

B/N = attempt to relate  
reality & creation

His inability to move from his forceful synthesis

How can we know what is real? (Sartre)

- 1) overcoming discontinuity
- 2) integral to imagination
- 3) with essential

HISTORY and EXISTENTIALISM IN SARTRE, by Leonard Krieger  
from THE CRITICAL SPIRIT.

(p. 239): Existentialism poses both subjective and objective problems for history. As subjects, existentialists espouse positions that are often antithetical to the historical dimension; as objects, they have exhibited ideas and activities that are often opaque to historical knowledge. In Sartre both kinds of problems are joined, and, in what follows, through him a joint solution will be essayed.

But @ as...  
Imaginary

(p. 247): The imaginary thus represents at each moment the implicit meaning of the real, that is, the way in which consciousness grasps reality as a whole in order to surpass it.<sup>18</sup> (Sartre, Psychology of Imagination, p. 272)

Just as real

Generalization of aesthetic imagination's to inherent contradiction

(p. 249) His inability to demonstrate the movement from historical perception to historical synthesis, moreover, was irremediable so long as he associated historical knowledge with the aesthetic imagination. For he generalized this incompatibility between what the real analogue is and what it represents into an "inherent contradiction" and "ambiguity" of all images.<sup>24</sup> (Ibid., pp. 169-71)

A. G. G. G.

Human reality

(p. 250) The underground connections which he made, willy-nilly, between reality and the aesthetic imagination.<sup>25</sup> (On Sartre's early political interests, see Simone de Beauvoir, Memoirs, p. 344) For since the imaginative consciousness must grasp reality in order to deny it, we are left with the apparent paradox that what Sartre calls "human reality" is constituted by the faculty that constitutes the unreal. Since, moreover the imaginary is for Sartre "a fact" and he confers on it the status of existence - "unreal existence" - an unstated generic notion of being underlies this two-dimensional existence.<sup>26</sup> (Sartre, Psychology of Imagination, pp. 200, 271-2... It was to resolve the general problem of relating reality and creation that he rounded out his first stage with the writing of *L'Être et le Néant*; in which he articulated the doctrine of history appropriate to this first stage.

B. G. G. G.

Imaginary as the unreal

(p. 251) He overcame, in *L'Être et le Néant*, the problem of discontinuity and, in the service of this measure of integration, established the elemental basis for history. But he remained, in this work, within the framework of individuality. It was the internal drive to overcome this limitation upon unity that pushed him finally into the second stage of his thought in search that history became central to him.

Discontinuity & individuality

And so *L'Être et le Néant* becomes, for us, the pivotal work. Not that there is much in it about what we would recognize as history: there is, indeed, very little. It concludes, as I have indicated, the phase of Sartre's philosophy it is crucial for the revelation of the inescapable limits and problems of that thought - limits and problems which created intellectual needs that history was later brought in to fill. Moreover, since Sartre has never departed from the main foundations of his thought,

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In search of history

C. G. G. G.

Key

II New m/p/h On your imagining  
 & even knowing  
 (2) being both in past  
 & "actualized"  
 (3) Past - but of  
 essence of ENOZA  
 re. existence of PROCESS, i.e. may be  
 illuminated, i.e. Meaning

(p. 251 continued) Sartre also set forth the assumptions which molded the subsequent form of his historical doctrine.

Meaning  
 is Contingency  
 (p. 252)

(1) Rel. Ex. to  
 to Consciousness

Rel.  
 of Ex. to  
 Consciousness

The Theme is the relationship of existence and consciousness for the particular kind of being which Sartre calls "human reality". These two sub-types of being manifest a radical rift in the heart of human being as such. This rift manifests itself in the striving of consciousness to create a ground, a reason for being, and to rejoin existence in a (unitary) or, in Sartre's term, "totalized" being whose contingency would now be replaced by meaning. . . . . Since this consciousness emerges from existence and seeks to return to synthesis with existence, its primary function is not imagining nor even knowing - but doing. Sartre's theme was thus the immanent unity of being, and he articulated it by turning existence into a process.

