The Existentialist Rediscovery of Hegel and Marx

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I

INTRODUCTION

The relation between phenomenology of the Brentano-Husserl type and existential philosophy of the Kierkegaard-Hegel type is often held to be intimate and fruitful. Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty attempted to combine, and sometimes claimed to have succeeded in combining, the two tendencies. But the union was never perfect: Sartre remained a "phenomenologizing existentialist," Merleau-Ponty an "existentializing phenomenologist." From a sufficiently Olympian perspective, phenomenology and existential philosophy at mid-twentieth century often appear to support each other—in Peirce's

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1. From the beginning—in his essay "The Transcendence of the Ego," written in 1934 and published in 1936—Sartre was a "revisionist" Husserlian, rejecting the substantial self of Husserl's "egology" and the semi-Platonic essences of his Wesensschau. But Natanson overstates the contrast between Sartre and Husserl when he insists that Sartre's method "deserves the name 'phenomenological' only in so far as Hegel's phenomenology is intended, . . . it is quasi-phenomenological if we are referring to Husserl's variety of phenomenology" (Maurice Natanson, A Critique of Jean-Paul Sartre's Ontology [Lincoln, Neb.: 1951], p. 74; compare also p. 99). Mrs. Warnock seems to me to put the matter more equably, if more vaguely, when she says simply that "Sartre owes far more to Hegel than to Husserl" (Mary Warnock, The Philosophy of Sartre [London: 1965], p. 70).
earthly phrase—“like two drunken sailors,” i.e., sincerely and warmly, but ineffectively.

The relationship between the two remains delicate and controversial. I shall not attempt to throw fresh light on it, except incidentally. My concern is mainly with existential philosophy of the Sartrean type. I shall refer less often to “phenomenology” than to “the Phenomenology,” meaning, of course, Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes—Phenomenology of Mind* or *Spirit*—of 1807. I focus upon Sartre rather than upon Heidegger or Jaspers, because it was Sartre (and to a lesser extent Merleau-Ponty) who brought Hegel and early Marx into the mainstream of twentieth-century existentialism.

**II**

**HEGEL REDISCOVERED**

The “rediscovery” of Hegel and Marx to which my title refers took place in Paris during the 1930’s and 1940’s. The French existentialists were highly selective in their appropriation of Hegelian and Marxist thought; indeed, their rediscovery verged on “intellectual re-creation,” if not *creatio ex nihilo intellectualis*! In Sartre, for example, stress fell on specific themes drawn from specific works of specific periods in both Hegel and Marx. Sartre took over not only ideas that were there to be taken, but also at least a few ideas that were not there, or at least were not intended by their authors to be taken in the way that Sartre took them.

With minor exceptions, Hegel, for Sartre, meant *early Hegel* (through 1807) and above all the *Phenomenology*. The *Phenomenology* in turn meant two major themes: (a) the struggle for recognition among selves, and the master-slave dialectic; (b) alienation, including self-alienation; and two minor themes: (c) the “unhappy consciousness” and (d) “the death of God.”

I shall sketch the historical background of (1) the rediscovery of Hegel, (2) the rediscovery of the *Phenomenology*, and (3) the rediscovery of the two major and two minor themes.

1. Until early in the twentieth century Hegel’s thought was
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doubly eclipsed: in the middle of the nineteenth century by French positivism and toward the end of that century by neo-Kantianism and, to a lesser extent, the half-positivist, half-Kantian “empiriocriticism” of Mach and Avenarius. The movement “back to Kant” of the 1880’s and 1890’s was intended as a short-circuiting of Hegel himself as well as of post- and anti-Hegelian positivism.

The “rediscovery” of Hegel coincided with the discovery and publication of the long-lost early works. These works were quoted and discussed at length in Dilthey’s commentary of 1905, and mentioned in Croce’s more general and critical commentary of 1906 (published on the seventy-fifth anniversary of Hegel’s death). The works themselves were published by Nohl in 1907 under the title Theologische Jugendschriften (Early Theological Writings). The title is misleading because many of the early works are nontheological, and some of them are antitheological.

However, this Hegel revival was not yet a rediscovery of the Phenomenology, even though the early works pointed toward it.

2. In both the mid-nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the Phenomenology was generally eclipsed by Hegel’s later works—especially the Science of Logic and the Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences. The Phenomenology was scarcely mentioned by serious commentators. (It had been taken very seriously indeed by the young Marx and by such neo-Hegelians as Cieszkowski, but Marx’s early works remained unpublished, and Cieszkowski was virtually unknown.) A partial exception

2. Wilhelm Dilthey, Die Jugendschichte Hegels (Berlin: 1905); reprinted in Dilthey, Gesammelte Schriften, Vol. IV (Leipzig and Berlin: 1921). Dilthey does not discuss the Phenomenology.


was provided by the Russians, and this—curiously enough—may have a bearing on the French existentialist rediscovery of the *Phenomenology*. Alexander Herzen, in 1842, wrote of it (in a private letter not published until much later):

