority imposes on us, is construed in the same relation where interests are construed in the exteriority where they can be reached. This relation in the *Critique* forms the second plane of operational concepts or figures, the first one being the asymmetric pole-relation of need and

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The memories here are not "authentic" memories but "bad faith" memories recorded in lonely conversations where the other "person" taking part in the conversation is the tape recorder.

scarcity. It is through the construction of these pairs of concepts that Sartre designs the initial setting for the construction of the agent as subjectivity.

## 6.2 Exteriorization, Interiorization and Subjectivity

### 6.2.1 Exteriorizing and Interiorizing - the Agent in a Space of Action

The second line of argumentation which we can interpret from the *Critique* within this setting is construed through the relational concepts of exteriorizing and interiorizing. The conceptual constellation which Sartre sets forth as embracing the aspects of the interiority and the exteriority through the construction of the interior as a space of action shows a profound political aspect of the work. Generally these concepts are read merely as forming a part of his argumentation on totalization and History, and the "interior" is seen as the interior of the dialectical totalization in the sense Sartre writes that the dialectical movement can be seen only from the interior:

"[N]ul ne peut *découvrir* la dialectique s'il se tient au point de vue de Raison analytique, ce qui signifie, entre autres choses, que nul ne peut découvrir la dialectique s'il reste *extérieur* à l'objet considéré. [...] La dialectique ne se découvre qu'à un observateur situé en intériorité [...]" (CRD I, p. 133, see also CRD II, p. 443 and Le Blond 1960, p. 63-65). "Le lieu de notre expérience critique n'est pas autre chose que l'identité fondamentale d'une vie singulière et de l'histoire humaine (ou, d'un point de vue méthodologique, de la "réciprocité de leurs perspectives"). A vrai dire l'identité de ces deux processus totalisateurs est elle-même à prouver. Mais précisément l'expérience part de cette hypothèse et chaque moment de la régression (et, plus tard, de la progression) la met directement en question. La poursuite de cette régression serait à chaque niveau interrompue si précisément l'identité ontologique et la réciprocité méthodologique ne se découvriraient pas chaque fois comme un fait et comme une Vérité intelligible et nécessaire. En réalité, l'hypothèse qui permet de tenter l'expérience est précisément celle que l'expérience tente de démontrer. [...] De toute manière, si ma vie, en s'approfondissant, devient l'His-toire, elle doit se découvrir elle-même au fond de son libre développement comme rigoureuse nécessité du processus historique pour se retrouver plus profondément encore comme la liberté de cette nécessité et enfin comme nécessité de la liberté. [...] la *nécessité* comme structure apodictique de l'expérience dialectique ne réside ni dans le libre développement de l'intériorité ni dans l'inerte dispersion de l'extériorité; elle s'impose, à titre de moment inévitable et irréductible, dans l'intériorisation de l'extérieur et dans l'extériorisation de l'intérieur." (CRD I, p. 156-57)

The reconstruction of Sartre's postulations with regard to One History could take this passage as a starting point and the problem of the agent as a totalizer versus History without a totalizer would acquire new dimensions were we to postulate, as I have done, that there is no exteriority as such for Sartre.<sup>22</sup> This would not, however, lead to a solution to the problem because the concepts of totalization of envelopment and incarnation, as they are developed in the second volume of the *Critique*, do not establish the step binding the point of view of the individual

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This aspect is developed fragmentarily in the second volume of the *Critique* in connection to the totalization of envelopment (see e.g. CRD II, p. 251-52 and 289-91).

agent as an actor in the interior space of action to the point of view of History as the exterior. Even the postulation that Sartre makes, as we shall see, of the groups as an interior space of action of the many does not solve this problem since the viewpoint remains that of an interior. The discrepancy of this construction with the postulation of One History as totalizing movement of the exteriority and the interiority offers us, on the basis of the discussion above, a possibility to take a view of some of the specificities of the Sartrean "practical" agent, one of the most interesting political constructions in his work. This view can be interpreted through the concepts of interiorizing and exteriorizing read through an aspect which, as I shall argue, reveals a specific setting with regard to the construction of the agent. It is through the initial configuration sketched above, by using the figures of scarcity, seal and Machine as conceptual devices, that Sartre turns the interiority - exteriority constellation into a description of the space of action which underlines his conception of the agent as a political agent throughout the different "levels of experience" and the "practical ensembles".

In the *Critique* we can find a systematization of the concepts of interiority and exteriority which could be referred to, following Simont, as a "hybrid relation" (1990b, p. 118). This relation, forming a kind of double register, is construed through concepts such as scarcity and seal marking the exterior conceived of as a limit, on the inside of which the game is played. It is also construed through concepts such as destiny and exigence which design the exteriority of the interior space of action.

In the light of the postulation of One History which would require the establishing of the interior and the exterior points of view as shifting perspectives one could wonder why Sartre avoids discussing explicitly the dividing line between these registers. In spite of the shifts in his perspective when describing this construction his central point of view remains that of the interiority of the space of action. However, if we think of Sartre's initial statement of wishing to place the agent in social reality, the point of view is quite logical for, so to say, stepping into the landscape already configures the landscape as a landscape, and it is the dividing line as a limit which is played here, not the exteriority as such. It is also played through concepts such as practico-inert, seriality and groups which form another dimension designating the interiority and exteriority of the interior space of action. There are no concepts or figures in the *Critique* which would designate either the "pure exteriority" or the "pure interiority" within the interior space of action. What there is are different perspectives Sartre takes on this constellation, especially on the relation between these concepts.

Sartre uses these two concepts as lines directing his argumentation and a detailed analysis can show us such perspectives in the text which reach further than the explicitly discussed themes in the work. In order to reach these perspectives we need to refer to the above description of the interior and to use some help-devices, the first of which is the concept of "tool".

## 6.2.2 Tool as a Mediator Between Interiority and Exteriority

In the previous chapter the tool was discussed from the point of view of forming a figure for the organizing aspect of action. In addition to this the tool in Sartre expresses also the relation between the interior and the exterior, or, more precisely it is a figure for “grasping” the inert exteriority, for modifying both the agent and the world.<sup>23</sup> There are two aspects with regard to the concept of tool that Sartre develops. One of them is that of a practical instrument used for acting - be it a tool for working a 2x4 or the streets of a city “used” for configuring the space. The other is the agent turning her/himself into her/his own tool in order to reach the exteriority - a point of view which includes for example our bodies as well as our imagination. This is postulated by Sartre as a two-way relation seen both from the poles of the agent and of the inert exteriority: the exigencies of the exteriority “demand” the agent to turn “into a tool” in the measure that she/he changes the exteriority through the tool. It is within this relation that Sartre describes the exteriority as “worked matter” which includes the agent as interiority exteriorized (see e.g. CRD II, p. 440) or, as we could say, the world produced or “practically discovered”:

“[L]’homme du besoin est une totalité organique qui se fait perpétuellement son propre outil dans le milieu d’extériorité.” (CRD I, p. 167, see also 371-72)

“[L]’outil est un dévoilement pratique du monde dans la mesure exacte où l’organisme pratique devient outil.” (CRD I, p. 465, see also SIT IX, p. 93)

In the interior space of action the tool is not a mere bridge between the agent and the “environment”, or the exteriority, but forms an inner perspective of the agent acting within the exteriority (see CRD I, e.g. p. 283). For Sartre the tool is a figure which expresses the moving relation of the interiority and the exteriority, and he describes this as the ambivalence of the tool (CRD I, p. 371). From this perspective the tool can be put into question and be construed as a pawn in the game in a very different way compared to understanding it as a mere means of action, as an instrument for working matter (as it is seen e.g. in Catalano 1986, p. 199 and in somewhat modified sense in Hincker 1966, p. 163).

The tool, as it construes the relation between the interiority and the exteriority from the perspective of the agent, implies in Sartre a dimensional structure: the surpassing of a situation toward an objective. This is the function of the tool in a relation on which the agent forms a perspective within temporalization through the temporal aspect of the tool - the tool carries in its present its past fabrication and its future use (see CRD I, e.g. p. 371). All the dimensions intervening (situation, objective, tool, agent) construe a space of action which changes - is

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In commentary literature one of the typical formulations of the role of the concepts of internalizing and externalizing is that which stresses *praxis* as the key perspective of them. These formulations are quite pertinent, for this theme runs throughout the *Critique*, but from the perspective of the present study they are limited, for they do not sufficiently bring forth the aspects of production and of subjectivity highlighted here. As an example Flynn could be mentioned, who, when discussing the Sartrean epistemology, defines *praxis* as “totalizing *praxis* (the dialectical action whereby an agent internalizes and externalizes his environment in accord with individual and collective needs and interests)” (1976. p. 21).

reorganized, reproduced - in the course of action. Hence the tool forms a part of the interiority designed by action. It is from this point of view taken of the tool that we can reach the double register of interiority - exteriority within the interior space of action in Sartre.

On the one hand, as we have seen, there is the exteriority postulated as nothing but exteriority, as inaccessible, as something that can be described only through scarcity, seal and Machine as limit figures. On the other hand Sartre postulates an interior as a space of action where the agent's perspective is taken through the tool as a means of accessing the inaccessible exteriority within the interior (the "inside"). This in its turn designs the interiority and exteriority of the interior as dimensions of action where the exterior can be read as little in terms of "nature" or "object" as the interior can be in terms of "human" or "subject". There is no symmetric constellation in the interiority - exteriority construction which would allow for such divisions; in this political theater the world is One and the perspective taken on it is exclusively that of the agent.

In this sense both the exteriority and interiority form a shared space which is not only construed as a space where the producer and the produced encounter, but also where the Other is encountered, or in other words, where freedoms encounter. It is also in this space that, from the point of view of the pole of the produced, those in serial relations cannot reach themselves as series because a series as "produced" by the collective object in the exteriority has no interiority. Furthermore, it is this space which is limited by scarcity through the presence of the exteriority, and it is through the interiorization and re-exteriorization of scarcity that the world is designed as a "lieu commun de nos oppositions" (CRD I, p. 211).

In this constellation scarcity and the tool have a special relation which has a bearing on the setting where the interiority and the exteriority are intertwined with temporality and history, for example in connection with the question of the "one" and the "many". Scarcity also serves as a figure with which Sartre brings in the perspective of the "many", whereas the tool implies the perspective of the "one" and the seal the produced as indifferent to both of these perspectives.<sup>24</sup> This is a point which highlights the absence of a collective we-subject in Sartre. There is no fundamental contradiction between the "one" and the "many" - they form different points of view between which shifting from one to the other is always possible. This possibility of shifting implies the possibility of the political: tool and scarcity (and hence the "one" and the "many") form a relation where both poles are played by the agent(s), a relation where the "one" and the "many" are not placed on different sides of the fence. This is obvious in Sartre's analysis of the groups where a view taken of acting within the organized structure of a group is indifferent to this division, both perspectives are present in the "*individu commun*" as produced by the "many" (the group) and by the "one" (the practical organism, or the agent):

"Le groupe constitué est produit en chacun par chacun comme *sa propre naissance d'individu commun* [...]" (CRD I, p. 454, see also p. 563)

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The "one" and the "many" problem has been discussed also in Hendley 1991 and mentioned in Flynn 1976, p. 37.

“En ce sens on peut dire que les déterminations de l’individu commun sont un produit de son travail de groupe et que l’évolution pratique du groupe oblige l’individu commun à faire son option à partir des déterminations que le groupe a inscrites en lui. Et, bien entendu, l’individu commun n’est que la limite inerte de la liberté: c’est l’organisme pratique qui fait l’option. Mais il la fait précisément à partir des déterminations introduites dans son inertie jurée.” (CRD II, p. 62)

A construction of a collective “we” is here rendered irrelevant; the present condition is lived by the “one” and the “many” contemporaneously, only from different perspectives - for example one unemployed lacks a specific tool, many unemployed face the scarcity of jobs.

It is parallel to this simplified sketch that we can take yet another view of the difference between “absolute” and “relative” scarcity. This difference is not a difference between “absolute” as constant and “relative” as changing, but a difference which implies two different limit-situations. Firstly, absolute scarcity is an impossibility of together living the material conditions determined for the entire group, and secondly, relative scarcity means the impossibility of pushing further the limits determined from a specific perspective without postulating a change in the existing “mode and relations of production”:

“[...] la rareté absolue comme une certaine impossibilité d’exister ensemble dans certains conditions matérielles déterminées pour tous les membres du groupe [...] la rareté relative comme impossibilité pour le groupe dans des circonstances données de croître au-delà d’une certaine limite sans que changent le mode ou les relations de production [...]” (CRD I, p. 225n).

The “one” and the “many” are not placed on different sides of the fence and neither are the “absolute” and the “relative”. On the one hand the impossibility of living the present condition of the group is a view where the limit construes the perspective. On the other hand the impossibility of growing beyond a certain limit is a view where the perspective is that of action. Analogically, the “one” is a perspective of limit and the “many” is a perspective of action - two perspectives which form a pole-relation and hence cannot be postulated as separate. The political aspect of action always refers to playing with the condition of being both the “one” and the “many”.

### 6.2.3 Interiority and Exteriority in Terms of Action: Seriality and Groups

Seriality and group praxis form in Sartre another central view of the exteriority and interiority. Seriality is the relational concept which describes both the exteriority in the “inside” and the impossibility of action related to the lack of the interior as a space of action, whereas the upsurge of the groups construes the interior space where action can be postulated. However, one should bear in mind that here “action” is seen in a special light: this constellation does not deny the possibility of action in serial relations, but postulates that the only perspective that the agent can take on action is that taken “from” the groups forming the interior space of action.

The structure of the text of the *Critique* presents seriality as anterior to the groups within the logic of Sartre’s methodological perspective. However, if we

consider the whole constellation of the work, all different "levels of experience" are displayed as contemporaneous and the difference between seriality and the groups is that of a point of view, not a difference either in temporal or logical terms. In this sense there is no logical necessity for the anteriority of seriality within the construction Sartre exposes in the *Critique*. This is of importance when we consider the interiority - exteriority construction because it highlights the fact that the perspective taken here is that of the agent. The agent acting in seriality would form a view of exteriority which, as I have argued, is the very one that Sartre excludes entirely; the agent's point of view is always that of an interior, the project is exteriorization of immanence (CRD I, p. 168). Hence in seriality the point of view is not that of the exteriority but that of the "practical agent" who is "lost" and "re-emerges" in the groups. Action can be postulated only through groups which form the interior; serial action is seen in terms of "passive activity" and powerlessness.

This is stressed by Sartre through describing action in seriality as having the perspective of a "false interiority" ("l'intériorité (fausse mais efficace)" CRD I, p. 174, see also p. 314). This is a construction with which Sartre indicates the presence of the interiority in the exteriority as well as the impossibility of taking the point of view of the exteriority. In seriality action is "impossible" because it takes place in a false interiority. This brings about an important aspect of Sartre's concept of action: to be considered as action "proper" there must be a possibility of change postulated. In seriality this possibility does not exist; the project is not a fulfilment of one's needs but the realization of the objectives of the Other, it is not the perspective of producing ourselves but that of being produced (CRD I, p. 253).

This is a condition which, as the descriptions of seriality usually tell us, is lived in terms of solitude, of absurdity, of interchangeability (see CRD I, e.g. p. 309-11, 312n1, 317) and of powerlessness (see CRD I, e.g. p. 325, 397). As in seriality it is the Machine in relation to which the agent is produced as powerlessness; it is the culminating figure of the condition lived here. However, powerlessness is not limited to not being able to change the impossible situation of the Machine as Destiny, but receives its depth from the unreachability of the Other - of the adversary. It is within this constellation that further descriptions of the exteriority and the interiority can be given.

In the frame of seriality (the Unity of the multiplicity, CRD I, p. 317) the Other forms another figure which represents the encounter of the interior and the exterior:

" [L]'Autre c'est moi en tout Autre et tout Autre en moi et chacun comme Autre en tous les Autres [...] c'est la réintériorisation par l'ensemble humain de l'extériorité [...] mais [...] dans la mesure où cette unité *intérieure* de tous est toujours et en chacun dans tous les Autres en tant qu'ils sont autres et jamais *en lui* sauf pour les Autres, en tant qu'il est autre qu'eux, cette unité *toujours présente mais toujours ailleurs* redevient l'intériorité vécue dans le milieu de l'extériorité [...]" (ibid.)

Seriality is not the exteriority pure and simple, it is not a copy of Nature as exteriority placed within the human world, but it is a field of action where the two attributes are lived in a specific relation to the Other (brought, as we have

seen, into the “inside” by scarcity). In seriality everyone is Other to the same extent and the exteriority of the Other is lived as our interiority, not only as the definition of the others but as “my” definition as well: “I” am Other to the others as well as to “myself”. Otherness (alterity) forms an undeniable aspect of “my” condition as well. Hence it is the Other that serves for interiorizing the exteriority which is lived as “our” interiority, as alterity and presence that is always “elsewhere”, unreachable. The condition of exteriority of seriality as opposed to the condition of interiority of the groups is stressed here, too: the series are always “elsewhere” whereas the group forms a “here”:

“Nous disions tout à l’heure: la série est nulle part, elle est toujours *ailleurs*; au contraire, le groupe est toujours *ici* et dans la mesure où nous savons qu’il est aussi ailleurs, il constitue cet ailleurs comme *le même ici*.” (CRD I, p. 419-20)

Hence the condition for action to be “proper” is that of taking place “here” and not “elsewhere”. The “elsewhere” is unreachable and the Other is a figure which is not substantiated as an adversary. In this encounter of the exteriority and the interiority the point of view of the interiority fades into the background and Otherness as the absence of the possibility of action reigns.

Furthermore, as well as the perspective of dimensionality of action is lost through the postulation of “elsewhere” in the frame of “passive activity”, the perspective of temporality is lost here too. The objectives of “passive activity” are those of the Other and hence cannot form a view of action as temporal action of the agent in the form of playing with the projected (future) possibilities. Moreover, as the Other cannot be reached as the adversary, History in Sartrean terms is absent from here also, as struggle without an encounter with an adversary is impossible. In all, we could say that there is a double register concerning action present in the *Critique* in which the attributes given are not solely those of “passive” and “active” but are extended to implicate also the aspects of production, temporality, dimensionality, interiority and exteriority. In addition, we could also say that the perspective of the impossibility of action in seriality as described above forms a limit-situation (see CRD I, p. 385) which Sartre construes as the springboard for “moving” into the groups: the impossibility of the impossibility of action brings about the Apocalypse as a strategy of action.

Moreover, in seriality the constellation of interiority and exteriority repeats the setting of an “inside” brought about through the concepts of scarcity and seal and colors it with further attributes. Here on the one hand, the limit between the exteriority and the interiority is not seen as a line one cannot cross or which one cannot approach, nor on the other hand, is it brought within action. It cannot be reached either in dimensional or temporal terms and can be conceived of solely in the intemporality and repetition of the Machine. Hence this limit is not actualized, “my” condition of being the Other does not differ from “yours” - the only differentiation possible is that of the identity of a number in a series implying permanence and order, which underlines further the impossibility of an encounter with an adversary and the loss of the perspective of action as change (see e.g. CRD I, p. 312-13).



In this condition identity as alterity<sup>25</sup> in the repetition of the produced and in being the Other "myself" describes the exterior - interior relation within the interior space of action in a way which forms two arguments. Firstly Sartre argues here that there is no compact identity of the agent and no such conceptual construction to which solely exteriority (or solely interiority) could be assigned. On the contrary, it is always a question of playing the limit of the exteriority and the interiority because the agent is always present, even if it were only as "inscribed in the matter". Inasmuch as seriality is in the focus the limit is played with "false" means (see CRD I, p. 86).