Meaning  
 is Contingency  
 is not  
 but doing

Process of  
 Totalizing  
 being  
 doing

(p. 253) Consciousness must be both in its own past - since the past is by definition the substance of what anything is - and at the same time it must deny, negate, "annihilate" this very past, for this is consciousness' very reason for being. The past must be both continuous with the present - 'the origin and springboard of all my actions' - and ruptured from it. The past must both supply to the future the terms in which possibilities are projected and choices made and be "illuminated" - that is (p. 254) offered its "meaning" - by the future, since it is in the light of its possibilities and choices that consciousness determines what the past is. In Sartre's trenchant expression of the paradox, "All my past is there, pressing urgent, imperious, but its meanings and orders which it gives me I choose by the very project of my end."

Reason for  
 Being  
 Disintegrating  
 process  
 of synthesis

(p. 258) Everything happens as if the world, man, and man-in-the-world succeeded in realizing only a missing God. Everything happens therefore as if existence and consciousness were presented in a state of disintegration in relation to an ideal synthesis. 50 (Ibid, pp. 90, 623) ... If history could be recognized, it could exercise a (p. 259) reverse effect as the medium for the realization of both past and society by internally relating them. There was the need and here was the possibility that cradled Sartre's growth. - Since Sartre had reached the limits of his own resources in Being and Nothingness he obviously could not grow from within.

Ground  
 for  
 Being  
 as  
 medium  
 of reality  
 past  
 &  
 Society

1960 III Critique  
 of Historical  
 Reason

(p. 265) This Second stage of Sartre's, philosophically grounded in his massive Critique de la raison dialectique of 1960, is thus not so much Marxist as historicist, and the work might well have been titled the Critique of Historical Reason that so many philosophers since Kant have been tempted to write. He set as his aim: "to test, criticize and ground.."

III is "Man-in-the-world"  
 State of DISINTEGRATION  
 On the other hand, II History

Authentic history

Instruments of thought

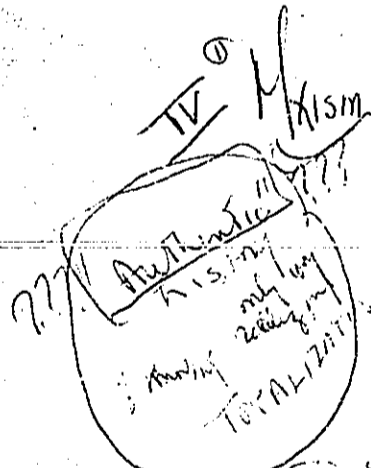
Are they grounded? Did they exist?

Authentic history?

(p. 265) the instruments of thought by which history is thought insofar as they are also the practical instruments by which it is made.<sup>73</sup> (Ibid. p. 135) Marxism, for Sartre, does indeed reveal the general process through which men make a unity of human reality through history, but for him, too, Marxists do not know how the process works, and more important, contemporary Marxists have lost the sense of the movement, the dialectic, the real history in the process. The role of existentialism within Marxism then, according to Sartre, is precisely to restore authentic history to it as the only means of knowing and ultimately realizing the "totalization" that is history.<sup>74</sup> (Ibid. pp. 28-59, 152)

Authentic history?

(p. 266) "Our revisionist colleagues are having great sport using the heterogeneity of grass-roots history to dismantle every general truth in sight. All these positions deny a synthetic role for history, either by assuming a pre-existing structure of general truths to be merely particularized in history or by rejecting the relevance of general truths to the historical enterprise. But if Sartre is an even approximately faithful expression of contemporary culture, then these relationships and, with them, the familiar notion of history's function, are anachronisms. If neither logic, nor science, nor art any longer furnish general truths pertinent to human conduct, if their meanings are also utterly fragmented, then history must use the patterns of synchronization and succession of human actions in the common medium of time to link their particular fragments and to construct whatever general truths about man we must have."



IV Marxism  
I need a general history of TOTALIZATION  
BUT IF SO  
Authentic history

V Revisionism, anachronism, deny the relevance of general truths

BUT IF SO  
neither science nor art

Rejecting relevance  
These are pre-conditions for ANACHRONISMS  
LIFE MEANINGS FRAGMENTED  
MUST

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