Toward the end of the book it is as though you were plunging into the sea: profundity, transparency, the breath of *Geist* bears you along . . . *lasciate ogni speranza*—the shores disappear; salvation resides only in your own breast. And then a voice is heard: *Quid timeas? Caesarem vehis*. Fear dissolves, the shore appears; the fair leaves of fantasy are stripped away, but the sap-filled fruits of reality [deistvitelnost = *Wirklichkeit*] remain. The mermaids have vanished, but a full-breasted maiden waits for you. . . . Such was my impression. I read to the end with heart pounding, with a kind of solemnity. Hegel is Homer and Shakespeare together, and that is why respectable people find his Anglo-Greek dialect incomprehensible.5

Similarly appreciative if less lyrical comments were made by the Russian Slavophiles, especially Ivan Kireyevsky and Alexis Khomyakov, during the late 1840's and early 1850's. By the 1850's Herzen himself was calling the Hegelian dialectic (as exhibited in the *Phenomenology*) an "algebra of revolution."6 In 1892, in a substantial and sympathetic article on Hegel in the standard Russian encyclopedia of the period, Vladimir Solovyov referred to the *Phenomenology* as Hegel's "best work."7 One of the first translations of the *Phenomenology* into a foreign language was the Russian version edited by Radlov in 1913. (Baillie's English translation had appeared in 1910.) Another and much better Russian version, by Gustav Shpet, was published posthumously in Moscow in 1959 as Volume IV of Hegel's *Sochineniya*. It is one of the best translations to date in any language.

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The first serious twentieth-century European study devoted mainly to Hegel's *Phenomenology* was Jean Wahl's *Le Malheur de la conscience dans la philosophie de Hegel* (Paris, 1929). Here again there appears to be an underground link with non-French sources. Josiah Royce's posthumous *Lectures on Modern Idealism* (edited by his student, Jacob Loewenberg) had appeared in 1919 and included three chapters—over seventy-five pages—on the *Phenomenology* (pp. 136–212). Wahl, unlike most French philosophers of the interwar period, knew English well, had studied Royce, and had published a book on English and American philosophy in 1920. Wahl's 1929 study of the "unhappy consciousness" lists Royce's *Lectures on Modern Idealism* in the bibliography (p. 202), quotes Royce twice, and refers to Roycean interpretations of Hegel several times.

Of course by 1929 Wahl had also read Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (1927). But it should be emphasized that Hegel's *Phenomenology* is scarcely mentioned in Heidegger's long book. To be precise, it is cited twice; both references are to the final chapter, on "Absolute Knowledge," and have to do with Hegel's views of time. And these references are overshadowed in Heidegger's work by numerous references to Hegel's *Logic* and *Encyclopedia*.

Another stimulus to interest in Hegel generally and the *Phenomenology* in particular, for Sartre and Merleau-Ponty as well as for Kojève himself, was the special Hegel centennial issue of the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* published in 1931. It was a large issue (233 pages) and an impressive one, with contributions by Croce, Nicolai Hartmann, and Charles Andler, among others. Andler's article, which is devoted to

9. The quotations appear on pp. 34, n.1, and 73, the references on pp. 74, n. 2; 96, n. 2; 113, n. 2; 152, n. 1. Royce's *Spirit of Modern Philosophy* (1892), pp. 190–227 of which are devoted to Hegel, is also listed in Wahl's bibliography.
the *Phenomenology*, discusses the importance of "the negative" but makes no reference to alienation, the master-slave dialectic, or the unhappy consciousness.

However, Nicolai Hartmann's article, although it refers to the *Phenomenology* only in passing, makes two significant points about it and a further relevant point about the *Logic*. First, Hartmann calls the *Phenomenology* Hegel's "first masterpiece" and says that it remains "a fundamental work"; second, he speaks of the "famous dialectic of master and servant" and devotes an extended passage to explicating it. Presumably he called this dialectic "famous" or "well-known" in 1931—before the publication of Marx's Paris Manuscripts of 1844—on the basis of three serious earlier discussions: (a) that of Jean Wahl (1929), not referred to by Hartmann himself; (b) that of Richard Kroner, in Volume II of *Von Kant bis Hegel* (1924), which Hartmann refers to in the Preface to (c) Volume II of his own book, *Die Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus*, 1929, a long section of which (ch. 2: pp. 295–362) is devoted to the *Phenomenology*. This chapter includes several pages on the struggle for recognition among selves and the master-slave dia-


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lectic (pp. 332-35). The exposition is lucid and sympathetic; there are many quotations from Hegel's text. Hartmann makes clear his admiration for the master-slave dialectic, calling it "one of the finest things in the Phenomenology," concise and "plastic" in form, highly significant in content. He finds it the best example in Hegel of a dialectic that inheres in the subject matter itself. Hartmann in 1929 also anticipated Kojève's lectures of 1933-39—and Marx's rediscovered Paris Manuscripts to be published in 1932—when he noted the "revolutionizing principle" in the master-slave relation, pointing out that the slave's work affects not only the thing worked on but the man who does the working, that the slave cannot shape (bilden) things without shaping himself. "This," Hartmann concludes, "may be regarded as the universal foundation for a philosophy of work."  