Secondly, identity cannot be assigned to a "place" either. When Sartre says that reality is lived in the interiority ("[...] l'aliénation, le pratico-inerte, les séries, les groupes, les classes, les composants de l'Histoire, le travail, la *praxis* individuelle et commune, il [the agent] a vécu, il vit tout cela en intériorité [...]"), CRD I, p. 142) it does not mean that there would be a "place" called the interiority where the "living" takes place, but that the exteriority is always interiorized and re-exteriorized, or "[l]'intériorité s'extériorise pour intérioriser l'extériorité" (CRD I, p. 149, see also p. 309). However, since the postulation of an "inside" through scarcity and the seal excluded the exteriority as such, the perspective of the circularity of the interior - exterior construction is construed asymmetrically. Sartre's initial point of view is that of the agent interiorizing the exteriority and the agent externalizing the interiority, not that of a reciprocal movement of the exteriority and interiority. Hence the interiority is the point of view from which the world is present to the agent, but in seriality this is lived as a special condition of presence - absence. It is the absence-pole that construes the central perspective of seriality: the exteriority presents the agent as absent to her/himself and as having "lost" the perspective of interiority.

In brief, the world of seriality and practico-inert Sartre describes to us, instead of being "pure" exteriority, embraces both the aspects of the produced as the point of view of the exterior and the producing as the point of view of the interior. In this construction the latter is present in the guise of absence, as the "worked matter" which forms the nucleus of the point of view of seriality presents us an inversed view, that of the interiority in terms of exteriority and that of the exteriority in terms of interiority:

"Ainsi la matière ouvrée nous reflète notre activité comme inertie et notre inertie comme activité, notre intériorité au groupe comme extériorité, notre extériorité comme détermination d'intériorité [...] c'est notre reflet inversé [...]. Simplement, il n'y a point ici d'Idée mais des actions matérielles, exécutées par des individus; et la matière n'est ce reflet changeant d'extériorité et d'intériorité qu'à l'intérieur d'un monde social qu'elle environne tout ensemble et pénètre, c'est-à-dire en tant qu'elle est *ouvrée*." (CRD I, p. 247)

The exteriority of seriality as an inversed situation, where action is impossible and where absence is the form of presence, is a condition produced by the agents. It is

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In Sartre this is the *only* identity of the self that there is, the internalized identity of the condition of exteriority and of the "object" producing "us". There is no identity as a characteristic in the sense of an "active", "autonomous" self nor as such a compact construction on which a "subject" could be construed.

a human condition lived in the “inside”, in the world where the agent is situated. Hence the “inhumanity” of the practico-inert and the serial condition is human too.

“[N]ous situons l’homme dans le monde et nous constatons simplement que ce monde pour et par l’homme ne peut être qu’humain.” (ibid.)

In this sense we can say that the interiority - exteriority constellation within the interior space of action is a certain description of the world: we are in the world in the measure the world is in us. However, the being-in-the-outside (l’être-dehors, CRD I, p. 317) that we are is interiorized in different milieus. Firstly in that of the exteriority of seriality (see CRD I, p. 317), of the produced where the perspective of the agent is lost, present only as absence, and secondly in that of the interiority of the groups where also, as the “story” Sartre writes advances, these two milieus encounter and are no longer described apart.

Where in seriality there is no such interior space of action where action “proper” could be postulated, in the group-in-fusion this interiority is gained through the postulation of the third (CRD I, p. 430). The third serves Sartre here as a help-device for construing the interior space of action within the group structures in a manner analogical to that of the figure of future drawing the interior within temporality and the seal within the exteriority. The third, at the moment of the agents acting together and fusing into a group, sets the limit of the group as an “inside”. However, at the moment of the Apocalypse, the interiority - exteriority relation is at a turning point, in formation. The Apocalypse is a figure which indicates an indifference to this relation: the interior space of action construed here is not a differentiating figure in terms of producing - being produced as the perspective of the group-in-fusion is solely that of producing. The game is played with other devices, those of temporality as the “here and now”, and of spontaneity - a figure for expressing the “sudden” already discussed.

The indifference with regard to the limit between the exterior and the interior is expressed by Sartre through the concept of the “same” in contrast to the identity in Otherness of the seriality (see e.g. CRD I, p. 313, 407, 409, 430). The “same” expresses here the agent both in temporal and dimensional terms, as we have seen, action in the group-in-fusion has no history and it is not seen here in terms of finiteness in time or place. On the contrary, it is postulated as ongoing everywhere in contrast to the intemporal and undefinable “elsewhere” of seriality. It is in this construction that Sartre comes the closest to a “we-subject” as there is no exteriority - interiority limit postulated in the relation of the agent and the Other. However, this “we” is not a structured we, let alone an organistic one, but is construed through “imitation” (see CRD I, p. 387-88) - everyone in action sees the Others as if they were the “same”. This is a strategy of action in a temporary action situation where the agent is wearing the mask of “we” and it does not last beyond the “sudden”. This is also the construction where the absence of an opposition between the “one” and the “many” is clearly displayed: where all are the “same”, the “one” and the “many” form only a difference in point of view and not a determining or a limiting structure.

Hence from the agent's point of view the group-in-fusion represents the fusion of the interiority and the exteriority into an undifferentiated here and now present everywhere, a break in the impossible situation of the impossibility of acting in the exteriority. It also construes the possibility of action in the interior space of a group or, in other words, construes the stage for the political agent. The group which emerges from this break as an interior space of action and as a scene for the possibility of action acquires permanence within which its interior-character persists even "when" the group is invaded by seriality and the produced in its corrupted forms of institution and state enters the stage. It is this permanence of the interior space of action which construes the background perspective to action in the *Critique*. This is the stage where the conflict is articulated, where the adversary is present and within reach and struggle is possible. This is also the stage where the agent is present as non-identical and in possession of the different masks different strategies of action require. However, the different "stages" of the group offer different props for the stage.

The pledge that the newly grouped take in order to establish the permanence which reaches beyond the "sudden" re-establishes the limit between the exterior and the interior. This means that the Other, which in the exteriority of seriality is described as permanent alterity assigned to the others as well as to "I", is here described in terms of a possibility. The Other as a definable adversary is back on the scene, as it is at the limit of the exterior and of the interior where the agent and the adversary encounter. This is also a limit which is played for because the status of the Other here is not the intemporal and interchangeable status of seriality but one to be constantly redefined. Where in seriality the agent interiorizes the Other as exteriority, here it is the third through "whom" I interiorize my being produced (see e.g. CRD I, p. 406). This means that, in contrast to seriality, in the pledged group the agent does not interiorize the Other as permanent alterity but as the possibility of becoming the Other, i.e. the traitor who breaks the pledge taken.

This is the point where Sartre assigns the agent the first efficient tool for political action: betrayal. The pledged group is construed by Sartre through the perspective of a third as the "one" who holds the group together through mediating between the agents, and also negatively through the figure of the traitor representing the dissolving of the group as an impossibility and hence also keeping the group together. The "sameness" and the "mots d'ordre" of the Apocalypse are not tools in the same sense as they are spontaneous and sudden and hence do not offer a perspective of duration which would make political struggle possible. In a manner of speaking they are to no avail in politicking, whereas the "traitor" does construe such a perspective: the possibility of the dissolving of the group through the action of the traitor forms a threat. In addition to this the traitor forms a political figure in that in the interior space of action of the group the traitor as a threat construes an internal adversary by the side of the external Other - the agent in the group can in a way play both sides of the fence (see CRD I, p. 566-67).

The "following" groupforms, organization, institution and state, construe different acting situations and different tools for the agent. Organization, literally,

organizes the stage and the role of the agent<sup>26</sup> in a more complex and structured manner and, within a further perspective of permanence, offers tools such as the division of functions for the struggle against the Other as an adversary and for the maintaining of the group. Organization in the *Critique* still forms a stage for political action, but as seriality, alterity and passivity creep in more extensively in the institution and the state the agent loses the advantage offered by the break construed through the Apocalypse. The interiority is taken over by the exteriority until "finally" all that is left is the Other as a scandal (see CRD I, p. 752-53).

However, as the perspective of the agent is not lost here in the same manner it is lost in seriality, an "ultimate" field of struggle remains. The sovereign as the institutionalized third re-establishes the indifference of the limit between the exterior and the interior, as it in its capacity of the third in the interiority of the group as well as in that of an institutionalized representant of the group in the exteriority plays them both. This, however, takes place within a different setting from that of the spontaneity of the group-in-fusion. The temporal perspective of "here and now" is replaced by a perspective of continuity of the institutionalized time and the possibility offered by a rupture is lost. The institutionalized third represents the perspective of eternity and the loss of the perspective of dimensionality in action as it plays the interiority and the exteriority equally, whereas in the group-in-fusion the perspective is that of the interiority.

However, the two aspects of the sovereign in the *Critique*, the individual as a sovereign actor and the quasi-sovereign as the institutionalized third, point to two different constructions of the setting of exteriority and interiority. Individual sovereignty, the sovereign agent can take the role of a player of the condition lived at any "level" of the groups, but the quasi-sovereign is, by definition, a quasi-player compared to the Sartrean sense of action "proper" (see CRD I, p. 591-605). The latter as produced by the group and as representing the produced as it enters the groups in the guise of seriality cannot break out of its space of construction. On the contrary, as the one placed between the Other and the group, the quasi-sovereign is condemned to playing the limit as a space of action in a formalized situation where its function is to maintain an image of action in the corrupted group.

The agent as a sovereign actor represents the picture Sartre paints of the political agent (see Palonen 1992). However, this picture contains yet another facet, the one describing the agent in terms of interiority or subjectivity.

#### 6.2.4 Subjectivity: the Agent Versus the Subject

On the basis of the above I shall argue in the following that in Sartre the key for reading the agent as a conceptual construction is the abandoning of the classical

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I have discussed this in more detail in my article *Organisation et désorganisation comme structures de l'action politique chez Sartre* (1990b).

concept of subject<sup>27</sup>, and the understanding of his term subjectivity in terms of interiorizing and exteriorizing.<sup>28</sup> I shall also argue briefly that Sartre's discussion (or rather the lack of it) with the structuralists, such as Lévi-Strauss, Foucault and also Lacan has been misread (even to a certain extent by Sartre himself) because of a misreading of the concept of the agent in Sartre. It is not my intention to enter deeper into this discussion or to reconstruct a relation between Sartre and the structuralists (for this see e.g. Howells 1992), but to indicate some points where this question can be approached through Sartre's own comments on the discussion.

The double register of the interiority and of the exteriority, and the following construction of a space of action as a place of their encounter as well as the construction of the agent as interiorizing and exteriorizing is, in my view, in the first place an attempt to overcome the division into a subject as an actor and an object as the object of action. The concepts of world, field of action (or practical field) and the relations construed as pole-relations and as circularity all form a part of the background against which the impossibility of this kind of subject - object division is postulated in Sartre.

In a setting where different, changing views and perspectives thematize the landscape of the agent, the action and the action situation within the perspectives of production and temporalization, and where a space of action as the space for the encounters is postulated, it is not possible to discuss the agent as identifiable to a subject, or a "product" as identifiable to an object. Nor is it possible to identify the Sartrean non-identical self to a subject or the factual world to an object, for this would mean dividing the world into the exteriority and the interiority as parallel worlds whereas in Sartre the world is a dimensional construction including both the interiority and the exteriority.

Furthermore, as we have already passingly seen, the interiority forms a mediation in the exteriority - these two are not separate entities but form an interwoven fabric. Therefore, in the following the term "subjectivity" should be understood in its specific Sartrean perspective, not as marking a division between subject and object, or even between subjectivity and objectivity in the sense of drawing a dividing line between the exteriority and the interiority, but in a dimensional space where subjectivity forms an attribute of the dimension of the interiority in the exteriority.

27 According to Christina Howells, Sartre's conception of the subject is a response to Descartes and Kant as well as to Nietzsche, Husserl and Heidegger especially with regard to the subject - object division (1992, p. 321-26). She also considers Sartre as a forerunner of those discussing the question of subject after him and says that "[t]he time is now surely ripe [...] to pay some serious attention to Sartre's view on the subject." (ibid., p. 327) On a related discussion on the concept of subject see e.g. Frank 1988 and Renaut 1989.

28 The omission of the concepts of interiority and exteriority in relation to the concept of subject has led Alan Badiou in his *Théorie du sujet* (1982) to consider Sartre's subject as presented in successive stages (Badiou obviously refers here to the structure of the exposition of the *Critique*) and hence as a "conception simple du sujet" (p. 315). By this he means the contrary of a subject seen as "la coexistence de ses liaisons, verticales et diagonales" (ibid.) and refers to a subject "comme foyer, comme point d'origine, comme constitution de l'expérience" (ibid., p. 196). The latter definition describes exactly what the agent in the *Critique* is not.

One should, however, as I have already pointed out, beware of not losing sight of the perspective of freedom here. Were freedom thought to be an attribute of the interiority (and hence of subjectivity), its being "placed" within the exteriority would draw a picture where the critical dimension of the concept would be lost. However, as freedom is not an attribute of the interiority (subjectivity), but of *action* (which embraces both the interiority-within-exteriority as a perspective and the exteriority as an object of action as well as the produced interiorized), its radicalness as a perspective is by no means lost here. On the contrary, it is in this setting that it is fully exposed: freedom is not a "subjective element", but an attribute of action "out there" in the world. Freedom is something we cannot escape even though it is we who not only "are" it, but even more importantly, use it as the very means for escaping that which cannot be escaped - as a tool for the political aspect of our action. Being a perspective of interiority in the exteriority means being condemned to freedom. This is the contingent perspective of being in the world.

In addition to the description of subjectivity as interiority in the exteriority Sartre describes it in relation to the agent.

"[I]l serait tout à fait abusif de limiter *l'intérêt* à la propriété réelle de nos sociétés bourgeoises. C'est un rapport négatif et pratique de l'homme au champ pratique à travers la chose qu'il est dehors, ou, dans l'autre sens, un rapport *de la chose* aux autres choses du champ social à travers son objet humain." (CRD I, p. 267)

In this passage the thing ("*la chose*") in italics refers to the thing "outside" ("*la chose qu'il est dehors*"), i.e. to the interiority (subjectivity) of the human being as it is in the exteriority, and not to any "thing" as such. It is a question here of the relation of the human being's subjectivity as a thing in the exteriority to other things in the social field (the exteriority) through the mediation of the "objet humain", i.e. the agent which from this perspective does not form the perspective, but the object of the perspective. In other words, in this passage Sartre establishes two points of views of the interiority - exteriority construction: the point of view of the agent (the relation of the agent to the exteriority through the interiority (subjectivity) that she/he is in the exteriority) and the point of view of the field (a relation of the "subjectivity-thing-in-the-exteriority" to other things in the field through the mediation of the human-object). This means postulating the agent as "empty", not embodying subjectivity (interiority) but as action pure and simple where subjectivity (interiority) is but a mediation.

These two descriptions of subjectivity are of crucial importance in the *Critique*. In order to shed light on the question I shall discuss it through the interpretation of Thomas R. Flynn.

For Flynn "subjectivity" is another word for the impossibility of man's being an object for himself". He also states that "[w]e are left with a revolving self-nihilation as Sartre's "ultimate subject"." (1986, p. 12) However, I would argue that we cannot discuss an "ultimate subject" in Sartre in the sense of a human being having an unmediated experience of her/himself in the terms of an identifiable subject because the human being finds her/his subjectivity in the externalized in the course of action in the organized reality.

In my view it is possible that Flynn fails here to take into consideration the way Sartre surpasses the subject-object division and construes subjectivity as interiority which can be reached in the exteriorized. He also seems to misread the 1966 interview *L'Anthropologie* to some extent. In this interview Sartre opposes investigations which are conducted only either with the exteriority or the interiority in view. Sartre says:

“Il y a un moment de diversification qui vient de l'homme-objet et qui devrait supposer le moment dialectique de totalisation”. (SIT IX, p. 89)

Here the “diversification” represents the singularizing modification through the mediation of the interiority, “l'homme-objet” is the human being in the exteriorized, but not the exteriority as opposed to the interiority, for the interiority can only be reached in the exteriority as exteriorized. Hence these two categories do not form opposite terms in the sense of an “inside” and an “outside” construed with a dividing line separating them. Furthermore, the “moment dialectique de totalisation” refers to the externalization - internalization construction, which, in its turn, refers to the production aspect of the world and of the agent.

Sartre is using here, as in most parts of the *Critique*, a very complicated terminology which, even though he seems to master it himself, tends to confuse the reader because it contains several overlapping formulations and supposes a detailed familiarity with his terms and his use of them. Sartre's language, as I have pointed out earlier, in spite of the length of his formulations and the way he repeats them “in other words”, is very compact and requires a point of view which can form an opening or an entrance into it. With regard to the question of subject or subjectivity in Sartre, Flynn as well as many other commentators do not seem to have found such an opening. In addition, there is very little discussion on the question and much of the existing discussion is conducted in somewhat vague terms of subject - object combinations. Flynn's discussion is not an exception in this sense, for him the “agent emerges as subject-object” (1976 p. 35, see also De Waelhens 1967, p. 246).

In my view these kind of formulations, even though they point in the right direction, do not bring forth the specificities of Sartre's view - a discussion in terms of subject and object maintains the classical viewpoint as the primary one. Flynn sees the “subject-object” and subjectivity (“true freedom”)<sup>29</sup> as two different constructions, whereas I would like to suggest that this constellation should be seen in entirely different terms, those of an agent as the interiority (subjectivity) exteriorized and re-interiorized. Sartre's agent is not a subject in the classical sense and it is not a vague combination of subject and object either, but subjectivity (interiority) as mediation between exteriorizing and re-exteriorizing. It is necessary to add that, as we have seen, the exteriority and interiority are here to be seen as dimensional aspects of action, not as separate entities in terms of a “place”. In this sense, in my view, Juan Aragüés' (1995) way of using the term subjectivity to replace the term agent tends to lead to confusion as it does not

problematize the question of subject. However, it implicitly brings up the problem just as well as Flynn's formulation of subjectivity as freedom, which I would, however, formulate in terms the agent equalling to freedom.

Yet, it is true that Sartre is by no means systematic in his use of terminology with regard to the question. Hence it is not uncommon to see formulations such as:

"[S]i l'homme est à la limite objet pour l'homme, il est aussi celui par qui les hommes deviennent objets." (SIT IX, p. 89)

However, I would like to point out that formulations like this refer to a context which for Sartre is that of exteriorizing and interiorizing, or as he in the very same passage explicitly says: "[e]n d'autres termes: l'ensemble des processus d'intériorisation et de réextériorisation [...]" (SIT IX, p. 88-89).

The "subject - object" which Flynn extracts from this passage, in my view, unproblematizes the question and, moreover, shows that there is here a limit between the subject and the object which is drawn *within* the agent, in the *interiority*, and that it maintains the division between the interior and the exterior. This seems also to be the point from which Flynn divides praxis and practico-inert into two categorically distinct categories, a division which for him in the last analysis presents itself as an insuperable difficulty with regard to History (see Flynn 1976, p. 37 agreeing on this with Merleau-Ponty).