Finally, to round out the possible contribution that Nicolai Hartmann may have made to the existentialist rediscovery of Hegel, we note that he—or rather his French translator—uses the exact phrase that Sartre was to adopt as the title of his major philosophical work: he refers to the dialectic of "L'Être et le Néant" at the beginning of Hegel's Logic.  

Alexandre Kojève was not only Russian-born; he had written a dissertation on Solovyov, stressing the latter's philosophy of history, a study which would surely have brought him into contact with Hegel in general and the Phenomenology in particular. Kojève was the first scholar in France to comment on the Phenomenology in detail—in a suggestive, often brilliant, sometimes eccentric, even perverse, study that has not yet found an equal in any language. This commentary was given to the public in lectures at the École des Hautes Études in Paris annually between 1933 and 1939 and distributed in mimeographed form during those years, although not published until 1947. Sartre

16. Ibid., p. 335.
17. Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, XXXVIII (1931), 311.
and Merleau-Ponty attended some of Kojève’s lectures\(^1\) and doubtless read the mimeographed versions of those that they did not attend. It seems safe to assume that these lectures were the main direct source for the impact of Hegel’s *Phenomenology* upon French existentialist thinkers during the 1930’s. Kojève, in turn, was stimulated by Russian, German, and French sources. The Russian sources were his study of Solovyov and perhaps the Russian translation of the *Phenomenology*;\(^2\) the German sources were doubtless those mentioned above—the commentaries of Nicolai Hartmann and, perhaps, Richard Kroner; the French sources included Jean Wahl’s 1929 study of the unhappy consciousness and perhaps also Andler’s 1931 article on the *Phenomenology* in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*.

During the late 1930’s Jean Hyppolite, under Kojève’s influence, began to publish articles on Hegel and the *Phenomenology*. His translation of the latter appeared in two volumes in 1939 and 1941; his detailed commentary followed in 1946.\(^3\) Hyppolite’s commentary, which remains the most careful and useful in any language, draws freely on both Wahl and Kojève and is, in a broad sense, “existentialist” in its orientation.


\(^{2}\) Another possible Russian stimulus to Kojève’s interest in Hegel is I. A. Ilyin’s *Filosofiya Gegelya, kak ucheniye o konkretnosti Boga i cheloveka* [Hegel’s Philosophy as a Theory of the Concreteness of God and Man] (2 vols.; Moscow: 1918). Abridged German translation: Iwan Iljin, *Die Philosophie Hegels als kontemplative Gotteslehre* (Bern: 1916).

\(^{3}\) Jean Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure de la Phénoméologie de l’Esprit de Hegel* (Paris: 1946). The need for a full-scale scholarly commentary on the *Phenomenology* was noted by Georg Lasson as early as 1907, in the preface to his centennial edition: ‘Gewiss ist ein ausführlicher Kommentar zur Phänomenologie ein wissenschaftliches Bedürfnis’ (G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Jubiläumsausgabe [Leipzig: 1907], p. xv). In 1924 Richard Kroner repeated the point with greater emphasis: “Ein Kommentar zur Phänomenologie ist eine heute dringend geforderte Aufgabe, die . . . nur in einem selbständigen Buche gelöst werden kann” (*Von Kant bis Hegel* [Tübingen: 1924], II, 382n). Kojève and Hyppolite between them have supplied a more useful and comprehensive commentary than any of the numerous German scholars who have written on Hegel’s philosophy.
3. As we have already noted, Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit* makes no reference to the master-slave dialectic, to alienation (in Hegel), to the unhappy consciousness, or to the “death of God.”

It seems fair to assume that Sartre and Merleau-Ponty derived their interest in these themes from other sources. The sources, in fact, are fairly obvious: (a) Wahl’s 1929 study; (b) Kojève’s lectures of 1933–39; (c) the rediscovery of Hegel by such Marxists as Lukács (especially in his controversial and subsequently disavowed work, *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*, 1923); (d) Sartre’s and Merleau-Ponty’s direct study of Marx’s 1844 *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*—the “Dead Sea Scrolls of Marxism,” as Lewis Feuer has called them. Mention of these last two sources brings us to the existentialist rediscovery of Marx.

### III

**YOUNG MARX REDISCOVERED**

In the case of Marx there was no need, as there had been with Hegel, for near-total rediscovery. All of Marx’s works from the *Manifesto* of 1848 on had been readily available since their publication and widely influential at least since the 1880’s. Most of Marx’s mature works had been translated into French, although thinkers like Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, to say nothing of Wahl, Hyppolite, and Kojève, did not need translations, being entirely at home in German. The “mature” Marx of 1848–83, like the “mature” Engels of 1848–95, had no appeal for existentialists in either Germany or France.  

21. Wahl discusses the theme of “the death of God” at some length, with reference to Hegel rather than Nietzsche. The first two chapters in Pt. II of his book are entitled, respectively, “La mort de Dieu” and “La double signification de la mort de Dieu” (*Le Malheur de la conscience*, pp. 69–91).

22. In his postexistentialist treatise of 1960, *Critique de la raison dialectique*, Sartre enthusiastically appropriates both Engels and “mature” Marx, stopping short only of the Engelsian universalization of the dialectic to include all of (nonhuman and nonhistorical) nature. Here, as Mrs. Warnock remarks, “it is the fully grown Marx-Engels doctrine of dialectical materialism which has taken over—the very doctrine which, in 1946 [i.e., in the essay, “Materialism and Revolution”] Sartre claimed to find actually [self-] contradictory” (*op. cit.*, p. 156; compare p. 164).
makes no reference at all to Marx. It is doubtful that any existentialist work published before 1932 showed sympathy for, or interest in, Marx's thought. The earliest works to show such sympathy are from the pen of another Paris-based Russian émigré—Nicolas Berdyaev, who as a young man in Kiev and St. Petersburg had flirted briefly with a "Kantian" revision of Marxism and who later, in works published in Russian in Paris during the 1930's and quickly translated into the major Western languages, including French, embraced the young Marx as a congenial critic of both alienation and objectification. (On the second point, Berdyaev, like Sartre later, misinterpreted Marx, who in fact attacked alienation but defended objectification [Vergegenständlichung].)

During the years of the Nazi occupation of Paris, and perhaps earlier, Sartre turned to a serious study of Marx's Paris Manuscripts of 1844.\(^1\) He was drawn to them for a variety of reasons: by a general sympathy with Communism, hence with Marxism; by the Hegelian "young-Marx" Marxism of Kojève's lectures; possibly by some of Berdyaev's writings of the 1930's; probably by his study of early Lukács, which in turn was stimulated by Lukács' Rumanian-born disciple, Lucien Goldmann, who had settled in Paris and whom Sartre knew well. Sartre was responsive to the echoes of Hegel's *Phenomenology* in the young Marx, especially the stress on the master-slave dialectic (reformulated by Marx as the dialectic of non-worker and worker) and the theory of alienation and self-alienation. In turn, Sartre was led by his study of Marx (and by Lukács and Kojève) to look more closely and "existentially" at Hegel's own formulations of these themes.

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23. Sartre has told us something about his early encounters with Marx's writings, especially the *German Ideology* and *Capital*. Since he took them as theoretical statements rather than incentives to revolutionary *praxis*, he claims to have missed their main point. Compare *Critique de la raison dialectique* (Paris: 1960), pp. 22f. Partial English translation by Hazel Barnes: *Search for a Method* (New York: 1963), pp. 17f. (Hereafter references to the *Critique* will be given as CRD with page number.)
I suppose that everyone is entitled to his own Hegel and his own Marx. But Sartre’s philosophical appropriation and “possession” of both Marx and Hegel are quite extraordinary. Following the lead of Lukács, he Hegelianizes Marx (interestingly enough, Lukács had done this in 1923, nine years before the Paris Manuscripts were published—although there have been rumors that he had access to some of them prior to their publication). Following the lead of Kojève, he Marxianizes Hegel, although in *Being and Nothingness* (1943) he does this less drastically and systematically than Kojève. What Sartre does to both Marx and Hegel, and to his own “vintage” existentialism (the vintage year being 1943), in the huge and difficult first volume of his *Critique de la raison dialectique* (1960) is a question to which I shall recur briefly in Section VI.

*Being and Nothingness*, as Marcuse has said, “is in large parts [sic] a restatement of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Mind* and Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit*.” Being and Nothingness is closer to the *Phenomenology* than to *Being and Time*. The two books are of about the same length; both aim at unusual comprehensiveness; both include much material of a kind not usually found in philosophical works of their respective periods. Perhaps most striking is the inclusion in both of historical as well as literary materials: Sartre follows Hegel in discussing the French Revolution of 1789 and in making several excursions into ancient history. He rivals Hegel in the number of writers whom he discusses at some length.


25. By a curious coincidence, Heidegger and Sartre were exactly the same age (thirty-eight) when they published their respective *opera magna*. Hegel was a year younger when he published the *Phenomenology*.

26. The *Phenomenology* includes discussions—sometimes without explicit identification of the author in question—of Homer, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Rousseau, Diderot, Goethe, and Schiller; *Being and Nothingness*
Being and Nothingness, like the Phenomenology, sets forth "forms or shapes of human consciousness" (Gestalten des Bewusstseins). Indeed one might consider Sartre's detailed analysis of mauvaise foi—bad faith or self-and-other deception—as an attempt to add a new "form of consciousness" to the Hegelian galaxy. The same might be said of the Sartrean treatment of sadism in interpersonal relations—a theme not touched upon by Hegel. In Being and Nothingness, as in the Phenomenology, such Gestalten as mauvaise foi, "the unhappy consciousness," (das unglückliche Bewusstsein), and "spirit alienated from itself" (der sich entfremdete Geist) are personified, acquiring almost mythological status. In both cases the result is impressive. "Sartre's great inexact equations," as Iris Murdoch has put it, "like those of his master Hegel, inspire us to reflect."  