However, in Sartre, nothing can be "placed" *within* the agent, all "takes place" in the interior space of action drawn by the agent in the exteriority where the internalizing and externalizing "take place". This is a crucial point in understanding Sartre's attempts to describe temporality and history. There is no such "place" as a human being which could embrace distinctions or limits such as a subject or an object<sup>30</sup>, or in other words, the interiority is not a "place" but a moment in a movement, it is subjectivity (interiority), not a spatial but rather a temporal concept for Sartre. Sartre's main argument against the structuralists is that they do not understand history as totalization and they define subject in inert spatial categories. This is the point where the misreading of Sartre's concept of the agent has led to emphasizing a difference in view in terms of structure and history and leaving out Sartre's original manner of "deconstructing" the subject.

What Flynn formulates as an insuperable problem placed between history and structure (1976, p. 37) turns out from this point of view to be a problem

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A parallel view is present already in Sartre's critique of Husserl's egology in his *La transcendance de l'ego* where the ego (self) is out in the world and is not a "place" that could contain something. Leo Fretz expresses this aptly as follows: "Il [Sartre] est le seul philosophe de notre siècle à se servir d'une analyse transcendantale pour arriver à la conclusion de l'impersonnalité de la conscience transcendantale et pour en écarter définitivement l'ego. L'Ego ne réside pas dans la conscience, il n'est pas immanent à la conscience; il dépasse les limites de celle-ci, il la transcende. Aussi *La Transcendance de l'ego* montre que l'ego ne doit jamais être considéré comme un habitant de la conscience, mais uniquement comme un produit de son activité." (Fretz 1979, p. 224). According to Christina Howells the subject is seen in this text in terms of a "self as an imaginary construct and an unrealizable limit" and of an "ego as a syn-thetic construct" (Howells 1992, p. 327, 330, see also Fretz 1992 and *Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre*, 1975, p. 10-11).



between the agent and history as two different forms of temporalization. Flynn discusses this using Merleau-Ponty who criticizes Sartre of having an “instantaneous” philosophy (ibid.). However, Merleau-Ponty’s criticism is directed toward Sartre’s *Les Communistes et la paix*, which was written before the *Critique*, and hence it does not deal with the categories of the *Critique* but argues in the first place against Sartre’s view of class consciousness - a discussion in which Sartre’s conceptual apparatus of the *Critique* was still in formation. Hence Flynn’s reference to Merleau-Ponty’s critique fails to meet its point. On the other hand, even though one would not agree with Merleau-Ponty’s view, expressed in his *Les aventures de la dialectique*, on the instantaneous, or snapshot like character of Sartre’s view on temporality, one would indeed entirely agree that Sartre’s views are derived from his philosophy of time. In fact it is the very point of view in the *Critique* from which the formulations of totalization as interiorizing - exteriorizing and totalization of envelopment can be understood.

In a way Flynn repeats the very problem of the discussion between Sartre and the structuralists which Sartre conducted - as far as he did - mostly in terms which spoke a language different from those to whom it was addressed. The discussion was not conducted by Sartre so much in terms of a dichotomy “history - structure” as Flynn claims (1976, p. 37), but in terms of temporality and “subject”, i.e. the agent. What Sartre brings forth in his interview in 1966 (*Jean-Paul Sartre répond*) is that he opposes the structuralists, for example Lévi-Strauss, Foucault and also Lacan for having replaced movement by immobile succession and hence having removed history from the picture (ibid., esp. 87-88); for seeing language as inert and not as action and hence having neglected praxis (ibid., p. 89); for “decentering” the subject and turning it into an “element amongst others”, into an inert structure, a place where foreign powers enter in conflict - Sartre refers to Freud and uses the image of de Gaulle trapped between United States and Soviet Union (ibid., p. 92). Against this he gives his own views on the question in terms of history as totalization, i.e. as a temporal construction, and of subject as an actor.

In brief Sartre’s principal point in his criticism is that of the disappearance from the structuralists’ view of both the perspective of temporality and of the agent as a “producer” and as subjectivity non-reducible to a “place” where something passively takes place. He expresses this at places in quite sharp tones such as:

“[Lacan’s subject’s] rôle reste purement passif. Il n’est pas un acteur [...] Vous voyez que le problème n’est pas de savoir si le sujet est “décentré” ou non. En un sens, il est toujours décentré.” (ibid., p. 92)

“L’“homme” n’existe pas, et Marx l’avait rejeté bien avant Foucault ou Lacan [...]. Si l’on persiste à appeler le sujet une sorte de *je* substantiel, ou une catégorie centrale, toujours plus ou moins donné, [...] alors il y a longtemps que le sujet est mort. J’ai moi-même critiqué cette conception dans mon premier essai sur Husserl. [...] Il y a sujet, ou subjectivité si vous préférez, de l’instant où il y a effort pour dépasser en la conservant la situation donnée. Le vrai problème est celui de dépassement. Il est de savoir comment le sujet ou la subjectivité se constitue sur une base qui lui est antérieure, par un processus perpétuel d’intériorisation et de réextériorisation.” (ibid., p. 93)

“Au fond, derrière tout ce courant de pensée, on retrouve une attitude très cartésienne: il y a d’un côté le concept, de l’autre l’imagination. C’est une charge à fonds contre le temps.” (ibid., p. 94)

“Peu importe que ce sujet soit ou non décentré. L’essentiel n’est pas ce qu’on a fait de l’homme, mais ce qu’il fait de ce qu’on a fait de lui.” (ibid., p. 95)

The accuracy of Sartre’s critique is an inessential point here, what is of importance is that in this interview he repeats what I consider to be one of the central thesis of the *Critique*, the construction of the agent through the concepts of interiorizing and exteriorizing and subjectivity. This is, in my view, a point which tends to be neglected when discussing this question, and this neglect leads to a point of view which poses the question of history in such terms that an important aspect of Sartre’s discussion remains overlooked. A discussion in terms of structures does not point the way toward Sartre’s conception of the subject, or of subjectivity; Sartre’s view of structures is not directly comparable to that of the structuralists. The most concise way of expressing this is perhaps Sartre’s choice of calling the *Critique* “anthropologie structurelle” (CRD I, p. 9) in contrast to Lévi-Strauss’s *Anthropologie structurale* (1958). However, there is another text where this question is formulated in very explicit terms, namely the text of the lecture Sartre gave in Rome 1961.

### 6.2.5 Subjectivity, Internal and External in Sartre’s Lecture in 1961

Sartre gave a lecture on the question of subjectivity at the Istituto Gramsci in December 1961. The text of the lecture was never published by Sartre and the tapes on which it was recorded were lost (see Szabo’s *Note annexe* 1993, p. 41). There exist, however, two reconstructions of the text - an Italian edited translation by the name *Soggettività e marxismo* by Giampiero Ascenso, based on the tapes and published in 1972<sup>31</sup> (It p. 132) and a French text by the name *Marxisme et subjectivité* based on notes taken during the lecture and reconstructed by Michel Kail and published in 1993. A careful comparison between these two texts shows few major differences and also to quite an extent they use formulations that are not only similar to each other but are also very “Sartrean” in tone.

There are, however, differences between these texts which deserve to be mentioned, such as “appartenant au fond” (Fr p. 13) - “profondo” (It p. 134); “un être” (Fr p. 15) - “un oggetto” (It p. 135); “déplacement” (Fr p. 16) - “superamiento” (It p. 136) etc. These can be mistakes based on mishearing or of translation (see Szabo, ibid. p. 41). There are also places where the French version gives the word “le fond” (e.g. Fr p. 12, 13) and the Italian respectively uses several words such as “essenza” or “natura intrinseca” (It p. 134) which to a Sartre reader make the French version seem more familiar, perhaps even more accurate. There are, however, some passages where the French text seems to be more accurate in a somewhat larger context. For example, on the page 17 (Fr)/ 137 (It) there is a significant difference between formulations concerning interiorization and exteriorization.

On the basis of my reconstruction of Sartre’s thought I would be inclined to consider the French text more correct since it follows both Sartre’s logic and the

style of his expressions. There is another noteworthy difference: on page 19 the French text gives the word "subjectivité" and the Italian "soggetto" (It p. 139). Here also the French text seems to be more "Sartrean" in tone, especially considering that the title of the lecture includes the term subjectivity. In my view, even though this text is not authentic in the strict sense of the word it can be considered as Sartre's, especially as we can establish direct relations between the discussion of the text and his other discussions of subjectivity. This is especially the case between the lecture and the *Critique* and the interviews on structuralism.<sup>32</sup> In the following I shall discuss the text of the lectures in some detail for I agree with Kail (see his introduction to the text, p. 1-10) in that it forms quite an important discussion of the question.

Sartre takes as a framework for his lecture a critique directed against Lukács' views on the subjectivity-objectivity division,<sup>33</sup> and advances into a deep going critique of certain Marxist understanding of the concept of subjectivity. Using Lukács as a target Sartre on the one hand seems to reject the point of view of production as an economic process and relates it to subjectivity and objectivity, or to subjectivation and objectivation which are the terms he specifically introduces here (see Fr p. 11, It 133), thus continuing his rethinking of the classical subject-object division. On the other hand he criticizes Lukács of burying subjectivity entirely within the individual subject which leads to the obliteration of subjectivity altogether.

In order to rescue this subjectivity Sartre starts in this text from "the real human being" in a very similar manner to that of the *Critique*. He goes on by relating this being to "something that is not her/him" that is "outside" and "in front" (see Fr p. 14, 15, It p. 135, 136). With these terms he brings into the picture the perspectives of dimensionality and temporality discussed above. As we have seen earlier, for Sartre reality is temporally produced and organized and it is structured through the internal and external as dimensions of action. Sartre also uses in this text dimensional expressions such as "au-delà", "hors de lui", "devant lui", "l'être du dehors" as well as the "qui n'est pas lui" - a dimensional expression that derives from the central constructions of *L'être et le néant*.

As the dimensionality of this construction is stressed its place-like character is denied. For Sartre neither the "internal" nor the "external" construe "places" which could be identified but aspects of the space of action which is described through the internalization of the exterior and the externalization of the interior in a truly Sartrean circularity - there is no "interiority" as a separate place, only as a moment of action. However, even though the internalized is a mediating

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32 The *Jean-Paul Sartre répond* and *L'anthropologie* discussed above. In addition we can find indications of this discussion already in *Matérialisme et Révolution*. In this earlier text Sartre's perspective is different, but we can see that already there he refers to definitions that play an important role in the later texts, namely those of "inside" and "outside": "[...] il n'y a ni dehors ni dedans pour l'homme." (MR p. 205)

33 In this light Flynn's remark that Sartre took the concepts of internalizing and externalizing "doubtlessly" from Lukács' *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein* (1923) (Flynn, 1976, p. 38n4) is a view that should be taken with some reservations because of the substantial critique that Sartre addresses to Lukács' use of these concepts in this lecture as well as earlier (see CRD I, p. 24, 28, 67n).

moment between the external(ized) and the re-externalized, this moment of action is not only a passing-through station on the way, but it is the very aspect of the space of action where the agent produces her/himself. Without a reference to producing, Sartre's formulations of subjectivity and internalization may well be understood in quite a mechanistic sense, for it is production (which, as we have seen, cannot be reduced to the production of finite objects in Sartre) that gives the perspective to the role played by this construction in Sartre. If the "internal" is neither an empty container nor an entity standing on its own, it can be seen as a point of reference for the production of the agent. The interiority as mediation means that Sartre does not describe the agent as identical with her/himself even as subjectivity, on the contrary the concept of interiority/ interiorized is the very construction by which Sartre aims at surpassing the postulation of an immediate relation of the agent to her/himself (see Fr p. 11, It p. 133). There is no immediacy because it is a produced relation and hence mediated as well as functioning as mediation. In brief, Sartre does not construe only an agent in the world but also the world in the agent, or in other words, he is playing a game with these two aspects where at stake are both the agent and the world.

In the sense of not having an interiority as an identifiable place the agent is "in" the exteriority. The "subject" and the "object" have been placed on the same side of the fence so that they can be reached as played in the same field. In the same sense the agent can reach her/himself only in the exteriorized, since no "place" such as the interior where the agent would dwell exists - the agent is not self-identical.

It is against this background that Sartre's comment on the concepts of subject and object can be interpreted:

"Précisons que nous n'allons pas parler, d'abord, du sujet et de l'objet, mais bien plutôt de la subjectivité, ou de la subjectivation, et de l'objectivité, ou de l'objectivation." (Fr p. 11)

["Bisogna precisare che non parlemo subito di soggetto e di oggetto, ma piuttosto di oggettività, di oggettivazione e di soggettività o di soggettivazione." (It p. 133)]

The interiority for Sartre is a field limited by relations that pass through each other in a relation of the parts to a totality (see Fr 16, It 136-37), i.e. the interiority as not a "place" is a construction of relations. The exteriority, on the other hand, receives in this text two definitions: firstly as the exteriority of the "in there" ("*l'extériorité du dedans*, ou si l'on préfère *d'en deça, d'avant*", Fr p. 17 - "*l'esteriorità del di dentro*", It p. 137) which lies "under" our "organic status", and secondly as the exteriority of the "beyond" ("*l'extériorité d'au-delà*", Fr *ibid.* - "*l'esteriorità di là*", It *ibid.*). These two definitions are further described (respectively) as the organic status to which death ultimately takes us and as that which the "organism" finds "facing" (her/him) as the object of work and a means for fulfilling a need.

This construction is a further description of the division of the exteriority into two that can be interpreted from the *Critique* as discussed earlier. What Sartre does here is to relegate the "pure" Natural even further away from his construction (to be met in death), the exteriority which "remains" is that of the "beyond". This indicates that the exteriority is produced in the process of exteriorizing -

interiorizing which Sartre here relates to the dialectic of the inorganic, organic and the exteriority interiorized. Hence, so to say, there is nothing that would not form a part of the world and the game played in it - not until we are dead. The whole game is played in dimensional and temporal terms and this being in the exteriority is related to her/himself through the mediation of the interiority (see *ibid.*) which forms a part of this temporality as it forms the immediacy. However, this immediacy is not the immediacy which Sartre denies in the beginning of the text, the coincidence of the agent with her/himself, but an immediacy within mediation (Fr p. 22, It p. 140). Sartre exemplifies this through knowledge. Interiorization produces the object as an object of knowledge, the interiority as immediacy is of non-knowledge which cannot be named (Fr p. 18-22, It p. 138-40).<sup>34</sup> Subjectivity is the dimension of the game which cannot be named, because naming would change it into something we can reach as it becomes mediated and is at a distance. Naming turns out to be here a key to playing the limit of the interiority and the exteriority. In addition, in this passage there is an undertone which invites relating it to the concept of bad faith: as long as things are played as if they had no names they can be played out of the reach of the other players.

Subjectivity thus described can only be reached in the exteriority as an "answer" to a situation, an answer which is never that which the exteriority "demands". The encounter with the exteriority is never a direct one but always falls a little off the mark (see Fr p. 23, 29, It p. 140, 145). This is a condition which we could perhaps describe as the other pole in relation to counter-finality, or as an "interior contingency". Hence subjectivity, as far as we can discuss it, is "outside" (*ibid.*) - once again it is not a self-identical subject, nor a subject that could be seen as a "place" for there is only an agent who in action can realize her/his interiority/ subjectivity as an answer to be named. The agent here is construed through action in relation to situation and to the exteriority mediated by the interiority. This agent has nothing natural, it is entirely constructed, and as a player of the limit of the interiority and of the exteriority a constructor of the "world" - a political player *par excellence*.

The temporal perspective Sartre takes here on the agent, illustrated through a description of a partly blind person, bring in the categories of *L'être et le néant* (one *a à être*, is-to-be, see Fr p. 26, 28, It p. 143, 144-45) but turned into the language of the *Critique*. The inert and praxis are at a distance from each other, a distance which is this interiority and which means that things are not given and then maintained but are given as to be maintained (*ibid.*). The perspectives of the future and of the past taken to the present given as to be acted on construe the temporal dimension of the agent: there is no "before" nor "after", what there is, is change in a temporally construed "within" space.

This change as an attribute of subjectivity is, in an example on a surrealist

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An example on Stendahl's *La Chartreuse de Parme* has been left out from the Italian edited translation apparently as a less important passage. However, it is precisely in this example that Sartre discusses the role of naming as a distinctive feature of sub-jectivity/ interiority.

friend Paul (Fr p. 29-31, It p. 145-47)<sup>35</sup>, described by Sartre as an anarchic situation, an act of self-destruction as well as destruction of social order through scandal - the interiority/ subjectivity is a scandal of the exteriority. This scandal in its turn is described as the freedom [my term here, not Sartre's] "of" the interiority to play with temporality which Sartre describes in terms of repetition and of invention as projection, i.e. something that can be reached only in the exteriority.

The temporality of the interiority is lived in the exteriority in discrepancy with the time of the exteriority which, as we have seen earlier, is the time of the Machine, a figure which in this text serves as an image of the agent who transforms the machine into the interiority (see Fr 39, It 151), i.e. interiorizes the time of the Machine. In this lecture Sartre brings forth all the central conceptual constructions through which the agent is described in the *Critique*. The discussion on the interiority and subjectivity - or subjectivation - which is only passingly, though on several occasions, discussed in the *Critique* sheds additional light on the description as it adds aspects such as naming to the picture. In addition it clarifies the picture by explicitly bringing to the fore the construction of the agent as the interiority/ subjectivity as a mediation within the exteriority - a conceptual construction which is a far-reaching reformulation of the classical subject - object division and of the concept of subject.

For Sartre the agent is not a subject but an actor. This view is put forward by Sartre in an even more radical turn of words in an interview conducted in 1969 (*Itinerary of a Thought*) where he says: "[...] "subjectivity" and "objectivity" seem to me entirely useless notions today, anyway" (ibid., p. 45) and goes on with a short description of interiorizing and re-exteriorizing as indicating the way the agent is construed. This only strengthens the picture of the Sartrean agent which is not only the player but also the one played.

I have discussed this question in length in order to stress the problematic nature of the use of terminology here. I have in this present study attempted to solve this problem, which in my view forms not only one of the key problems in Sartre but also one of the questions of central importance from the point of view of political study, by using the term agent to refer to the Sartrean actor. The agent wearing a mask is not a subject, nor mere subjectivity or interiority, but a player of the human condition of being condemned to act both in terms of interiority and exteriority. This agent is not self-identical and cannot be assigned to a "place" but is a dimensional construction seen in temporal terms. On the basis of this I would like to add one more stroke of paint to the portrait of the political agent in Sartre: the agent is not identifiable to a *person* as an entity representing all the aspects of being a person at once. This can be exemplified by a quotation from the *Critique*:

"Il ne faudrait pas croire cependant que ma perception me découvre à moi-même comme *un homme* en face de deux autres *hommes*; le concept d'homme est une abstraction qui ne se livre jamais dans l'intuition concrète: en fait je me saisis comme un "estivant" en face d'un jardinier et d'un cantonnier; et en me faisant ce que je suis, je les découvre tels qu'ils se font, c'est-à-dire tels que leur travail les produit [...]" (CRD I, p. 183).

This sentence forms to some extent a puzzle because the middle part seems, at least at first sight, to refer to the idea that "man" is an abstract concept. However, at the beginning of the sentence the word "homme" is used twice as referring to a man, not to a human being in general. Hence we could read the sentence also so that the "concept de l'homme" refers to the concept of a man - not to the concept of man as representing the human being. In this sense the word "homme" could be replaced by the word "person" in order to show that, according to Sartre, what we reach of ourselves and of the others is not a "person" but facets displayed in relation to the action situation at hand.<sup>36</sup>

The political agent has been described above as an actor which forms a view of action and of the world. In the following I shall discuss the Sartrean agent both as a player, and an actor using different strategies of action and extend this description to other texts besides the *Critique*.