In Being and Nothingness Sartre's basic categories are Hegelian; they are taken mainly from the Phenomenology, with important supplementation from the Logic: for-itself and in-itself, includes discussions of Sophocles, Rousseau, Balzac, Flaubert, Dostoyevsky, Kafka, Gide, and Faulkner. This common concern with literary expression of "forms of consciousness" is related to the assumption, noted by Wahl (with special, but not exclusive, reference to stoicism, skepticism, and the unhappy consciousness): "... ce que Hegel considère dans la Phénoménologie, ce ne sont pas des philosophies mais des façons de vivre; ou plutôt les deux ne sont pas séparés" (Wahl, op. cit., p. 7). But the Phenomenology is much more than cultural history plus philosophical anthropology. It also deals—as does Heidegger's Sein und Zeit—with the traditional problems of being, certainty, truth, law, the order of nature, etc., none of which seems to have interested Sartre in 1943. Compare the comments by William Barrett in Irrational Man (New York: 1958), pp. 221f.  

27. Klaus Hartmann has suggested that Sartrean mauvaise foi may be derived from that "shape of consciousness" which Hegel in the Phenomenology calls Verstellung (dissemblance), as well as from the Kierkegaardian concept of dread. (Compare K. Hartmann, op. cit., p. 55.)  
28. Ibid., pp. 55f.  
consciousness and self-consciousness, being and nothingness. Sartre’s fundamental themes—negation as an ontological factor and the negativity of consciousness—are entirely Hegelian.

However, the use to which Sartre puts his Hegelian categories is radically un- and even anti-Hegelian. His is a truncated dialectic, a dialectic without synthesis, without reconciliation, oddly reminiscent in this respect of the nihilistic dialectic of Bakunin and Lenin. For Hegel, the in-itself and the for-itself are *abstrakte Momente*, that is, one-sided and partial phases.

30. Each of Sartre’s key philosophical terms corresponds to a Hegelian term. The terminological transposition of Hegel from German into French had been substantially completed—by Wahl, Kojève, and Hyppolite—when Sartre began his *magnum opus*. Here is a partial list: für sich = pour-soi; Fürsichsein = être-pour-soi; an sich = en-soi; Ansichsein = être-en-soi; an-und-für sich = en-soi-pour-soi; An-und-fürsichsein = être-en-soi-pour-soi; Bewusstsein = conscience (occasionally Gewissen = conscience—since the notoriously ambiguous French term conscience means both “consciousness” and “conscience”); Selbstbewusstsein = conscience (de) soi (the parenthetical “de” in Sartre’s words, “ne répondu qu’à une contrainte grammaticale” [*L’Être et le Néant* (Paris: 1943), p. 20; hereafter *EN*]; for the remaining 700 pages of the book, Sartre follows this grammatically unorthodox usage); das Andere = l’autre; der Andere = autrui; aufheben = supprimer et sublimer; Aufhebung = suppression et sublimation; Sein = l’être; das Nichts = le néant. Sartre occasionally introduces German terms directly into his French text, e.g., Husserl’s Abschattung, Hegel’s selbständig, unselbständig, Selbständigkeit, and Unselbständigkeit. As Joseph Fell has pointed out, Sartre follows Hegel in using conscience (Bewusstsein) and conscience (de) soi (Selbstbewusstsein) to designate not states but activities and even agents—as in the “struggle of self-consciousness.” Compare Joseph P. Fell, *II, Emotion in the Thought of Sartre* (New York: 1965), p. 156. Of course, Sartre’s exotic term ek-stase, used in the special sense of “a (futile) gesture of self-transcendence,” derives, via Heidegger, from the Greek *ekstasis*.


32. In Hegel *das Moment* (= phase or aspect of a cumulative dialectical process) is clearly distinguished from *der Moment* (= moment of time). In French *le moment* is used indiscriminately for both. English translators of Hegel and of Sartre have used ‘moment’ in the two different senses, without distinguishing them. *Das Moment* should be rendered either as “dialectical phase” or, more precisely if less elegantly, as ‘moment’. Similarly with Hegel’s special senses of ‘abstract’ and ‘concrete’. In Hegelian usage ‘abstract’ means “one-sided, inadequately related, deficiently mediated”; ‘concrete’ means “many-sided, adequately related, complexly and fully mediated.” Unfortunately, Sartre regularly confuses these senses (‘abstract’
of a dialectical whole, which will be aufgehoben—canceled, preserved, and raised to a higher level—and thus reconciled in the concrete synthesis of the "in-and-for-itself." For Sartre, the in-itself and the for-itself are irreconcilable; their opposition is unmediatable. Similarly with self and other, and with being and nothingness. In Hegel the self returns to itself out of otherness, including and reconciling the other within itself. For Sartre self and other stand permanently hostile and unreconciled. His doctrine of the néantisation ("nothingizing" or nihilation) of the en-soi by the pour-soi, whatever sense one may make of it (see below), is certainly not a doctrine of dialectical reconciliation. The result is a distorted Hegelianism; it retains the harsh action of contradiction without the soothing balm of synthesis. And Sartre's is a deeply pessimistic view: every ekstase must fail, every effort by an existing individual to become God, to conquer another's freedom, to assimilate the "massive, viscous, and sickening" en-soi is doomed to frustration.