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One should beware of reading this as a loss of a "personal" aspect of an individual person, quite on the contrary, the singularity of a person is profiled through focusing on the "facets" related to situations. In this sense this view comes close to Leo Fretz' view of the *Critique* offering a point of departure both for methodology and for ethics through the concept of "l'homme historique", "le concept d'un individu impersonnel" which has its roots more in *La Transcendance de l'ego* than in *L'être et le néant* (See Fretz 1979, e.g. p. 222, 224 and 234 and 1992, esp. p. 79-83, see also Howells 1992, p. 331-32)

## 7 THE AGENT AND THE STRATEGIES OF ACTION

In the previous chapter, in connection with fraternity and the possibility of becoming a traitor which threatens the perspective of permanence of the group as an organized space of action, "betrayal" was mentioned as the first efficient political tool Sartre assigns to the agent. In this chapter I shall discuss other such tools or, rather, strategies of action that are available to the agent in an action situation within certain constellations Sartre construes.

In fact, when discussing betrayal as a political tool, or as a strategy of action, the adjective "first" is somewhat misleading. Its being first stems from the logical story of the *Critique*, as this tool becomes available "once" the interior space of action of the agent has been construed. Yet, on the other hand, being the first one refers here to the postulation that the strategies of action discussed here can be seen as strategies only from the perspective of the space of action. This does not, however, mean postulating that a "group" needs to be created before any action can take place. The group for Sartre is a figure for expressing action in the setting of producing - being produced and of interiorizing - exteriorizing and it gains its importance in this setting precisely from this feature. This means that a situation can be seen as an action situation "once" the perspectives of production and of temporality are established. In addition, within the framework of describing action through the limit-situation as an ideal type action situation, the introduction of change as a view of the situation is required. It is within these landmarks that the discussion about the strategies of action will be conducted in this chapter.

What I would like to suggest here is that the portrait of the political agent in Sartre gains additional features from an interpretation of certain concepts. Through this interpretation a way of looking at the politicizing of the action situation can be established. Therefore I shall discuss here for example morals as a political strategy in the first place through Sartre's concepts of authenticity and bad faith which, as I shall argue, can both offer a political view of action and of the agent. I shall also discuss further the importance of the construction of the



agent as non-identical and the role of facticity from a political perspective. Both the question of identity and of facticity are seen here as ascribing further attributes of action and of the agent, as well as shedding light on the construction of the action situation as a limit-situation.

In the discussion above I have used the term "attribute" without further specifications of its use. In my reading of Sartre, as indicated in the introductory chapters, attributes refer to construing different perspectives of a description of a phenomenon, perspectives which limit themselves to other perspectives highlighting the central features of the view taken (for example authenticity as an attribute takes a different perspective of action than bad faith). Hence they also underline the fragmentary features of Sartre's text. However, they can also be related to a more substantial discussion.

In the rest of the chapter I shall explore the possibilities of pushing the attribute perspective a little further, partly through putting aside even more the strictly textual context, and by concentrating on views of the political through the Sartrean perspective. The purpose of this part of the study is not to "explain" Sartre or to provide the reader with a completed interpretation from the perspective adopted here but to show that when reading Sartre with a purpose of bringing to light the politically significant perspectives in his work, a creative reading is implied - a reading which leaves open other interpretative horizons and builds a tension between different interpretations and descriptions. Also a partial reading is implied - a look into concepts and perspectives which can be used as devices for problematizing the question under discussion without activating the Sartrean conceptual apparatus systematically as a whole.

## 7.1 The Agent Revisited

The agent, as we have seen, forms a central perspective in the *Critique*. What makes this construction of special interest is the perspective we receive from Sartre's understanding of interiority, exteriority and subjectivity, or, rather, of the play of interiorizing and exteriorizing which brings a new facet to the picture. The schematic division into agent - field of action is broken within the perspective where the agent does not form a "place", but is construed as a mediating moment of the interiority in the exteriority, as a constitutive and a constituted part of it. Therefore no strict lines between action and the field of action can be drawn. Furthermore, the agent temporalizes both the field and action from the perspective of an interior space of action where the past, present and future form dimensions of the "here and now" and where the limits of the interiority and exteriority are constantly played. The agent, construed in this dimensional setting cannot be defined as a closed entity but remains sketchy, only an outline picture of whom one can always ask "was, is, will be, who, where?". Hence also the agent forms a space which is politicized through the play over the limit of the interiority and exteriority and of temporality.

Through the different perspectives taken of the agent in the practico-inert field, in group-in-fusion, in organization and other group forms, the agent in Sartre proves to be a conceptual construction, not a self-identical or identifiable person but, as already indicated earlier, *persona*, with all the implications of the etymological sense of the word - a mask, an actor. The agent is not a subject in the classical sense, but from the perspective of the exteriority (seriality) a "number", and from that of the interiority (the group), a "third". In all, as unidentified, unlocated, sketchy, dimensional, temporal and situated in relations of conflict in the world the agent forms in this setting an impossibility, another limit-situation. In this sense the limit-situation as an ideal type action situation is not something separated from the agent but is extended to cover the agent as well.

On the one hand in *L'être et le néant* the limit-situation which is construed by the impossibility of the projected and the realized future to be the same construes the agent as a temporal perspective with a spread structure where it is impossible for the for-itself to become the in-itself which it *is-to-be*. On the other hand in the *Critique* it is impossible for the agent to be both the individual praxis and the inertia (the produced) it *is-to-be* - or one could say that it is impossible for the agent to be identical either with the producer or with the produced she/he *is-to-be* and hence she/he is condemned to be a constant temporal (re)definition of the relation between these poles or, still in other words, is condemned to not to be able not to be free. In this sense the agent for Sartre is at once impossible and the impossibility of being impossible - a limit-situation *par excellence*.

"En fait, l'impossibilité de l'homme est donnée comme détermination individuelle de la vie; mais la *praxis* qui la découvre ne peut la saisir comme *sa propre impossibilité*; elle la saisit dans l'acte - qui est, par-lui-même, affirmation de l'homme comme impossibilité qui, d'une manière quelconque, est impossible." (CRDI, p. 367)

The agent remains in the margin with regard to her/his own action, the situation of action is never residuelessly played and the counter elements are not merely outside adversaries but also a built-in condition of action. This is stressed further through Sartre's view on subjectivity where in action the interiority - perspective taken to the exteriority never entirely meets the demands of the exteriority but always falls "a little by the side" - the agent can never fully realize the interiority aspect of action. This constellation makes it possible to picture an analogical view of the agent "provoking" situations where a change in action and hence in the perspective taken, construes a perspective of a limit-situation where the existing co-ordinates and divisions of the action situation can be played and altered.

Yet, the possibility of "provoking" a limit-situation is only a peripheric perspective and as such not the primary one we can read out of Sartre's texts. However, for example in *Saint Genet* where "Saint Genet" forms one of the strategic figures of Sartre we can find a number of examples of this.

Juliette Simont's analysis of *Saint Genet* in her article *Kant, le philosophe parodié* (1990a) presents us Sartre as a philosopher (mis)using another philosopher's concepts and views as strategic devices for construing a view of the question he has at hand. It also presents us a Genet à la Sartre as the player of Evil and of Beautiful, a player for whom order and disorder form a dividing line which

makes the situation impossible (see *ibid.*, esp. p. 27, 35. See also Simont 1990c, p. 204-05). From my point of view, this is the very nucleus of the work: Saint Genet forms the strategic (and perhaps also the tragic) figure which Sartre uses for describing the possibilities of action in a limit-situation - a "double jeu" where Sartre himself is one of the players in the disguise of the philosopher, and where Saint Genet plays the double role of the fool and the king of nothing. In this play where the strategic figure uses the strategy of Evil and the other player, Sartre, uses the concepts of Kant as his strategy in confronting "Genet" on the playground, the provoking of a limit-situation becomes evident. Sartre presents Genet as a writer who in his texts creates an impossible situation where a change from a thief to a "thief" becomes possible and at the same time, implicitly, presents Sartre as a writer who in his text creates an impossible situation where Genet changes into "Genet".<sup>1</sup>

Les hommes *jouent* à être des voleurs. Le jeu est à l'origine du monde. Il y a *monde* [...] lorsque des conventions collectives fixent les règles du jeu. Absurdes et gratuites, ces conventions n'ont d'autre effet que de transformer en tous les domaines l'activité humaine en ballet. [...] C'est le Mal qui est un Ballet." (SG p. 121)

In *L'Idiot* Sartre construes a similar kind of setting as a limit-situation (see IF I, 1. Un Problème): Flaubert as the one who could not read and who wrote *Madame Bovary* is impossible. Only this time, Sartre does not place himself as a player into the universe of Flaubert, but uses stand-ins, the family of Flaubert in the first place. "Gustave" grew up in a limit-situation structured by the impossibility of "becoming" anything. For him it was "[i]mpossible d'obéir, impossible de refuser l'obéissance" (IF III, p. 1812) and the strategic tool which Sartre allows him, as well for playing this situation to which there was no solution as for maintaining it as an ideal situation for writing, is the neurosis, a tool comparable to Genet's Evil.

In addition to serving as examples of the "provoking" of limit-situations these two strategic figures which Sartre builds into his biographies can serve as landmarks for a view of the political where the player is given the possibility of invention as well as the choice of strategies used. Here we are at a crossroads, at a point where the view of the political in Sartre takes a radical turn: from the description of this impossibility of being an agent (which we *are-to-be*) it turns into the legitimation of action: "how" are we to legitimate our action and our condition of being an agent here where it proves to be impossible? "How" are we to act in the limit-situation we can never leave behind? From Sartre's texts we can construe two different ways of "answering" the "question": strategies of action and morals - or, in other words, the political and moral aspects of the human condition.

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<sup>1</sup> In this sense, seeing Sartre construing his "own" Genet, I disagree with Georges Bataille for whom Sartre's mistake when discussing Genet was to take him literally, because Genet "knows no rule of honesty" and laughs at his reader (1979, p. 26). In my view Sartre reads Genet's *texts* and reconstrues "his" Genet as a strategic figure on the bases of them and therefore "honesty" does not form a question here.

It is commonly agreed that these two aspects are closely intertwined in Sartre but certain turning points, showing somewhat different stress laid on the orientation of Sartre's discussion with regard to the "answer" in question here, can be named. In *L'être et le néant* the concept of conversion, even though not extensively discussed, is the concept which points the way to the *Cahiers pour une morale* where a discussion on action is in question. In the *Cahiers* the concept, in spite of its political potentials, remains, however, to a certain extent a moral concept, which makes an attempt to "reconciliate" the agent with her/himself, to become an authentic perspective instead of a perspective of the player of both authenticity and of bad faith - an attempt that failed. After the *Cahiers* Sartre turned to seek the "answer" from politics, ending up with the descriptions of the class in the 50's - another attempt that failed. Later on, he started two different projects on morals. The first one is based on the discussion of the *Critique*, i.e. the Rome lectures and Cornell notes<sup>2</sup>, which, as we can see from Sartre's analysis of the West Virginia primaries, establish a close relation between morals and politics. The second one is a project under the heading of *Morals of Power and Freedom*<sup>3</sup> which, so we can think, displays certain links to the development of his political views after the *Critique*.

However, in my view it is by starting from the perspectives offered by the *Critique* that we can form a landscape where these two aspects can be related in a specific way. In this landscape morals can be read as a political strategy for playing the impossible condition of the agent.

Here the view of permanence implicitly present in the concept of conversion changes: there is no search for a permanent solution to the impossibility, but a view which sets forward a perspective of acting in a situation where choices and action are taken in a temporary frame, and where this temporary character of the action situation forms a margin within which the situation can be played - the perspective of redemption is excluded and the agent is on the stage in a middle of an acting situation using the tools available ("les moyens du bord", see *Carnets* p. 103, *CM* p. 85, 312, *SIT VI*, p. 93, *CRD I*, p. 59, 468, 482 and *II*, p. 254) according to different strategies of action.

Against this background we can sketch images of the agent as a strategist in an action situation, but before discussing these images an examination of further attributes of the agent and of action are required for a fuller profiling of the theme.

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2 On the Rome lectures see footnote 4 in chapter 3. The Cornell notes refer to the unpublished notes Sartre prepared for a series of lectures at the University of Cornell in the U.S. but which he canceled as a protest to the bombings in Viet Nam. The Kennedy and West Virginia (1991 (1965)) text is an extract of this manuscript. See Simont 1987, Verstræten 1987, Stone, Bowman 1991.

3 These moral views are generally linked to Sartre's last interviews (*L'espoir, maintenant* 1980). On the question see for example *SIT X*, p. 184, Sartre 1977 (1972), p. 136, Lévy, 1984, Cohen-Solal 1985, p. 651.

## 7.2 A Further Description of the Agent as the Player of Identity and Change

"The words "the rose is red" are meaningless if the word "is" has the meaning "is identical with". [...] And if we explain [to someone] the word "is" as the sign of identity, then he does not learn how to use the sentence "the rose is red"." (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, III)

The non-identical agent in Sartre can be discussed even further in terms of identity and change. Through these concepts it is possible to shed additional light on the specific features of the quest for identity that the agent as that which *is* and *is-not* is.

In order to form a view of this question, we could first take a look at the concepts of similarity and difference. In the already discussed text of Cohen (1985, p. 12-13) similarity and difference are exposed as construing a boundary which divides the agents into those who belong and those who are outsiders. This means establishing a dividing line which construes an "inside" or an "outside" where the agent is located. It also means that in this constellation the boundary is drawn as a limit which serves for construing a possibility of discrimination. From a Sartrean perspective this kind of constellation is rendered a very suspect one, not only because it offers tools for exclusion and/or inclusion and for establishing an identifiable identity, but first of all because the limit thus drawn cannot be expressed in terms of playing. It can be contested, but not seen as an object of playing, as a constituting aspect of the present action situation because the situation is not "extended" beyond the boundary from either side - there is no such combination as similar-different to describe the actor. In contrast to this, Sartre's discussion on identity and non-identical can be interpreted in a setting where difference receives a description which points beyond this constellation.

In *L'être et le néant* Sartre uses the metaphors of in-itself and for-itself, and the presence of the latter to the former, to describe the space where coincidence with oneself is impossible, the space which makes the possible possible. In other words, he describes a reality which is not compactly what it is, without any attributes assignable to it. It is the attributes which form counter concepts to coincidence and identity, and a perspective within which difference implies change. In this setting the limit, which Cohen draws between the "inside" and the "outside", is in Sartre drawn in the "interior space" and it is in this space that difference offers a counter view to the quest for identity. In a manner of speaking, where Cohen separates the different from those who are not different, Sartre puts them all to play in the same space, to struggle over the limit which is drawn in the "interior space". Moreover, where Cohen postulates at least a relative permanence of the limit drawn, in Sartre, within the perspective of change, it is seen as constantly redefined.

This sketchy view of the question of identity in Sartre offers the background against which the politically relevant aspects of the setting construed of the concepts of identity and non-identical can be discussed further. We can distinguish two aspects of political relevance in Sartre's views.

Firstly, as we have seen, the postulation of "human reality" as not identical with itself in the same fashion as an ink-pot *is* an ink-pot (EN p. 246-47) establishes the perspective of freedom. Here *distance* is the central attribute of the construction of the space of action. "Non-identical", in its turn, is the attribute which designs "human reality" as an agent construed in the relation between the poles of a never ending quest for identity and the impossibility of ever reaching it. The space of action construed here is a temporal space: the non-identical, acting agent produces her/himself in temporal dimensions *as* this space, which is not a "place" where the agent would be located and where action would "then" take place. Instead, it forms an aspect of action and an aspect of the action situation from the agent's point of view.

As the non-identical agent cannot be positively "placed" in this world as identifiable, but only as an actor, as a mask, the world cannot be seen as identical in relation to the agent either. In spite of the postulation of the opaque world of the produced exteriority, the locating of the agent as a perspective of the interiority within this exteriority construes an opening within it. It is this opening which forms that which usually in the context of Sartre's texts is called the world. In other words, the world as a situation of action is a parallel concept to the agent postulated as non-identical. These two form the perspective of change within the impossibility of being identical.

The political radicalness of Sartre's views lies here in the postulation of a setting where the dividing lines between the "self" and the "world" are broken down into views of the human condition taken through action and where in the postulation of the construction "human-reality-in-the-world" as impossible, the impossible is seen as always debatable, as something to be played. The agent is not just a pawn in the game playing against other pawns, but also a pawn playing about her/his being a pawn as well as about the board the game is played "in".

Secondly, the identical receives in Sartre a description through the relation between the agent and the others. Distance as non-identity is brought to the scene also through the "look" (*le regard*). Being "looked at" as well as "looking" establish the impossibility of being "One" - identity is struggled over in a setting where none of the players have a direct access to defining tools such as "the same" or "different" - the only approach to the human condition is that of alterity: it is the Other that places us on the playing-board and designs the pawn we play. And it is with this non-identical stranger's identity that the game is played - and lost: the points of view of the agent and of the Other never coincide. They do not coincide even in the heights of the Apocalypse where we are "the same", "here and now" as temporal agents in a space brought about in action because the "sameness" is always mediated by a third construing a dimension of escape not only from the number-like identity of seriality but also from being reduced to a mere mirror image of the other "same".

The "sameness" is circular, everyone is a third and the non-identical in this setting is revealed through the absence of a point of identification: the agent is always a third to the others, opening a view which cannot be enclosed within any fences dividing the playground, the third construes the agent as a player in a shared playground. For this shared playground Sartre gives names such as "common field" - a name which can be slightly misleading, because the field is

common only in the sense that it is shared, used by everyone as common land. Neither is it common in the sense that it would be the same for everyone for the agent remains unidentifiable also there where the Other takes a perspective of her/him.

In the concept of "look", however, we can find a strategic aspect which goes beyond the mere postulation of non-identity. Bukala says: "as long as I maintain success and control in "staring him [the Other] down" and thus objectify the Other, his subjectivity and freedom are merely patterns of objective qualities which are not used to his own advantage" (1976a, p. 173). Here the players are facing each other in a vain struggle over the control on the Other, trying to render the Other armless and play her/him out from the shared playground.<sup>4</sup> Hence the "common land" is not a place for harmonious encounters, but rather a "unité du monde comme lieu commun de nos oppositions" (CRD I, p. 211).

Furthermore, this constellation is rendered more complex if we add to it the perspective that the agent and the Other are also "one and the same". Being a pawn does not mean being this particular very same pawn intemporally, but playing the role of this particular pawn *temporarily* - the agent's perspective shifts from that of being the "same" to that of being the "Other", and construes a fabric where the limits between these perspectives are unidentifiable in the sense that they are both played for and played with. The "same" and the "Other" form a pole-relation where neither of the poles can form an identical or an identifiable point of view. These views do not form a symmetric universe with two faces, but an asymmetric setting: it is the ever present third which construes the perspective of escape that refers beyond identity and difference.

At the same time the third construes the possibility of the perspective of change through the threat of turning into an Other, a traitor which represents both a menace to the "sameness" ("brotherhood") and a possibility of escaping it (into "Otherhood"). This is a setting where Sartre puts in question the dividing lines which would construe the "same" and the "different", and introduces into the picture the play with the condition of being both the "same" and the "Other" as a point of encounter of different perspectives - not only as perspectives which can be attributed to different agents but also as perspectives "within" the agent. Therefore in this setting it is not only the identity that is put in question but difference as well.