In general, the defective, destructive, or frustrating aspects of human existence which in the Phenomenology are only abstrakte Momente—one-sided and partial stages in the dialectical development of the human spirit, destined to be definitively aufgehoben—are for Sartre permanent, uneliminable, and unmediatable features of la condition humaine. Thus, for example, the "unhappy consciousness," which for Hegel is a defective

and 'concretē' with the quite different Kierkegaardian and even Humean-empiricist senses ('abstractē' and 'concretē'; 'abstractē' and 'concretē'). Often he falls into an "ordinary-language" usage, according to which "concrete" means simply "specific" or "particular." For details see my article, "Some Recent Reinterpretations of Hegel's Philosophy," The Monist, XLVIII (1964), 40–44.


34. In the dialectical movement of Hegel's Logic, being (Sein) and nothingness (Nichts) are aufgehoben in becoming (Werden).

35. There is a kind of subdued and stoical Prometheus about the Sisyphus of Camus; Sartre's Sisyphian pour-soi, in contrast, carries no touch of Prometheus. The postexistentialist Prometheus of Sartre's Critique is essentially Marxist-Leninist.
form of the religious consciousness, is for Sartre an ultimate: "The being of human reality is suffering. . . . Human reality therefore is by nature an unhappy consciousness with no possibility of surpassing its unhappy state."\(^{36}\) Similarly with the struggle of self against self, the striving to gain recognition or respect (\textit{Anerkennung}). This is a stage or moment which gives way to the master-slave relation, that in turn giving way to the stoic consciousness, skepticism, the unhappy consciousness, etc. But for Sartre, "Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others."\(^{37}\) Rejecting Heidegger's category of \textit{Mitsein} (being-with), Sartre asserts: "The essence of the relations between consciousnesses is not the \textit{Mitsein}; it is conflict."\(^{38}\) In his philosophical play \textit{No Exit}, the celebrated aphorism: "L'enfer c'est les autres" (Hell is the others) makes the same un-Hegelian point.

Miss Murdoch puts this point vividly when she describes Sartrean "love" as "a battle between two hypnotists in a closed room," adding that "other people" enter Sartre's solipsistic universe "one at a time, as the petrifying gaze of the Medusa, or at best as the imperfectly understood adversary in the fruitless conflict of love."\(^{39}\)

Sartre begins with Hegel: each self-consciousness seeks to be truly \textit{pour-soi} by eliminating all competitors, by reducing each claimant to selfhood to the status of a mere \textit{en-soi}, a thing or object. But whether in the short run it succeeds or fails in this

\(^{36}\) \textit{BN} 90. "La réalité-humaine est souffrante dans son être. . . . Elle est donc par nature conscience malheureuse, sans dépassement possible de l'état de malheur" (\textit{EN} 134). Wahl makes Hegel sound, in anticipation, rather close to Sartre when he writes: " . . . comme en chacun de ces aspects [of human consciousness] il y a un conflit, on peut dire qu'en chacun d'eux nous trouverons cette conscience malheureuse qui s'est manifestée sans doute plus nettement à telle ou telle époque, mais qui se renouvelle sous une forme ou sous une autre à toutes les époques de la vie de l'humanité" (op. cit., p. 94; italics mine).

\(^{37}\) \textit{BN} 364. "Le conflit est le sens originel de l'être-pour-autrui" (\textit{EN} 431).

\(^{38}\) \textit{BN} 429. "L'essence des rapports entre consciences n'est pas le Mitsein, c'est le conflit" (\textit{EN} 502).

\(^{39}\) Murdoch, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 96, 72.
attempt, it must ultimately fail. If it fails in the short run, and other selves remain as pour-soi, they pose a continuing threat to its selfhood. On the other hand, if it succeeds in reducing all other selves to things (by killing them), no self will be left to recognize or respect it.\footnote{Sartre sees a further, quite clearly neurotic, level of frustration: killing the rival self does not eliminate him completely, for it fails to destroy his pastness, to make him "never to have been." His memory remains to haunt and taunt the "victor."} Self-respect requires the respect of others whom the self in turn respects as selves.

This impasse leads to the master-slave dialectic. I shall not enter into its details, since Sartre—unlike Kojève—is not interested in them. He is concerned only to assert, with Hegel—but twisting Hegel's meaning by universalizing and eternalizing what for Hegel was particular and transitory—that the relation of self to self is marked by hostility, conflict, the attempt to destroy and enslave.\footnote{Compare, e.g., "... while I seek to enslave the Other, the Other seeks to enslave me" (BN 364). ("... pendant que je cherche à asservir autrui, autrui cherche à m’asservir" [EN 431].) At this point, too, Wahl appears to want to build a bridge from Hegel to Sartre. He sees the tendency to "concevoir les choses sous la catégorie ‘domination et esclavage’" as a "trait fondamental de la conscience humaine" (op. cit., p. 126).} Sartre agrees with Hegel that the attempt to enslave must founder—but not quite for Hegel's reasons. In Sartre the foundering is, in a clear sense, nondialectical. In Hegel it is dialectical: the master becomes other than himself, becomes his own other, becomes nonmaster and ultimately slave (of his slave). The slave in turn becomes master of his master; and the point at which each becomes his own "other" marks the transition to the new dialectical phase (moment$_a$) of stoicism, in which the master-slave distinction is aufgehoben.\footnote{This whole process is lucidly described by Wahl, op. cit., pp. 119f, 121.} The good stoic can be indifferently either a master (e.g., Marcus Aurelius) or a slave (e.g., Epictetus), because he is not seriously committed to either role. In the absence of such a dialectical Aufhebung of the master-slave relation in stoicism, the slave's mastering of his master would generate a "bad," i.e., merely reiterative, infinity.\footnote{Cf. Jan van der Meulen, Hegel: Die gebrochene Mitte (Hamburg: 1958), p. 305.}
The question of the role of work in the master-slave dialectic and in what Lukács and Kojève have called—following Marx—the “emancipation of mankind” is a theme not pursued by Sartre in his existentialist writings. So I shall not pursue it here; it belongs in the story of Marxist interpretations and misinterpretations of Hegel, including the “existentialist-Marxist” interpretations and misinterpretations of Hegel in Sartre’s *Critique de la raison dialectique*, to which I shall return briefly in Section VI.

On another central point Sartre remains somewhat closer to Hegel; yet he manages to twist the Hegelian position into something that Hegel would surely have repudiated. I think that Hegel would have welcomed Sartre’s stress on actuality—“whatever is is actual”—and accepted his concomitant denial of possibility or potentiality as an ontological category. But I think that Hegel would not have accepted Sartre’s replacement of possibility by “nothingness.”

Sartre confuses nonactuality with nonbeing: possibilities are obviously not actual, therefore they are not. Expressed positively, what is merely possible is nothing, a nothingness. For Aristotle’s potency (dynamis), Sartre substitutes nothingness (le néant); for his actualization (energeia), nihilation or “nothinging” (néantisation); and for the product or outcome of this process (ergon), the “negated” or “nothingized” (néatité). This bouquet of neologisms would, I suspect, have a fresher parfum.

44. “Tout est en acte” (*EN* 12). Hazel Barnes mistranslates this sentence as “The act is everything” (*BN* xlvii). In this passage Sartre explicitly repudiates any “duality of potency and act” (“la dualité de la puissance et de l’acte”), insisting that “behind the act there is neither potency, nor ‘hexis’, . . .” (Derrière l’acte il n’y a ni puissance, ni ‘exis’, . . .”). Mrs. Warnock comments: “Beings-in-themselves have no possibilities; or, rather all their possibilities are realized at once at the moment of creation” (*op. cit.*, p. 62).

45. I am not persuaded by James Edie’s contention that “‘pure potency’ in the language of Aristotle can be translated into good English as ‘nothingness’” (see his contribution to this volume, “Sartre as Phenomenologist and as Existential Psychoanalyst,” n. 37). Pure potency or potentiality is nonactual, but it is not nonexistent—not a sheer nonbeing or nothingness. On this point, Kierkegaard, who prized free choice and decision at least as much as Sartre did, remained Aristotelian, analyzing free choice as the actualizing of one among a plurality of possibilities.
Sartre's curious doctrine derives from Heidegger ("Das Nichts nichtet," etc.) at least as much as from Hegel. It is reminiscent of Berdyaev's existentialist doctrine of freedom as rooted in the Ungrund or "void of non-being (in Greek me-on)." Human freedom, in Berdyaev's words, is "not ontal but meonic." Sartre may have been familiar with Berdyaev's position, but his immediate sources were (a) Heidegger and (b) Hegel, as filtered through the Heideggerianizing Hegel-commentaries of Wahl and Kojève. Wahl had said that "for Hegel negativity, freedom, subjectivity, and the process of Aufhebung are united." Kojève explicitly "existentialized" Hegel's remarks about the negativity of free human action: "Man," he declared, "is not a being who is; he is nothingness which nothingizes [or nihilates] by negating being. Now the negation of being is action." Kojève adds that negativity, as "pure nothingness," is "a real freedom which manifests itself in the form of action."  


47. "Pour Hegel, negativité, liberté, subjectivité, processus de l'Aufhebung sont unis" (op. cit., p. 95, n. 1).  