In a sense we are confronted with a typical Sartrean setting of dimensionality construed through the different perspectives taken. It strengthens further the view that the agent cannot be identified as a subject but as the player of the interiority and exteriority. As such the Sartrean agent sidesteps the settings where the questions of intersubjectivity, of a collective subject and of the constitution of a subject as a sole reference point for an agent of action surface.<sup>5</sup>

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4 For the concept of "outplaying" (*déjouer*) in Sartre see Palonen 1992.

5 It is true that from a certain point of view the sidestepping of these questions can be posed as a problem in Sartre (see for example Kruks 1990), but my argument here is that such a problem falls to a considerable extent outside the frame where Sartre's work is situated: it is the agent, an actor or a mask which is a permanent concern in Sartre were it in the formal frame of the *Critique* as an unidentifiable, impersonal agent, or as a singular, personal agent as in his *L'Idiot*.

In this sense we could say that the Sartrean agent forms a pole of resistance to order, as it offers no possibility of a single perspective of the "same" on which a perspective of order could be based. On the other hand, it does not offer the possibility of a perspective of a totally Other in the sense of an outsider either attempting or refusing to gain an entrance to the scene of action. The agent is inseparable from the scene, always already in an acting situation but not assigned to a permanent role. In this sense we could use Zygmunt Bauman's words taken, to some extent, out of their context, and describe the setting which the agent and the scene construe as he describes the "other of the modern state" as "no-man's or contested land [...], the demon of ambiguity [...] polyvalent definitions, contingency; the overlapping meanings in the world of tidy classifications [...]" (1991, p. 8-9).

Furthermore, in this sense, where the agent is conceived of as a shifting point of view of the "same" and the Other, the adversary cannot be conceived of as permanently identified but as temporary, construed within a certain action situation, as a part of the strategy of action. In this constellation the description of action through the impossibility of any "positive" results and through action turning against the agent refers to a political setting: the agent - adversary relation is a temporary, strategic division of the playground into "ours" and "theirs", a playground where turncoatism is possible with regard to the "same" - "Other" setting as well as to that of "us" and "them".

In addition, the concept of difference as referring to change can be described through the concept of singularity as already indicated - Sartre describes Flaubert as the writer who could not read and yet wrote *Madame Bovary*. In doing so he describes Flaubert in his singularity, which is a concept that can, from the perspective adopted here, be described as opposed to the concept of uniqueness when discussing the agent.

Uniqueness can be read as a concept leaning on the idea of difference, whereas Sartre's concept of singularity refers to being related to the others within the world as an agent who is creating this "relatedness" in the lived experience. Singularity does not exclude the aspect of being different but it avoids seeing the subject of the difference and uniqueness respectively in terms of "not the same as I" and "not the same as the other", and hence identical to her/himself.<sup>6</sup> Put in this way, both these concepts profile the problem of identity and of identical as possible views of a change. Where uniqueness construes a closed entity that can

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6 This is the place where Collier in his interesting study on Sartre and R. D. Laing's reading of Sartre (1977) in my view goes astray: he replaces the concept of singularity by the concept of uniqueness which results in an interpretation of Sartre where one idea can basically be seen: Collier sees the human being as unique, and as such different from others. In this interpretation the stress on different as a category for reading uniqueness results in drastic position: one of Collier's main arguments against Sartre and Laing's reading of him is based on an idea that the schizoid condition cannot be seen in terms of the uniqueness of a human being but that 1) schizophrenic people are different from sane ones 2) Laing's description of the schizoid condition is erroneous because in it no clear line can be drawn between two different conditions: sane and insane 3) the difference between sane and insane is analogous to the difference between the way "the world" should and should not be "seen" (lived) and it is only through maintaining this difference that we can cure those who are insane (=different). Hence difference is in Colliers interpretation seen as a dividing line whereas Sartre's concept of singularity refers to the producing - being produced aspects of a person - entirely outside such a division.



only be taken as an "original point of departure", as something that is given, not questioned, singularity brings out the political aspect of action in a particular situation. Flaubert as a writer who could not read is impossible, and those who have read Sartre's biography of Flaubert can see how Sartre describes his whole work (and life) as a struggle for creating (through neurosis) possibilities and strategies for relating to this impossibility and also to those construed in relation to it.<sup>7</sup>

This takes us back to the stage where the skilled actor who is not a unique person behind the mask, but an actor who acts her/his role in a singular way, a skilled actor who is not identical with her/his role, i.e. is not a self-identical subject, is acting in a dimensional temporal situation which is not only "around" her/him, or "between" her/him and the Others, but "within" her/him as well. It takes us to the stage where the perspectives taken include a break. In other words, this is not only an expression of how the stage is structured from "inside", but also an expression of how the agent is structured in action as a player of limits and change.

This description of the agent is related to the questions of origin and of beginning. As a place for identification cannot be assigned to the agent, an origin or a beginning cannot be either. This in its turn takes us back to the question of change as a perspective of action. Within the perspective of this present study change bringing about the "new" is seen as something that can be described only in the guise of a relation to the already existing reality in the same sense singularity can be described in relation to other singularities, difference as something that can be seen more as a way of relating to the world than a way of being separated from it, and new as a way of relating to the existing attributes instead of a way of creating new ones out of nothing. This stems from the view that it is not possible to *begin* "being thrown into the world" - acting in a situation means being already *there*.

Starting from here the Sartrean agent postulated as not having an origin or a beginning and as not having a possibility of founding her/himself in the world, is seen in terms of detachment from the existing through a break or a rupture, as a jump into the abyss (or, so to say, into nothingness). This does not, however, mean throwing away any "original" script of the play that is being played and taking on a whole new one, but rather means moving inbetween the lines of the script present in the action situation and taking different perspectives of the situation with a view to reformulating the script.

This also means retaining from understanding the origin (beginning) as a line between what was and what will be, i.e. in terms of time. On the contrary, it is seen in terms of distance, absence and temporal action (re)producing and (re)organizing the situation of action. This means seeing the agent as irreducible to One and underlines the idea of multifacet-like action and agent with its implications such as temporary choices, shifting aims, changing strategies and the like. Therefore the "already existing reality", as it does not function as a background to

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7 In his foreword to Laing and Cooper's *Reason and Violence. A Decade of Sartre's Philosophy 1950-1960* (1964) Sartre comments on neurosis as something a person invents in order to "pouvoir vivre une situation invivable" (ibid., p. 7).

an origin or a beginning, enters in relation with the agent who has no perspective of identity toward her/himself or toward the world. This is a setting where facticity can be discussed in terms of a political strategy of action.

### 7.3 From Facticity to Alterity - Facticity, Non-identity and Freedom

Facticity, in Sartre, is the other pole in relation to both freedom and to the “non-identical”. The latter, within the view presented above referring to the agent as a space of action in a never ending quest for identity, forms a counter-pole which could be described by Sartre’s early comment:

“La facticité n’est pas autre chose que le fait qu’il y ait dans le monde à chaque instant une réalité humaine. C’est un *fait*.” (Carnets, p. 314)

The facticity aspect of our being is an attribute activated on the playground in which action takes place. This forms a setting where the dividing line between the agent and the field of action is once more broken by Sartre. There is no division between the “inside” and the “outside”, in dimensional terms the agent and the world form an “interior space”. The facticity of our body, of our past and of the produced construe our condition in this world, and it is in the “interior space” that, once again, our condition is played.

The other pole in relation to facticity, namely freedom, refers to another aspect of this “interior space”: the agent is construed not only as the quest for identity, but at the same time also as the escape from this condition and as the impossibility of ever reaching this identity. If we consider the agent *in the world* as an organizing perspective both on the world and on her/himself, the constellation formed by Sartre’s concepts of facticity and freedom receive specific dimensions. These dimensions are expressed here through non-identity and escape as constituent aspects of this constellation, they cannot be described through counter posing facticity and freedom as two separate attributes designating on the one hand a sphere of permanence (the body, the past, the produced) and on the other the non-permanent, changing human reality, because within the “interior space” of action facticity forms a pole with freedom.

The relation between these two concepts is asymmetric: facticity construes freedom as an inner attribute (being free(dom) in a situation), but freedom, on the other hand, is not an attribute of facticity, but of action. From the perspective of action freedom and facticity form two altering perspectives and strategies with and within which the game is played as well as two altering settings in which it is played. For Sartre freedom is a concept describing the primary view of the agent and of the action situation, a limit figure which expresses the constant impossibility of being a thing or a product, the very marginality of the human condition as never-to-be-what-it-is and always-to-be-what-it-is-not. Facticity, on the other hand, is a concept describing the limits which are played in this setting.

Against this background and in the perspective of this present study the concepts of freedom and facticity can be reinterpreted as having aspects that can be read politically. Meanings and values created by the agent as freedom are created in an already existing world, in a world which is construed through the presence of the agent, not through the agent as freedom opposed to the world of identical things and to “working” it. On the contrary, they are created by the agent as freedom in relation to having facticity as an attribute of the already existing, of the produced and of the limits they construe within a strategic perspective of action in view of change. I am here referring to Anderson with whom I disagree when he states that:

“As we know, for Sartre human freedom creates all the meaning and value in the universe. Thus if the world is to have meaning [...] it will have it only through freedom. Yet this is not just that human freedom creates meaning in an already existing world; rather, [...] human consciousness, as a free being which is nonbeing, carves up the self-identical undifferentiated density of being-in-itself into the ordered diversity of objects that we call the world.” (Anderson 1993, p. 56)

The diametrical opposing of freedom and the “self-identical density” which as an object of action is “carved into a world” is a conceptual construction which leads to problems when situating “human freedom” into this “carved world”. The dividing line and the two sides of the fence are maintained and the perspective of action as taking place within the interior space of action is lost. If facticity is seen only as “referring to what an individual is and was” and as “a mode of being-in-itself” linked to the body (*ibid.*, p. 15), the diversity of perspectives that this concept can open are reduced to that of merely stating a fact which has no further meaning than that of being undeniable, a frame for existing (“experiencing the world [...] as visible, textured, shaped and so on”, *ibid.*, p. 17). Furthermore, here the problem raised by the opposing of freedom and facticity (“what has happened to its [consciousness’] alleged structure as pure spontaneous (free) activity containing no passivity?”, *ibid.*) is solved through posing a possibility of escape “from the factual dimension of myself” (*ibid.*, p. 18). In this setting the political aspect of both facticity and freedom is lost in the very search for a “solution” to the problem. The relation of facticity and freedom which construes us as “human reality” is not one to be “solved”, for example, by giving supremacy to freedom but one to be played. It is this possibility of playing facticity that gives it the coloring of a strategy of action which shall be discussed below in connection to the example of the woman in a café (see chapter 7.5).

## 7.4 Morals as a Political Strategy

### 7.4.1 Morals as a Perspective of Action

Even though Sartre and Morals is one of the subjects which seems to occur frequently in commentary literature, relatively few studies discussing the moral and the political beyond what remains almost a mere statement on the existence of a

relation between them seem to have been published (see for example McBride 1991 and for a more profiled view Simont 1989 and Knee 1993). This alone is a witness to the fragmentary nature of the texts Sartre wrote on morals, not only in the sense that they are only fragments of text, interviews and posthumously published notes, but also in the sense that the substance of these texts cannot be systematized into any coherent ethical theory (see for example Simont 1992, p. 178). Apart from interpretations of the *Cahiers* (e.g. Amorós 1991, Aragüés 1995) and the already mentioned articles on the Rome Lectures and Cornell Notes some attempts to systematize the Sartrean ethics have been made both before and after the publication of the *Cahiers* (e.g. Kariuki 1978, Anderson<sup>8</sup> 1993 and Santoni 1995 concerning Sartre's "Early Philosophy"). A more general tendency, however, seems to be the discussing of certain moral concepts in Sartre either in a frame of a profiled discussion (e.g. Verstræten 1972 in relation to Sartre's political theater and Simont 1989), or through certain individual concepts such as authenticity or bad faith (see e.g. Santoni 1972, 1978, 1985, 1987, 1990 Catalano 1990a and b and Charmé 1991).

Considering Sartre's views from a political perspective there are two principal lines of thought in Sartre's texts on morals which can be highlighted here. On the one hand there is his attempt to rethink the classical moral concepts as well as morals as a classical concept, and on the other the relation between morals and politics.<sup>9</sup> Even though these two cannot be separated from each other - the political in Sartre's morals cannot be fully appreciated without using the perspective of a rupture with some classical concepts, such as subject, duty, value, norm - a stress in the perspective directs the view taken of the texts as well as the way how one profiles Sartre's thought. In this present study the emphasis is laid principally on the relation of morals and politics, and the view forwarded is that reading the moral in Sartre's texts offers a view of the political. It is also maintained here that these two are interwoven to such an extent that they cannot be discussed separately without losing an important perspective of Sartre's work, especially while keeping the agent and action in focus. From the point of view of a conceptual study this is even more evident because some of the conceptual constructions which underline the political aspect of Sartre's discussions are indeed put forward and developed in the frame of a discussion on morals.

In her *La force de choses* (1963) Simone de Beauvoir cites Sartre's unpublished notes as follows:

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8 Thomas C. Anderson is perhaps the scholar who has pushed this kind of study on Sartre furthest. In his *Sartre's Two Ethics* (1993) he wishes to put forward a systematization of the "moral values, norms, and ideals Sartre proposes", to explain "the rationale he offers to ground such values, norms, and ideals" (p. xii) and to follow "the [...] progression of Sartre's moral thought from an early, abstract, idealistic ethics of authenticity to a more concrete, realistic, and materialistic morality." (p.1)

9 William McBride indicates this as "[...] Sartre's [...] ethics [...] constitutes a sustained critique of the morality of good and bad intentions that is associated with traditional mainstream Western ethics, as exemplified in Kant's notion of Good Will." (1991, p. 18) I agree with this, but I would like to suggest that Sartre's rethinking of the question reaches further than just these categories as it implies the political and also the agent.

“[L]’attitude morale apparaît quand les conditions techniques et sociales rendent impossible les conduites positives. La morale, c’est un ensemble de trucs idéalistes pour vous aider à vivre ce que la pénurie des ressources et la carence des techniques vous impose”. (de Beauvoir 1963, p. 218)

This sentence could serve as an introduction to a view of Sartre’s morals as having a distinct political dimension, a little peek into the relationship between morals and politics that we can find in Sartre. The short passage clearly relates morals to the impossible as a strategy for acting in an impossible situation. However, this passage does not discuss a limit-situation with a strategy used for changing the situation but refers to a counter-strategy of maintaining the present situation. Even though this is by no means all there is to Sartrean morals, it describes one of the initial points of view that we can take of the question of the relation of politics and morals. Morals are used for political purposes, they are not a separate sphere but directly related to the situation, action and to objectives posed.

Through this we can refer to the historical character of morals. In the *Cahiers* Sartre says:

“L’ontologie existentialiste est elle-même historique. [...] La morale doit être historique, c’est-à-dire trouver l’universel dans l’Histoire et le ressaisir dans l’Histoire.” [...] “La morale est une entreprise individuelle, subjective et historique.” (CM p. 14, see also p. 487)

Later in the passage he rejects the idea of an abstract universal as well as morals in the Kantian sense in favor of the concrete universal. He also relates morals to politics, to the situation of the agent and to change (see CM p. 14-15). Moreover, he relates morals also to action and to struggle (CM p. 24-25) - even to revolution (CM p. 39). In order to stress the difference between morals as universal and as historical he also criticizes for example the morals of obligation (CM e.g. p. 279, 283) and distinguishes different moral attitudes, such as the morals of resignation, of the slave, of devotion, of a chief, of pleasure and of interest (CM p. 23, 194, 407-10, 576). All these express the view Sartre maintained throughout his work, namely that morals cannot be discussed outside their profoundly historical character which refers both to the changing of morals in relation to historical situations and to the historicity of the concept and of its understanding. Sartre’s discussion on morals never entailed a construction of ethical rules or other elements of stability or of transhistorical character that can be related to the question. On the contrary it maintains the character of forming an aspect of action in an action situation.

The historicity and the political aspect of morals in Sartre are highlighted also by the fact that he never wrote the Morals he intended to, but instead, wrote manuscripts which are related to the questions he was working on at the time. In a way his texts on morals display the same “circumstantial” character as some of his political writings in spite of the fact that certain questions and issues seem to have remained open in all his discussions on morals. One could even venture to say that the historical and situated character of morals, or even the strategic aspect they are given in de Beauvoir’s quotation, can be seen in that Sartre used the concepts he developed in the perspective of writing on morals for bringing

out the political aspects of his thinking. The *Cahiers* discusses several questions left open in *L'être et le néant* from a more politicized point of view and the same seems to apply to the Rome and Cornell manuscripts, especially with regard to the Kennedy and West Virginia fragment which directly discusses morals as a political strategy related to the very situation where action took place. This picture could even be strengthened by the discussion presented in the *L'espoir, maintenant* interviews where the relation between morals and politics as views of action is clearly present throughout the discussion.

In her *Paradojas del individualismo* (1993) Victoria Camps, while considering the idea of our decisions affecting all humanity the one surely valid thing that the forgotten Sartre said (p. 180), takes Wittgenstein's division into logic and ethics as a point of departure when giving a short description on the relation of politics and morals. According to her, Wittgenstein sees logic as the constitutive principle of the world and ethics that of the human being. Hence ethics can only change the human being but not the world. Following this division Camps sees that the ethics which might bring about a change in people may be on the verge of disappearing from practice, but it is not ethics as universal values that is to be blamed for the "inefficiency", but the human being, her/his lack of the will to be rational and virtuous. In her defense of the moral as a quality of action, Camps turns to politics where she sees a total lack of the ideas of common interest with regard to things that concern us all in the very place where such moral qualities of action should be present (*ibid.*, p. 73-75).<sup>10</sup>

Camps' discussion on the lack of moral quality in political action is interesting as such, but it is a view which is diametrically opposed to that of Sartre's. For Sartre, a claim that morals could be seen as a dividing principle between the human being (or action) and the world is inconceivable and this is precisely where the specifically political in Sartre's conception of morals lies. For him morals are an aspect of action and as such they form a view of the agent and of the world at the same time. This is why Sartre can suggest, as Camps says, that the agent is responsible for the whole world - morals are not merely about changes in the human being but about changes in the world as well.

Moreover, in Sartre it is not a question of a postulation which would imply that morals were a quality of action but an attribute, i.e. a perspective taken, of action. In this sense we can understand that in Sartre's analysis of the West Virginia primaries morals can be seen, as Kari Palonen has shown, as a means used for political argumentation (see Palonen 1994b). For Sartre the normative dimension of ethics is not in focus but rather morals in relation to the political. Morals in Sartre's work are not discussed in relation to any principle, imperative, belief or such (see e.g. Simont 1989, p. 24<sup>11</sup>) which would relegate us beyond the action situation and the agent.

10 For a view problematizing Sartre's and Wittgenstein's concepts of self and world see Wider 1991.

11 Christina Howells' view differs from this: "[...] Sartre will not commit himself so specifically, in his philosophical writing at least, on particular moral questions, but he is nonetheless tempted to seek a more general formulation of an ethical imperative." (1988, p. 28)

In his last interviews with Benny Lévy, Sartre somewhat sporadically expresses ideas pointing in the same direction - that of "using" morals in the context of politics:

"Je te dirai que cette recherche des vraies fins sociales de la morale va avec l'idée de retrouver un principe pour la gauche telle qu'elle est aujourd'hui." (L'espoir I, p. 57)

"Je voudrais qu notre discussion soit ici à la fois l'esquisse d'une morale et la découverte du vrai principe de la gauche." (ibid.)

In the same context he also makes comments on humanity and on political principles, intentions, radicalness and democracy which are expressed against a background of morals as a relation between human beings. In addition to this, in his discussion on Jewish religion he relates the concept of the end (objective) to the idea of the end of the world which he uses as a conceptual device and as a moral figure for posing revolution politically as change (see L'espoir III, esp. p. 58-59, see also CM esp. p. 95, 169). The fact that Sartre, due to his blindness, was not thinking "alone" but engaged in a dialogue with Benny Lévy in these interviews may, as is sometimes claimed, have affected the contents of his ideas. Nevertheless, his constant use of morals as a point of reference for political questions and as a conceptual device for analyzing the political is quite evident here, and in my view the "authenticity" of these interviews does not form a problem from this perspective.

From this point of view Sartre's discussion on morals and the concepts he uses to advance it - be they those of bad faith and authenticity from the time of *L'être et le néant*, those of the paradoxes of ethics from the time of the *Critique* or "hope" in his last years - are not to be taken as universalizing categories of ethics. Instead, they could be seen more as "circumstantial" conceptual devices used for developing his views of the political and for analyzing the moral aspect of action outside any normative theory of ethics - a perspective which could offer views of the question also in a wider setting than just within "Sartrology". In this sense Sartre's views on morals in relation to politics has been largely overlooked by commentators and other scholars.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the relation of morals and politics described above there is another aspect these two concepts share. Sartre finished his *La transcendance de l'Ego* with words which discuss "danger" as a common setting for both morals and politics.

"Et le rapport d'interdépendance qu'elle [the consciousness] établit entre le Moi et le Monde suffit pour que le Moi apparaisse comme "en danger" devant le Monde, pour que le Moi [...] tire du Monde tout son contenu. Il n'en faut pas plus pour fonder philosophiquement une morale et une politique absolument positives." (TE, p. 87)

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12 This is true also concerning for example Sartre's *Réflexions sur la Question Juive* (1946) which could offer an interesting point of view of the question for example in an Arendtian context. In connection with this see Flynn's (1986) interpretation of *Les Séquestrés d'Altona* (esp. p. 66-67) and his comments on Arendt's "banality of Evil" and Sartre's short analysis of the Eichmann case in *L'idiot* (Flynn, *ibid.*, p. 134-36, *L'idiot* III, p. 626-27, new, revised and completed edition 1988).

Even though the explicit perspective Sartre takes is that of an unproblematicized “positive politics and morals”, the text reveals the presence of the view which Sartre never abandoned. For Sartre, the setting in which he discusses his views is systematically a setting of conflict. In this quotation it is the “self” and the “world” that indicate the perspective of conflict and it is into this that Sartre anchors both morals and politics hence giving them a common reference point. Morals and politics are not considered as separate, both form a view of existence and action. Conceptually they are attributes of action in a pole-relation: a perspective taken of action implies both poles. This relation is also asymmetric, it is the political that is placed in the foreground in the sense that Sartre’s views on morals cannot, as already indicated, be fully understood without a reference to their political aspect. In the following I shall discuss this political aspect of Sartre’s morals as well as certain conceptual constructions which reveal the inherent political dimensions of Sartre’s moral thinking. Even though some of Sartre’s central concepts will be discussed, this is not intended to be either an overall or a detailed analysis of his moral concepts, but some fragmentary views of the possibilities these concepts offer for political thinking and for the political reading of Sartre.

In Philip Knee’s *Qui perd gagne* we can find a crystallized expression showing an aspect of the specificity of the relation between politics and morals in Sartre. Knee reads in *La nausée* (1938) Roquentin’s discovery of the “necessity” of “lying to oneself” commenting on it as a play between the contingency as our condition and bad faith as a strategy of facing this condition:

“[L]e plus important est la structure du problème moral [...] Il [Roquentin] se rend compte que la mise en ordre de l’expérience n’est possible qu’au prix du mensonge à soi, d’une mauvaise foi systématique. Il s’en aperçoit en faisant l’expérience de la contingence des choses [...] ce n’est qu’en l’oubliant, en s’oubliant que l’expérience peut s’ordonner [...] et que l’action dans le monde peut ne pas paraître impossible ou dérisoire.” (ibid., p. 7-8)

The political dimension of morals is written into these sentences. If we cannot “avoid” taking a deceiving perspective of our own action as organizing reality, and if this perspective is intrinsically related to the contingency of both our existence and of that of the world, we can only accept that this means at the same time that we cannot live our existence without using strategies of action. It also means that we cannot avoid choosing in a situation construed as tension - a razor’s edge as Knee describes it (ibid., p.7) - which lies at the root of the conflicting relations of human beings in this world. That is, we cannot live our existence without living its political dimension.

The political dimension the conflict, which is here related to the concepts of bad faith and contingency, is not only construed in the human beings’ relations to the world and to the others, but also in her/his relations as non-self-identical (or as Knee puts it: “non-coïncidence”, ibid., p. 2) to her/himself.

The combining of bad faith, contingency and conflict form a background to the interpretations in this study. The conflict and contingency are in general recognized as politically relevant concepts in Sartre, but it is much less common to maintain that bad faith, mostly seen principally if not altogether as a moral category, is in fact a highly political concept. Maintaining this means, of course,



maintaining at the same time that concepts intrinsically related to the concept of bad faith (for example authenticity) are also politically relevant in Sartre's texts.

From this standpoint the inter-relations of morals and politics can be described from a more profiled perspective. If politics and morals form in Sartre two inseparable faces of the same coin, they form it in a very specific way. They resemble more a combined bank and credit card with a magnetic strip on it, a strip containing both of them in the information it holds the different purposes of use being the only criteria for distinguishing them, as opposed to a coin where one can see only one face at a time. Hence, what is at stake here is action of which morals and politics form different attributes, action as a relation of tension between the two poles they constitute.

It is against this background that the following analysis of authenticity and bad faith will be conducted.

#### 7.4.2 Conversion to Authenticity?

In *L'être et le néant* we can find a footnote on authenticity where the concept is brought out in the context of escaping bad faith (EN p. 111). This footnote has served as a starting point for one of the most general interpretations of the concept. It has led to the search for a key for reading the concept from the point of view of opposing authenticity to bad faith. One can overcome the self-deception of bad faith, the quest for becoming in-itself, the inauthentic escape from freedom and from assuming one's responsibility through becoming authentic through (radical) conversion - a concept taken in this connection from another footnote in *L'être et le néant* (EN p. 484).<sup>13</sup> One of the strongest claims concerning this comes from Santoni:

"If there still linger questions about this, I trust that the present study [...] will put them to rest. The way out of Sartrean hell is authenticity [...]" (1995, p. xxxix).<sup>14</sup>

A less sharp and a somewhat more classical view can be found in a recent study of Bardy's:

"L'authenticité, ce sera la lucidité et le courage de celui qui accepte d'assumer ce qu'il est: un néant d'être qui a à se faire être inlassablement, source unique de sens qu'il donne à sa vie et au monde." (Bardy 1996, p. 14)

Even though not directly expressed, the constellation behind Bardy's definition is also the opposing of the two concepts of bad faith and authenticity. However, Bardy's view stresses the ontological perspective whereas Santoni's view is placed

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13 On the question see for example Trilling 1994 (1972), Martin-Deslias 1972, Smoot 1974, Catalanó 1990a and 1990b, Anderson 1993, Reimão 1994, Dupuy, 1996 and also Santoni 1972, 1978, 1985, 1987, 1990.

14 Anderson puts it almost as clearly when defining authenticity as "the escape from bad faith" (1993, p. 17).

more strictly within a discussion on morals.<sup>15</sup>

The concept of authenticity, if interpreted along these lines, becomes in my view overemphasized and directs the discussion exclusively toward a search for a fundamental moral principle in Sartre, even to such an extent that certain central aspects of the concept remain overlooked. In the following I shall discuss such perspectives of the concept that could indicate an interpretation along different lines bringing forward the political potential of the concept.

The importance of the concept of authenticity is usually built on the above mentioned footnote in *L'être et le néant*<sup>16</sup> and on Sartre's further discussion of the concept in the *Cahiers*<sup>17</sup>, in the polemical text *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, in *Reflexions sur la Question Juive* (1946) as well as in *Vérité et existence*<sup>18</sup> all published at about the same time. However, the *Cahiers* is not, as is well known, a coherent text, but more a collection of unfinished thoughts in a very fragmentary framework, and it is not possible to reconstruct a coherent theory of authenticity from it. The other texts discussing the concept, especially *Reflexions*, offer at places elaborated aspects of the concept but even these do not form a coherent whole. This does not mean that the concept would not be important in Sartre, but that considering it as conceptually fully developed in the same sense as the concept of bad faith in *L'être et le néant* distorts the perspective taken on its interpretation. Neither does it mean that a coherent view of the concept could not be offered through an interpretation. It means that interpreting authenticity as a concept opposed to bad faith is only possible from the perspective of giving a strong emphasis to the above mentioned footnote and considering the other texts as further developments directly related to Sartre's earlier comment. This is something which is not evident as several examples can be found to highlight the controversial character of Sartre's comments on authenticity.

“S'il y a un mode d'être commun qui est inauthenticité, alors toute l'Histoire est inauthentique et l'action dans l'Histoire entraîne à l'inauthenticité; l'authenticité retourne à

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- 15 For further views of a more ontological aspect of these concepts see for example Martin-Desliias (1972, esp. p. 61-62) and Smoot 1974.
- 16 According to Philip Knee the concept of authenticity is mentioned only once in the work (1993, p. 13n20). In the references to authenticity in the English edition of *L'être et le néant* given by Santoni, Sartre refers to Heidegger's concept of authenticity (1995, see p. 206n1, respective pages in the French edition used in this present work are 122, 614, 617). For a view of Heidegger's concepts of authenticity and inauthenticity see for example Ciaffa 1987 and Contat who says: “[p]our Heidegger l'authenticité est liée à la conscience d'être-pour-la-mort de la réalité humaine. Sartre va en faire une notion morale et politique, c'est-à-dire historique, fondée sur une nécessité de la liberté: celle d'assumer sa "situation" [...]” (1995, p. vii).
- 17 In his article *Authenticity: A Sartrean Perspective* (1990a) Joseph Catalano writes: “[i]f the task of living a moral life is ambiguous, the use of the term “authenticity” to describe the task, in a Sartrean context, seems not only ambiguous but wrong. To use the term “authenticity” seems to be taking up again the misguided task of developing an individualistic ethics indicated by the enigmatic footnote in the chapter on bad faith in *Being and Nothingness* and abandoned by Sartre in the unfinished work on ethics, *Cahiers pour une morale*.” In spite of this comment Catalano, however, returns to the “traditional” interpretation in the sense that he opposes bad faith to authenticity when he speaks about living an authentic life (p. 99, 108, see also p. 117n4).
- 18 A view problematizing the relation of authenticity and truth can be found for example in Cassiano Reimaõ 1994.

l'individualisme. [...] Toute doctrine de la conversion risque fort d'être un a-historisme." (VE p. 11)

"Nouvelle manière, "authentique", d'être à soi-même et pour soi-même, qui transcende la dialectique de la sincérité-mauvaise foi. Cette manière d'être est à quatre termes cette fois: réfléchi (reflet-reflétant), réflexif (reflet-reflétant)." (CM p. 490)

"L'authenticité amène donc à renoncer à tout projet d'être courageux (lâche), noble (vil), etc. Parce qu'ils sont irréalisables et qu'ils conduisent de toute façon à l'aliénation. Elle découvre que le seul projet valable est celui de *faire* (et non d'être) [...]. Le projet valable est celui d'agir sur une situation concrète et de la modifier dans un certain sens." (CM p. 491)

"Ainsi découvrons-nous une nouvelle tension au cœur de notre authenticité: celle d'être un absolu vivant que rien ne peut changer dans le temps que nous vivons et celle d'être irrémédiablement et nécessairement un futur passé dont une liberté qui sera à la fois nouvelle et moi-même décidera." (CM p. 493)

"L'authenticité porte sur ce que je veux. [...] La réflexion pure et authentique est un vouloir de ce que je veux." (CM p. 496)

"Si l'on convient avec nous que l'homme est une liberté en situation, on concevra facilement que cette liberté puisse se définir comme authentique ou comme inauthentique selon le choix qu'elle fait d'elle-même dans la situation où elle surgit. L'authenticité, cela va de soi, consiste à prendre une conscience lucide et véridique de la situation, à assumer les responsabilités et les risques que cette situation comporte [...]" (QJ p. 116)

When reading Sartre's comments on authenticity one might even venture to say that the central place assigned to the setting of bad faith vs. authenticity has its origin, at least to a certain extent, in the discussion amongst his interpreters. It has become almost the very figure through which an approach to Sartre's views on morals can be taken - a figure whose use is more justified by the texts of the commentators than by Sartre's own where authenticity is discussed in several different conceptual contexts, that of an opposition to the concept of bad faith not being the most prominent one.

However, even if we take the famous footnote in *L'être et le néant* as a starting point, we can establish a line of interpretation which is not based on relating bad faith and authenticity as counter concepts which exclude each other and form rival perspectives.

"S'il est indifférent d'être de bonne ou de mauvaise foi, parce que la mauvaise foi ressaisit la bonne foi et se glisse à l'origine même de son projet, cela ne veut pas dire qu'on ne puisse échapper radicalement à la mauvaise foi. Mais cela suppose une reprise de l'être pourri par lui-même que nous nommerons authenticité et dont la description n'a pas place ici." (EN, p. 111n1)

In my view, if this comment is read, as it most often is, that Sartre states that in his view bad faith can be overcome by authenticity, it has been simplified. It is true that Sartre here poses authenticity as a way of radically escaping bad faith and contrasts it to good faith, which does not serve the same purpose as good faith's origin is in bad faith. What is no longer evident is the simplicity of the constellation. On the basis of reading Sartre's texts in general one can legitimately assume that this comment is not an exception among so many other comments which hide more than they reveal. In my view, the perspective overlooked when reading this short statement is that of a particular aspect of the relation established between bad faith and authenticity. Sartre's formulation gives no indication here as to how this relation would be formulated if seen from the perspective of authen-

ticity. Interpreting “une reprise de L’être par lui-même” as a step from “self-deception” and “lying” to “salvation” is not the only possible interpretation here, and from a political point of view, not the most interesting one either. This kind of interpretation which excludes bad faith from “moral conduct” and totally opposes the two concepts can be seen taken at its furthest in an interpretation where bad faith is seen as a “natural attitude” without any other perspective than that of conversion to authenticity (see e.g. Santoni, op. cit., p. xxix)<sup>19</sup>.

In this kind of interpretation bad faith is seen as a “conduct” from which one should be “delivered”.<sup>20</sup> This “Husserlian” perspective<sup>21</sup> of bad faith as a “natural attitude” flavored with a perspective of liberation, however, overlooks the radical, political aspect of the concept as a play with the human condition and removes from sight the paradoxal, or one could even say, polemical aspects of the concept. It also establishes a temporal sequence between these concepts: “first” bad faith, “then” conversion and only “after” that authenticity - something which on the basis of the concept of temporality in *L’être et le néant* cannot, in my view, be established. The relation between these two concepts cannot be established directly - there is no such dividing line of confrontation between them as usually is seen. Sartre operates with them in different conceptual contexts, or in other words, uses them to describe different perspectives of action. Or still in other words, bad faith and authenticity in Sartre form an asymmetric relation where the poles are seen from the perspective of conversion which designates the place where the asymmetry is born. Conversion to authenticity does not make bad faith disappear leaving only authenticity on the scene.

“L’homme authentique ne peut pas par la conversion supprimer la poursuite de l’Être car il n’y aurait plus rien.” (CM, p. 42)

Philip Knee describes authenticity as possible but as being founded on failure which leads to a setting that for the human being it is impossible at the same time to resign oneself to the failure (and remain in bad faith) and to be liberated from it (and become authentic), and adds that “[i]l s’agit pour l’homme de s’arracher à l’échec sans pour cela prétendre se défaire d’une condition définie par l’échec.” (1984, p. 73) Knee’s perspective of the question is different from the one adopted in this present work, but his description of the relation of bad faith and authenticity as well as his view of the concept of conversion (“use “conversion radicals” [...] c’est use conversion qu’elle se donne les moyens d’envisager et même d’enclencher sans cesse mais jamais de réaliser”, *ibid.*) highlight the role of a shifting point of view - none of these three concepts can be read as constants explaining an equation to which one wishes to find a solution. Knee’s perspective of the question is that of taking the constant reaffirmation of the conversion (*ibid.*, p. 71) as a viewpoint of bad faith and of the failure of “becoming” authentic which is a perspective that sheds light on the problem at hand here.

19 About “natural attitude” see also Catalano 1990b, p. 685.

20 Santoni 1995, p. xxxiii. Santoni also says: “[...] I maintain that conversion to authenticity for Sartre marks a passage into the *moral* level of existence and constitutes entry into his “ethics of salvation” (*ibid.*, p. xxxi).

21 See also Anderson stressing the Husserlian perspective (1993, p. 52-53).

When we discuss "conversion" on a conceptual level the permanence<sup>22</sup> Kneer describes can be discussed in specific terms. It is not only a question of an ambiguous relation or of ambiguous concepts, but a definite conceptual construction that can be reconstructed from Sartre's texts. Bad faith and authenticity are attributes which describe different aspects of action, and, as indicated, conversion designates the change of perspective between these aspects. This relation cannot be established without conversion which formulates the point of view taken. However, conversion does not describe a change from one perspective to another as a change from one "state" to another, but describes the breaking point between these two as logics of action.

Conversion for Sartre is a limit figure similar to scarcity, which cannot be seen as a limit between "abundance" and "not-enough" but as a figure against which Sartre describes action. Analogically, the relation between bad faith and authenticity is established from a point of view which describes action, and in addition, from a point of view which, analogically to the figures of scarcity and need, constantly shifts between the two poles. Authenticity does not form an objective or a way to that which is morally good and bad faith does not represent the evil to be left behind. Both express the controversial character of the human condition which is an object of "operations" in action as well as the controversial character of action. In brief, authenticity as an attribute of action forms the other pole of the relationship in which it, together with bad faith, designates the playground for action. In addition, they also form strategies of action in a game played with conversion as a limit figure for changing strategies or for changing masks.

Hence this view places authenticity somewhat differently in this construction. Authenticity, instead of being considered as an objective or a value, is considered as an "operational tool", as a mirror against which action can be reflected. Conversion as a figure forming a point of view of the relation of bad faith and authenticity is "permanent" and therefore there are no "results" which would have a priority status in terms of value.<sup>23</sup>

Kneer's formulations problematize the question still further: he describes the "existential leap" (which, of course, is one way of putting forward the idea of a conversion) as a change of registers (ibid.) which would make a very apt description of the relation between bad faith and authenticity. Conversion does not mean moving from one type of action to another, nor indeed to a "better" one in manichaeist terms. It refers to a change of registers, which indicates acting in "different terms", in differently construed perspectives, with "different operations" - an "elsewhere", as Kneer puts it (ibid.). From this perspective the question of changing from bad faith to authenticity is a question that cannot be posed.

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22 Sartre says: "[l]a moralité: conversion permanente. Au sens de Trotsky: révolution permanente. Les *bonnes* habitudes: elles ne sont jamais bonnes, parce qu'elles sont habitudes." (CM p. 12)

23 See Sartre's letter titled *Liebe Genossen!* (1972) to the patients of a psychiatric hospital where the text is analogous to the description of the position of bad faith and authenticity here: a dividing line between those "well" and those "ill" cannot be drawn and "cure" is not a relevant concept with regard to the question of a condition lived. See also Trilling 1994 (1972), p. 195-97 for a description of an analogous view.

### 7.4.3 Bad Faith or About Liars and Deceivers

"Le point de départ de la problématique morale sartrienne est ce paradoxe d'une intention contradictoire: l'homme est le sujet libre d'un projet voué à l'échec." (Knee 1993, p. 14)

"Le problème moral [...] c'est le paradoxe d'une liberté qui se refuse elle-même, qui n'a de tentation plus forte que celle de se perdre." (ibid. p. 16)

There is no escape: morals in Sartre form indeed, as Knee puts it, a paradox which cannot be solved once and for all, there are only perspectives that we can take of the problem of morals in order to, maybe, shed some light on some of its aspects. But at the same time, it is a view which displays existence as fundamentally paradoxical and action as a play with this paradox of the human condition.

Even though this paradox is established by many interpretations of Sartre, the general tendency, as discussed above, is to see it also, or predominantly, from the point of view of the possibility of overcoming it. In the following I shall use Ronald E. Santoni's views as presented in his above mentioned book *Bad Faith, Good Faith and Authenticity in Sartre's Early Philosophy* and also his four articles on the question (1972, 1978, 1985 and 1990) as a background against which I shall discuss my views.<sup>24</sup> The reason for this use is the total contradiction that Santoni's views form with mine, as he discusses bad faith from a point of view which takes the possibility of overcoming it both as a starting point and as a guiding thread in his interpretation. He goes further than most other commentators in this line in his emphasis on the concept of good faith expressing the possibility of *not* living bad faith as an escape from freedom and responsibility and as a quest for the in-itself as an "original" mode of existence.<sup>25</sup>

In his Introduction Santoni (1995) takes up as the main question of his book "can good faith be salvaged" (p. xxvi) and maintains that "Sartre's ontology and text do *not* require" that "good faith would be condemned to bad faith" (ibid., see also p. 77) but that there is a "way out of bad faith" (p. xxvii).<sup>26</sup> Sartre's own succinct formulation of good faith says that it is a concept referring to "believing what one believes" and the parallel concept of sincerity is used in this context as a concept referring to "being what we are" (EN p. 110).

Santoni introduces the reader to the concept of good faith by saying that it is something that "one might reasonably expect to be unambiguously antithetical to bad faith" but goes on to state that this is not the case, that in Sartre good faith

24 Even though I take here quite a critical perspective of Santoni's views I do not mean to discredit his texts - on the contrary they are quite interesting and I have profited from his analyses as well as from arguing against his views.

25 Thomas C. Anderson (1993), even though not quite following Santoni's line in his interpretation expresses his astonishment with regard to the general interpretation of bad faith. He states that bad faith is not "necessary nor inevitable" and goes on by saying "[i]t is surprising how many have missed this positive side of Sartre's analysis." (p. 16)

26 Even though Santoni acknowledges that there are "legitimate grounds for asking whether [...] he [Sartre] intends good faith or authenticity to designate that transcending "possibility" [of overcoming it] or transformed mode of existence" (1995, xviii) he states a little later (p. xxxiii) that in his view it was Sartre's *intention* to make authenticity the way out of bad faith to good faith (see also p. xix).

"shares the project and goal of bad faith" (p. xvi-xvii). This introduction leads the reader to expect that Santoni would later on discuss these Sartrean concepts in the very setting of ambiguity and contradictory relationship he sketches out here. However, he does not. His analysis of good faith aims just as much as his analysis of bad faith to a rationalized, unambiguous explanation of these concepts, an explanation which is to serve as basis for building moral maxims with the help of which "we" could overcome the curse of bad faith (see p. xxv: "my attempt to reconstruct good faith as a salvageable and constructive alternative to bad faith" and "a redeemed sense of good faith, or authenticity, that spells the possibility of genuine self-recovery (from bad faith) in Sartre"). He also states that:

"[G]ood faith may be viewed as an attitude that confronts and affirms, rather than flees from, the freedom and responsibility to which (for Sartre) we have been abandoned." (ibid. p. 110)

This could not be expressed more clearly: the political - represented by the concept of escape which implies the possibility of action, a distance or a space of action construed in the relation between freedom and self-identity as a play with the two aspects of the human condition, the impossibility of not being able not to be free and the impossibility of being self-identical - is outplayed in Santoni's interpretation and what is left is a "pure" normative moral attitude which we can confront with the politically expressed problem of our existence - of freedom and responsibility.

Furthermore, Santoni's viewing good faith as a moral attitude which "confronts and affirms" the condition we exist in means identifying with this condition and - almost - surrendering to its positivity. With the loss of escape the perspectives of conflict and contingency, which Sartre construes with these concepts, is wiped out of the picture and the political aspect of freedom is lost. Freedom becomes a quality of a moral agent's condition which can be "affirmed", one becomes a moral agent in "good faith" with a harmonious relation to one's condition.

At the same time when the perspective of freedom is lost by the overriding of the concept of escape, the perspective of action as well as that of temporality disappear from the scene sketched by Santoni. Freedom in Sartre is construed through the concept of escape as an expression of non-identity and of the possibility of change, and these construe the setting for temporal action. Hence a view like Santoni's leaves the agent merely with the possibility of recovering the already-existing, with a perspective of abandoning the mask of a player or an actor and of losing sight of the political.

In this situation, if we are to recover the political agent from this scene, we must take a different perspective of the concept of bad faith. Within this perspective bad faith indicates a condition where freedom is not reducible to any moral attitude or quality and cannot be "taken over" by the agent who is always at a distance from her/himself. In brief, freedom is a political condition of existence and bad faith is one of the attributes Sartre ascribes to action as freedom. From this perspective the mere confrontation of bad and good faith as alternatives, or even as opposed poles, is impossible. It is only when losing sight of the inherently political in Sartre's text that such a division can be construed.

In Santoni's analysis the extraordinary conceptual constructions Sartre uses disappear and this to a great extent waters down the very specificity in Sartre: the art of operating with concepts which are not fixed and closed, but which include the dimension of their own negation as well as the possibility of maintaining their ambiguity and ambivalence. At the same time the view of the inbuilt possibility of changing the perspective taken in order to describe the paradox of our existence, the possibility of replaying seemingly final judgements (whether moral or political) and of keeping the situation open for playing disappear. It also waters down the description of the agent as a non-identical player of the exteriority and interiority and of producing and being produced, and in a sense reintroduces the classical subject implied in Santoni's views. Santoni explicitly rejects these specificities of Sartre's conceptual construction by saying that good faith "refuses to invoke "two-faced" or ambiguous concepts" (p. xxvi).

Later on in his book Santoni amplifies and problematizes his view in quite an interesting fashion, but the basic design of the setting he takes as a point of departure for his analysis remains. Hence these concepts, seen from the point of view of "overcoming" bad faith, lose their sharp edge, their conceptual strength and their value as devices for an analysis. In brief, they lose their radicalness which means depriving Sartre's thought of one of the very tools it uses and rests upon.

The key to a political interpretation of bad faith lies in the concepts of sincerity and good faith which Santoni wishes to salvage, but which in my view construe conceptual help-devices which Sartre uses for construing the concept of bad faith. According to Sartre one acting in bad faith can sincerely take her/himself as brave even if she/he is not brave (see EN p. 106-107). In this simple setting the question of "deceiving oneself" or of "lying to oneself" is seen in a relation construed between bad faith and sincerity or good faith, bad faith is not cynical lying but sincerity is of bad faith. This is the asymmetric design where the apparent simplicity of the picture vanishes. Sincerity is of bad faith because by acting "sincerely" we make an attempt to *be* what we *are*, and for Sartre, as we have seen, we cannot *be* what we *are*, we cannot be identical with ourselves.<sup>27</sup> Sincerity as action in bad faith is action where the agent is wearing a mask, or rather "is" the mask as there is no "sincere person" behind it. With Sartre's concepts we can not speak about either *being* brave or *not* being brave (see EN p. 110-11) but only about naming our acting such.

With the concept of bad faith Sartre refers to action which displays certain specific characteristics. He refers to action which does not positively believe in what-is-there but is aware of the character of this believing and of the fact that believing in things to be as they are, i.e. in "I am brave", is a decision - one has to want the what-is-there:

"La mauvaise foi saisit des évidences, mais elle est d'avance résignée à ne pas être remplie par ces évidences. à ne pas être persuadée et transformée en bonne foi [...] elle

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27 See for example Howells 1988: "[S]o called sincerity may be a form of bad faith if it entails an unquestioning identification with one's role" (p. 17). Anderson (1993, p. 16) refers to this too, but does not draw any conclusions with regard to the perspective of the impossibility of identity implied here.



n'ignore pas [...] que la foi est décision, et qu'après chaque intuition, il faut décider et vouloir ce qui est." (EN p. 109)

Bad faith then, consists of the awareness of not being what we are, of not acting fully as we are and of deceiving ourselves by acting as if we were what we are. In bad faith one is not convinced of "what-is", not entirely persuaded by oneself, and hence the "what-is" is not a compact, "as such" reality but construed through our view on it. This means that one acts in a context where the views which are "persuasive" but not "persuasive altogether", form a setting which cannot be fixed, where the identical does not form a perspective. Bad faith is a way of being in the world (ibid.) and for Sartre the "non-persuasion" of bad faith form the structure of all convictions:

"Mais la mauvaise foi est consciente de sa structure et elle a pris ses précautions en décidant que la structure métastable était la structure de l'être et que la non-persuasion était la structure de toutes les convictions." (ibid.)

Hence bad faith is not a state of being but a project through which the agent projects the surpassing of the situation. At the same time it is a temporal moment of action<sup>28</sup>, being and not being persuaded is a constant movement within this setting.

This setting follows Sartre's initial conceptual construction of the *is - is-not*: bad faith as self-deceiving action is an expression of the moving relation of "human reality", in terms of distance from and presence, to her/himself.<sup>29</sup> It is a figure Sartre construes to express action which describes the agent as non-identical with the what-is-there. In this sense good faith which postulates both the agent and the world in terms of identity is of bad faith as it is possible for the agent to postulate identity only on the basis of non-identity - things identical to themselves are like stones at the bottom of a river. Hence here, once again Sartre construes a space of action, a space *within* the agent's "basic" relation to the world and to others and at the same time radically denies self-identity. From this point of view Santoni's attempt to "rescue" the concept of good faith as a basic moral concept, not only overlooks the political aspect of the concept of bad faith expressing yet another aspect of freedom and the possibility of action, but also steps out of Sartre's initial ontological frame.<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, Sartre does not postulate bad faith as a decision made after reflection, but as a spontaneous way of being in the world, an attitude towards

28 "An individual's practice of bad faith might be described as his [Sartre's] attempt to control personal space and time." (Bukala 1976a, p. 170)

29 See also the *Cahiers* where Sartre establishes the relation between bad faith, sincerity and authenticity in the basic terms of *L'être et le néant*: "Puisque sincérité et mauvaise foi étaient renvoyées dos à dos pour jouer sur L'être et le n'être pas, il allait de soi que l'authenticité consistait à dévoiler L'être sur le mode de ne pas être." (CM p. 490)

30 However, Santoni specifically maintains that Sartre's seeing both good faith and sincerity as phenomenons of bad faith are based on his "misuse of the core of ontological system" (1995, p. xxi, see also p. 12). This is perhaps the most striking example of his "project" of rationalizing Sartre's thought - and rendering it "toothless", depriving it of the very tools that build up the critical potential inherent in it. An interesting "debate" around this question can be found in the above mentioned articles by Santoni and in Catalano 1990b.

reality. Therefore it is always present as a possibility of not “accepting” the what-is-there as an already existing truth of a situation or as a possibility of not being a positive “belief”, but a “belief” which is realized only through being put in question, through the destruction of its own character of belief.

“Ainsi, la croyance est un être qui se met en question dans son propre être, qui ne peut se réaliser que dans sa destruction [...]. Croire, c’est ne pas croire. [...] En ce sens, la conscience est perpétuellement échappement à soi, la croyance devient non-croyance, l’immédiat médiation, l’absolu relatif et le relatif absolu. L’idéal du bonne foi (croire ce qu’on croit) est, comme celui de la sincérité (être ce qu’on est), un idéal d’être-en-soi. [...] Et, par suite, le projet primitif de la mauvaise foi n’est que l’utilisation de cette auto-destruction du fait de conscience. Si toute croyance de bonne foi est une impossible croyance, il y a place à présent pour toute croyance impossible.” (EN p. 110)

Hence bad faith is an attitude towards the world, an aspect of action which uses the possibility of postulating itself as non-self-identical in an impossible situation construed of the impossibility of “sincerely believing” and of the impossibility of not being able not to believe. Bad faith forms the possibility of an escape from this limit-situation that we are.

However, as bad faith cannot “overcome” its being construed as the distance, the space of action, it is condemned to remain in this contradictory relation of escaping that which cannot be escaped (see EN, p. 111). This is another description of the agent as the strategic player of the impossible, another description in Sartre of the political dimension of our condition of being a human being. In the light of this it is impossible to agree with Anderson for whom bad faith “is not [...] a social, let alone a political, notion” (1993, p. 16). The agent as a “deceiver” is the political actor, the mask and this is the political aspect of our condition of being condemned to act in bad faith - this is the irony of our condition.

“Dans l’ironie, l’homme anéantit, dans l’unité d’un même acte, ce qu’il pose, il donne à croire pour n’être pas cru, il affirme pour nier et nie pour affirmer [...]”. (EN p. 85)

## 7.5 Bad Faith as a Strategy of Action: the Café Re-visited

“La mauvaise foi [...] a pour but de se mettre hors d’atteinte, c’est une fuite.” (EN p. 106)

In connection with a discussion of bad faith usually two examples from *L’être et le néant* emerge: that of the waiter and that of the woman in a café. The much used example of the woman will here be interpreted within the frame of the discussion above.<sup>31</sup>

This example is often used for illustrating the concepts of authenticity and bad faith. It is seen as an example of bad faith in terms of something that should not be, a “behavior” which should be replaced by an authentic one. Most of this

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31 This chapter is a revised version of a passage in my article *The Bastille Re-visited. Bad Faith and disidentification as political forms of action* (1993). See also my article on facticity and alterity (1990a).

discussion has related the concept almost exclusively to Sartre's conception of morals and it has been discussed exclusively in terms of an inauthentic way of acting. My interpretation here starts from the perspective that the relation between the concepts "authentic and inauthentic" is an asymmetric one, and that they cannot as such be used straightforwardly in relation to the concept of bad faith. Hence I do not interpret bad faith in Sartre's texts as something one should eliminate but (unfortunately) cannot, but as something that constitutes action and also as something that can be interpreted as a strategy of action from a political perspective. Bad faith is indeed amongst the most important political concepts in Sartre's *L'être et le néant*.

The two interesting descriptions, the one of the waiter and the one of the woman at a café offer slightly different perspectives of the setting for discussing bad faith. The waiter example can be interpreted from the "*un peu trop*" (a little too much) perspective (see Lebiez 1990) which Sartre uses as a figure for stressing the description of bad faith as the distance that we are from what we *are*. The example of the woman, on the other hand, is a description of the "deceiving" present in bad faith.

The waiter serving the tables, is a little too much of a waiter, a little too eager to fulfill his role as waiter for him to really seem like a waiter. On the contrary, he seems to be acting *as if* he were a waiter, and as he is acting to *be* a waiter and not merely waiting on tables, he is acting in bad faith.

If we take a closer look at this scene, we can find that the waiter in Sartre's example is, no doubt, acting, playing with his condition. "Toute sa conduite nous semble un jeu." (EN p. 99) Sartre describes this playing of the role of the waiter as acting in order to yield to the weight of reality, "pour emprisonner l'homme dans ce qu'il est" (ibid.), to make the waiter *be* a waiter and nothing else. But as the waiter *is* not a waiter, a prisoner of what he is - like an ink-pot *is* an ink-pot (ibid.) - and as he is the waiter only in the sense of having to be it but never *being* it, his existence and this situation, refer to something beyond, to something transcending the being a waiter. It is here, "in between" the waiter as a waiter and the waiter acting as if he were a waiter that we find the "I am what I am not" and vice versa "I am not what I am" (EN p. 99-100), an interesting opening for interpretation.

Acting in bad faith can, through the view of acting *as if* (one were...), be interpreted as playing with the attributes of existence and of action, or with the nothingness "between" the in-itself and the for-itself that differentiates the waiter from an ink-pot. The *as if* forms here an interesting point of view. In contrast to Cohen who calls acting *as if* a pragmatic "[w]e behave *as if* we were all equal here" and separates it from a rhetoric "[w]e are all equal here" (1985, p. 33) Sartre's use of the *as if*, using Cohen's terms, seems more rhetoric than pragmatic. It is destined to persuade the onlooker to take the situation for a factual state of things. Yet the very acting in terms of *as if* casts a doubt on the "factual state of things" as if a double register of references were in use, a double register where the *is - is-not* construction is activated.

The example of the waiter does not take us further than seeing the *as if* as a view of bad faith<sup>32</sup>, but the example of the woman does.

There is a woman sitting at a table with a man. She is aware of the man's interest in her and she knows that she will eventually have to make a decision between the alternatives present: either to accept his interest or to refuse it. However, she pretends that they are only having a friendly conversation, because - according to Sartre - "le désir cru et nu l'humilierait et lui ferait horreur" (EN 94). Both alternatives present are impossible for her because they would both oblige her to recognize the existence of naked desire. But then suddenly, the man takes hold of her hand, the situation has changed and calls for an immediate decision. She must decide whether to hold his hand or not; but what she does, is to leave her hand in his as if it did not mean anything, as if her hand were pure facticity, just flesh and blood, an in-itself, and doing so she falls into bad faith.

The common "result" of an interpretation of this scene is the posing of the question of how to avoid bad faith in the acting of the woman, which apparently, in this type of interpretation is considered to be "wrong". Posing the question of wrong, in its turn, brings up the question of morals and the question of how to replace the inauthenticity of her acting by authenticity. Yet, in my view the constellation here is more complex because of the asymmetry of the concepts of inauthentic and authentic in relation to nothingness as a structuring principle of existence in Sartre. The common interpretation of the inauthenticity of the woman's action is based on the view that a human being is not just flesh and blood. However, this view at the same time leaves out the perspective that it is because she both *is* and *is not* flesh and blood that she can act here in bad faith. Therefore, we can claim that acting in bad faith is *authentic* action from the "point of view" of the facticity of the human condition, and, posing the asymmetry of these concepts, the facticity here present cannot be excluded as an attribute of action and cannot be considered as the "origin" of inauthenticity.

Hence, acting in bad faith in this example does not mean just acting inauthentically, it means playing with these two aspects of the human condition. The woman *is* not only flesh and blood, but like the waiter she is acting *as if*. By doing so she has refused the existing situation with the choices present for her as a "factual state of things", she has "solved" the impossibility of the situation by adopting a strategy of action which breaks the structure of the situation. Now the "adversary" (the man, or as one could suppose, also an eventual onlooker) has been disarmed - he can no longer straightforwardly operate with the meanings given to the situation - it is not only her hand that "is" just flesh and blood it "is" his too - or as Sartre puts it:

"Elle a désarmé les conduites de son partenaire en les réduisant à n'être que ce qu'elles sont, c'est-à-dire à exister sur le mode de l'en-soi." (EN, 95)

When interpreting this scene in these terms we can trace a conceptual construction which refers to a possibility of creating a space of action, to a possibility of an

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32 In this context see Gisi (1979, p. 100ff.) who interprets the "as if" of the example in terms of playing.

opening in the action situation. Moreover, this possibility of opening the action situation is present "outside" the intentions of the woman because bad faith appears here as a contingent dimension of action - i.e. it is not reflected or planned. Therefore the refusing of the existing alternatives as a process of creation of other alternatives appears in a form or disguise of an image: the woman's acting is related in the first place to her image of herself - "a woman involved into an interesting conversation" - and to the man only through this "image". Nonetheless the alternative construed here as an image is "real": refusing all alternatives except the one of "no comment" can be seen as a commitment to making the situation playable, to keeping it open until all the opportunities of using the strategic possibilities that such an open situation can offer have been used. In other words, it can be seen as a commitment to creating a margin of action in a situation where only the possibility of choosing between given options is present.

This is the political aspect inherent in Sartre's example of bad faith, an aspect which is lost if we consider bad faith "classically" as a form of inauthenticity as opposed to authenticity. This is a portrait of the political agent which illustrates one very specific characteristic of the Sartrean theory: it leaves the reader the freedom of interpretation.

## 8 IN PLACE OF A CONCLUSION

Jean-Paul Sartre's texts in general and the *Critique de la raison dialectique* in particular are notoriously difficult texts to approach and to interpret. In this present study I have sought to overcome this difficulty by construing profiled views of his texts and by focusing on specific, limited questions. I have not sought to offer a general interpretation either of Sartre or of the *Critique* because, in my view, the importance of reading Sartre for political theory lies in the first place in the specific conceptual constructions and views his texts can offer, and only secondarily in a more general reading. In this work I have sought to identify some of these specific features: those that are centered around the agent seen as a political actor. Within this perspective my initial suggestion was that there is present in Sartre a largely overlooked description of the agent which can offer an important view of the present day discussion related either directly to the agent or to themes, such as temporality, through which the portrait of the political agent can be drawn in Sartre.

There have also been forwarded within this perspective a thematization of the different conceptual devices Sartre uses in the construction of the agent and an interpretation of the themes which, even though largely only implicitly present in Sartre, form a central perspective for a re-reading of his texts. The operational concepts, the concept of limit-situation, and the discussed metaphors have been used for construing an entrance into his texts and as a background to the description of the agent and of the action situation. They have proved to be useful landmarks in navigating through the number of different perspectives present in Sartre's work and in delimiting the focus on the most central themes and conceptual tools through which a specific view on the agent can be shown to be an important perspective in the *Critique*. In other words, they have formed the skeleton of the perspective adopted when directing the interpretation to the more detailed questions through which the specificity of the Sartrean view can be established. In addition, they have formed a background for indicating a more general

framework for reading Sartre today, a framework required by the recontextualization necessary for reading through the original context of writing as well as through the original reception of the work.

An approach through a profiled reading using these kind of background constructions aims at bringing forth the possibility of reading the political from a text which does not express itself in terms and discussions explicitly related to political questions or to political theory. The political character of this kind of text is revealed only after the questions posed and themes chosen are conceptualized through the use of specific conceptual tools and through taking a politically oriented perspective of the text. The importance of reading Sartre today, in my view, lies partly here. There are a number of concepts, themes, discussions and theoretical perspectives in Sartre which, once they have been formulated through this kind of interpretation, can be seen in a wider context as well - or Sartre's marginality as a thinker can be relativized. It is evident that the Sartre of the *Critique* is not a mainstream thinker, but the study of his views as carried out in this present work shows that, partly in spite of and partly owing to a vocabulary of his own, his discussions contain views and conceptual constructions which offer original perspectives of questions which preoccupied both his predecessors and his successors. The questions of subjectivity, temporality and production which form the cornerstones of the perspective Sartre takes of the agent and action are examples of this.

My "read Sartre by Sartre" strategy has partly aimed at bringing to the fore Sartre's original contribution to the questions discussed and partly at offering a perspective for a relativization of his highly personal thought. Using the conceptual devices which can be found in Sartre for reading his own text has brought up a set of concepts and themes which offer conceptual tools for discussing related questions. The constructions Sartre uses for painting the portrait of the political agent in an action situation offer a worthwhile comment as well to the Rortyan metaphysician as to his ironist. Even though Sartre, in my view, is closer to the latter than the former, he sketches views which relativize both perspectives in that they problematize both the "agent" and the "world" and refuse to draw dividing lines which would establish the possibility of a discussion in terms such as those Rorty operates with, namely public and private, reality and words, knowledge and poetry (see Rorty 1991). Using Rorty as a figure for taking a view of Sartre underlines Sartre's perhaps most important and widely neglected contribution to the discussion on the human condition - that of the impossibility of grasping it through dualistic terms construing permanencies such as divisions into the "inside" and "outside" discussed above as figures for such divisions.

At a moment when certain theoretical currents posterior to Sartre seem to display signs of having been pushed near to their limits, thinking of a "return" to a setting which displays an alternative view of some of the configurations of these currents may also offer a view of Sartre today. His being largely neglected amongst scholars reading into the post-structuralist currents, has, as I have indicated earlier, depended to quite an extent on a misreading, also at the time, on Sartre's part. Yet, even though the *Critique* in its outspoken framing and in the explicit questions asked by Sartre is a product of the time of its writing, it is relatively easy to pass through this layer of the texts and arrive at the questions

which reach further than those forming the specific setting of the conversation of the context of writing. This is also due to the specific way Sartre construes his concepts. The refusal to draw strict dividing lines finds its counterpart in the openness of the conceptual devices Sartre uses - they can be reinterpreted and reformulated to quite an extent and as such are useful tools also in a context that would differ from the original one.

I have in this work advanced a stretch into this direction. For example the questions of temporality and subjectivity - or interiorizing - exteriorizing - are in this study discussed at a certain distance from their original context and from the "intentions" of Sartre. They are discussed as conceptual constructions which in themselves indicate possibilities of re-thematizations through the conceptual devices Sartre uses. Here again the "read Sartre by Sartre" strategy has proved to be useful as it opens a view for a reading where the conceptual devices can be used within a perspective profiled by the scholar's interests instead of a view where one is guided by the text. This, in my view, forms one of the points where the importance of reading Sartre is highlighted from a political point of view: both Sartre's texts and his concepts lend themselves fairly easily to use within a politically oriented perspective.

In this work the use of the theme of production as a frame for discussing other questions forms an example of this. Through reading the agent in the frame of production and thematized through the perspectives offered by the discussions on temporality and subjectivity a number of points which do not only add to the description of the political agent but which show relevant questions in relation to these themes in general have come up. From a Sartrean perspective both the problem of the subject and that of temporality (or time) have been formulated in such a way that they both show the relevance of these questions to a discussion of the agent and action and indicate the importance of the possibility of the reformulations of the question offered by the conceptual apparatus Sartre uses.

Sartre's attempt to re-thematize the classical concept of subject and his reformulation of and critique of the Heideggerian perspective of time as well as the later development of the theme in relation to the question of history indicate a view both of the discussion of the first half of this century and of that of the second half. His relative position "in between" is a position which offers a distance from which a re-thematization and re-conceptualization becomes possible. This is perhaps most evident in connection with his views on temporality as the moving from "spatial" politics to "temporal" politics becomes thematized in Sartre from a point of view where both are evoked in the specific framework of temporality, temporalization and the interior space of action as dimensional constructions.

It is evident that the conceptual tools Sartre offers cannot be used in many specific fields of political study but the "prolegomena" he wrote was never meant to be a hardware store, nor even one for software with the help of which specific operations of research could be carried out. It was meant to be a starting point for developing such tools and for searching for both parallel and alternative perspectives of questions at hand.

However, the importance of reading Sartre does not only lie in this, but also in the specific concepts he construes and uses. In this study, although limited in



scope, I suggest that amongst the major figures of this century there are but few whose texts can offer such a wide variety of conceptual devices as Sartre's texts do. In the vast gallery of concepts he developed in his numberless pages there are those which can offer a challenge to a Kantian or to a Heideggerian setting as well as to a Merleau-Ponty or Foucault oriented one, be it a question of the politics of the body or of the agent as a temporal, moral and political actor. There are also those which, from a political point of view, challenge the general understanding of Sartre's own concepts be they those of freedom or those of groups. The "philosophical" or the "sociological" reading of Sartre often tends to sidestep the critical potential inherent in many of his concepts. It is my understanding that through a more politically profiled reading this aspect of Sartre's concepts can be found - and used.

This study has aimed at construing an argument where Sartre's concepts are both seen as relevant for discussing the questions brought up and used for creating a perspective for a re-thematization of the discussion. The result shows that both these are possible. A study on Sartre is not necessarily merely a study on a classical figure in terms of an exegesis, but can also be a discussion activating the unduly neglected perspectives in Sartre and showing a possibility of approaching questions which are relevant today, especially where a theoretical political perspective is taken, through his conceptual apparatus. Through Sartre certain questions - such as temporality or morals as discussed in this present work - can be identified as politically relevant questions and discussed in a way which contributes to the understanding of the question.

The portrait of the agent as described in this study is intended to offer views which would contribute to the understanding of the different themes through which it has been discussed - those of temporality, subjectivity, morals in relation to politics, the construction of the agent seen in relation to certain perspectives present in political anthropology as well as that of politics considered in terms of the political aspects of action and of the possibility of politicizing the action situation as well as questions which do not explicitly display themselves as political - in brief those which construe the agent as a political actor. It is also intended to offer a view of the conceptual aspect of political research in the form of a description of the possibilities of both politicizing concepts transferred from other fields of discussion and study than those of politics "proper" and using them within a politically oriented perspective. Finally, it is also intended to indicate thresholds and bridges from which views pointing in different directions can be established and perhaps used for formulating new questions.

This study has been written from a perspective which tries to keep present the multiple aspects of Sartre's thinking that keep the space of interpretation open. It has also been written from a perspective of some marginality leaving largely aside a discussion on related questions in other writers in order to bring out the specificity of the Sartrean approach. I hope I have here succeeded in achieving the position a scholar working on Sartre could feel content with - the one Michael Oakshott describes as follows:

*"The irony of all theorizing is its propensity to generate, not an understanding, but a not-yet-understood."* (1991 (1975), p. 11)

## YHTEENVETO

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on hahmottaa poliittisen toimijan muotokuva Jean-Paul Sartren teoksista, ennen kaikkea hänen vuonna 1960 ilmestyneestä *Critique de la raison dialectique*staan. Työ rakentuu Sartren tekstien tulkinnoista, joissa tarkastellaan eri näkökulmista niitä käsitteellisiä konstruktioita ja operaatioita sekä argumentaatiolinjoja, joiden kautta toimijan käsite on luettavissa erääksi Sartren poliittisen teorian kulmakivistä. Näitä suhteutetaan vakiintuneisiin tulkintoihin, joista pyritään irrottautumaan ja samalla luomaan omaa näkökulmaa Sartre-tutkimukseen.

Keskeiset aihepiirit, joiden kautta tekstejä tulkitaan ovat *Kritiikissä* käsitteellisenä kehikkona käytetty tuottamisen perspektiivi, Sartren varhaisemmassa teoksessa *L'être et le néant*issa (1943) alunperin esitetty ja *Kritiikissä* uudelleentematisoitu ajallisuuden käsite sekä subjektin käsitteen rakentaminen toimijan käsitteeksi. Näitä teemoja tulkitaan kehikossa, jossa Sartren tekstejä luetaan poliittisina teksteinä, jotka kuvaavat toimintatilanteita toimijan näkökulmasta ja pitävät muutosta näkymänä, jota vasten toimintaa tarkastellaan. Tämän tulkintakehikon rakentamisessa on käytetty käsitteellisinä apuvälineinä poliittisen teorian tutkimuksen, poliittisen antropologian ja retoriikan piiristä tuttuja metaforia ja figuuria, teatteria, pelaamista, naamiota ja rajaa. Näiden kautta pyritään paitsi hahmottamaan toimijan muotokuvaa myös luomaan työlle sellaista ilmapiiriä, jossa poliittinen on luettavissa teksteistä - esimerkiksi Sartren näytelmistä - sielläkin, missä se ei sellaisena ensisijaisesti näyttäyty.

Työssä on käytetty taustafiguurina rajatilanteen käsitettä, joka toimii yhteisenä nimittäjänä niille Sartren konstruktioille, joissa poliittinen tematisoidaan. Rajatilanne voidaan ymmärtää ideaalityypiseksi toimintatilanteeksi, "puhtaaksi" malliksi tilanteesta, josta toiminnan poliittinen aspekti on tavoitettavissa. Rajatilanne osoitetaan kuitenkin myös konstruktioiksi, jonka kautta voidaan tulkita poliittista Sartren teksteistä myöskin laajemmalti kuin yksinomaan toimintatilanteen käsitteen osalta. Sen kautta tarkasteltuna "raja", "mahdoton" ja "muutos" tematisoituvat perspektiiveiksi, joiden läsnäolo Sartren käsitteellisissä konstruktioissa viittaa poliittisuuden läsnäoloon rajalla pelaamisen mahdollisuuden kautta ja mahdollistaa ajallisuuden, sisäisyyden, ulkoisuuden ja subjektiivisuuden käsitteiden poliittisen lukemisen.

Tuottamista *Kritiikin* käsitteellisenä kehikkona on tulkittu näkökulmasta, jossa toimija ymmärretään tuotettuna tuottajana. Tämä tulkinta kontrastoidaan erityisesti *Kritiikkiä* hieman varhaisemman tekstin (*Réponse à Claude Lefort*) kautta tuotteen tuottamisen näkökulman kanssa ja asetelmasta rakennetaan Sartrelle ominainen toimijan perspektiivi, joka korostaa toimijan ja toiminnan mitä keskeisintä merkitystä hänen tuotannossaan. Asetelmaa tulkitaan edelleen näkökulmasta, jossa käytetään taustana konstruktivistista sävyä, joka välittyy Sartren kuvauksista ja joka toimii vasta-asetelmana sekä luonnollisen että tuotetun tuotteenkäsitteiden osalta. Tuottamisen teemaa tarkastellaan myös sekä *Kritiikissä*

käytetyn tuottamiseen liittyvän kahden rinnakkaisen rekisterin käyttöä osoittavan sanaston että "mahdottomuutta" tematisoivien käsitteiden kautta.

Sartren kuvaama toimija rakentuu ajallisuuden ulottuvuuksissa, ajallisessa toimintatilanteessa ja tämän työn näkökulmasta aika tematisoituu Sartrella toiminnan aikana. Näitä tarkastellaan ensisijaisesti sellaisten käsittekonstruktioiden kautta, jotka osoittavat Sartren tulevaisuus-käsitteen rajatilanteeksi, jonka kautta ajallisuus nähdään moniulotteisena toimintakenttänä vastakohtana ajan lineaarisuudelle. Ajallisuuden teemaa käsitellään myös Sartren historiakäsityksen, sen ongelmien sekä hänen strukturalisteihin kohdistamansa kritiikin osalta.

Ulkoisuuden ja sisäisyyden käsitteet tulkitaan *Kritiikistä* niiksi teemoiksi, joiden muodostamaa taustaa vasten toimijaa voidaan kuvata konstruktiona, joka rakentuu "sisätilassa" ulkoisuutta vasten. Työssä osoitetaan, että Sartrelle "sisätila", sisäisyys, muodostaa välttämättömän ehdon sille, että toiminta on toimintaa ja että tätä "sisätilaa" ei voi ymmärtää paikaksi, johon toimija olisi sijoitettu. Tämän sijasta se on nähtävä sisäisyyden ja ulkoisuuden kohtaamisena ja niiden rajalla pelaamisena eri ajallisia perspektiivejä edustavissa toiminnan organisoitumisen tavoissa.

Tähän asetelmaan päästään tulkitsemalla *Kritiikin* keskeisiä figuureja, niukkuutta, tarvetta, intressiä ja Konetta käsitteellisinä apuvälineinä "sisätilan" rakentamiselle. Tämän lisäksi kyseistä asetelmaa kehitetään edelleen Sartren vuonna 1961 Roomassa pitämän luennon pohjalta koskemaan subjektiviteetin käsitettä, joka tarkoittaa "sisätila"/sisäisyys - ulkoisuus -tematiikkaa toimijan käsitteen ymmärtämisen eräänä keskeisenä asetelmana.

Ajallisuuden, tuottamisen ja sisäisyys - ulkoisuus -teemojen taustaa vasten työssä tarkastellaan toimijan toimintastrategioita ja niitä "poliittisia työkaluja", jotka Sartre kuvauksissaan toimijalle osoittaa. Tarkentaviksi näkökulmiksi toimijaan otetaan identiteetin ja muutoksen sekä alkuperän ja alun käsitteet, jotka muodostavat taustan faktisuuden ja toiseuden tulkitsemiselle. Näiden kautta toimija nähdään strategina, joka poliittiseen maailmaan heitettynä pelaa käytettävissä olevin keinoin peliä, jossa viimeistä korttia ei ole koskaan pelattu.

Lisäksi työssä osoitetaan, että tässä poliittisessa maailmassa moraalit on Sartrelle eräs merkittävä poliittisen toiminnan strategia eikä, kuten yleensä esitetään, autenttiseen toimintaan pyrkimistä. Hänen keskeisimmät moraalit koskevat käsitteensä tulkitaan tätä taustaa vasten käsitteiksi, joita voidaan käyttää paitsi luettaessa esiin poliittista Sartren teksteistä myös tarkasteltaessa toimijaa mahdottoman pelaajana. Poliittisen toimijan muotokuva kulminoituu kuvaukseen moraalin poliittisesta ulottuvuudesta Sartrella kuvauksessa naisesta kahvilassa toimintatilanteen strategisena pelaajana ja politisoijana.

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## Appendix

Table of Page Correspondences between the 1960 and 1985 Editions of *Critique de la raison dialectique*

1960	1985	1960	1985	1960	1985
9	13	235	276	473	559
15	19	240	282	479	566
20	25	245	288	485	574
28	35	251	295	490	579
30	37	255	300	495	586
33	40	261	307	502	593
44	53	266	312	506	599
60	72	272	320	512	606
63	76	279	329	521	617
67	81	283	333	530	628
80	96	286	337	534	631
83	99	295	348	540	638
94	113	301	355	547	647
98	117	306	361	553	654
103	124	308	363	557	655
115	135	314	372	562	664
124	146	324	383	571	675
132	155	328	388	577	682
140	165	335	396	588	695
143	168	344	406	594	703
148	174	351	415	605	715
152	179	357	424	617	730
156	184	362	429	624	738
161	190	369	437	632	747
165	193	381	449	637	753
168	197	385	454	643	761
170	199	390	460	649	768
178	208	397	468	654	774
182	212	409	483	660	781
185	216	415	490	668	791
187	219	419	495	674	798
190	222	428	505	680	805
195	228	433	511	689	815
200	234	438	518	694	822
205	240	440	520	710	840
208	244	446	527	715	846
214	251	450	531	723	856
221	259	453	535	730	865
225	264	461	544	742	879
231	271	467	551	753	892