48. "L'Homme n'est pas un Etre qui est: il est Néant qui néantit par la négation de l'Etre. Or, la négation de l'Etre—c'est l'Action." Negativity, as "néant pur," is a "liberté réelle qui . . . se manifeste . . . en tant qu'action." (Alexandre Kojève, Introduction à la lecture de Hegel: Leçons sur la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit professées de 1933 à 1939 à l'Ecole des Hautes Études [réunies et publiées par Raymond Queneau; Paris: 1947], pp. 181, 493.) Kojève also speaks of action as being "négratrice du donné" (ibid., p. 497). It may be worth noting that Kojève—like Nicolai Hartmann (see n. 17)—uses the exact phrase which Sartre was to make the title of his major work: "L'Etre et le Néant" (ibid., p. 493n). Kojève makes Hegel sound very much like Sartre when he writes: "Sur le plan 'phénoménologique' la Négativité n'est donc rien d'autre que la Liberté humaine. . . ." And again: "La liberté ne consiste pas dans un choix entre deux données: elle est la négation du donné . . ." (ibid., p. 494). All of this, I submit, is much closer to French existentialism than it is to Hegel's own doctrine.
Sartre’s way of putting the point is even more paradoxical: “Freedom is precisely the nothingness which *is made-to-be* [literally "is be’d"] at the heart of man and which forces human-reality to *make itself* instead of *to be*.” Another: “The for-itself is defined ontologically as a *lack of being*, and possibility belongs to the for-itself as that which it lacks. . . . Freedom is the concrete mode of being of the lack of being.”

Sartre’s position may be seen as a radicalization of Bergson’s view (Sartre refers to Bergson more than a dozen times in *Being and Nothingness*): Bergson had denied the ontological status of possibilities as (timeless) structures of nonactuality, asserting that men create their own possibilities and subsequently actualize (some or all of) them. Sartre appears to share Bergson’s insensitivity to the *aporiai* generated by such a denial of the “objective” or “structural” character of possibility or potentiality. But it must be admitted that in this denial the two Frenchmen have eminent philosophical company—no less than that of Parmenides, Spinoza, and Hegel!

49. BN 440. “La liberté, c’est précisément le néant qui *est été* au cœur de l’homme et qui contraint la réalité-humaine à *se faire*, au lieu d’*être*” (EN 516). Further on Sartre adds that “Freedom . . . is strictly identical with nihilation” (BN 567). (“La liberté . . . est rigoureusement assimilable à la néantisation” [EN 655].)

50. BN 565. “. . . le pour-soi se décrit ontologiquement comme manque d’être et le possible appartient au pour-soi comme ce qui lui manque. . . . [La liberté] est le mode d’être concret du manque d’être” (EN 652). Sartre adds, punningly, that the possible “has the being of a lack and as a lack, it lacks being. The Possible is not, the possible is possibilized . . . : the possible determines in schematic outline a location in the nothingness . . . ” (BN 102). (The possible “a l’être d’un manque et, comme manque, il manque d’être. Le Possible n’est pas, le possible se possibilise . . . ; il détermine par esquisse schématique un emplacement de néant . . . ” [EN 147].)

51. Bergson attacks those philosophers who consider “freedom a choice between possibilities,—as if possibility was not created by freedom itself!” (Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison [New York: 1946], p. 123). (“. . . par liberté un choix entre les possibles,—comme si la possibilité n’était pas créée par la liberté même!” [La Pensée et le mouvant (Paris: 1954), p. 132].) Compare Sartre’s characterization of freedom as "a choice which creates for itself its own possibilities" (BN 566)—". . . un choix que se crée ses propres possibilités” (EN 654).
I shall not treat the topic of alienation, or the related sub-topic of objectification, in detail; it is being treated separately in this volume. I wish only to indicate briefly what Hegel meant by alienation (Entfremdung or Entäusserung) and by objectification (Vergegenständlichung), and the relation between the two; what, in turn, Marx meant by these terms and how he understood their relation; and, finally, what an existentialist like Sartre understands by the terms and their relation.

Hegel in the Phenomenology treats alienation in a section entitled “Der sich entfremdete Geist; die Bildung” (“Spirit Alienated from Itself; Culture—[or Education, Formation, “Shaping”]”). The phenomenological reference is not to absoluter Geist (Absolute Spirit) but rather to daseiender Geist (existing, finite spirit); the historical reference is to seventeenth-century France, a period of extreme cultural formalism, universalism, and sophistication.

Hegel asks how the individual can develop his “natural” powers and gifts, coming to be what he intrinsically and uniquely is. And he answers: by being gebildet, shaped and formed by culture—i.e., by acquiring a language, a “formation littéraire,” manners, mores, etc. To actualize himself as a particular individual, a man must, paradoxically, take on universal forms. Moreover, these forms are not his creation, indeed are alien to him. Yet historical culture is a wholly human product. Thus men’s own historical, collective creations stand massively over against, and alienated from, individual men.

In the Paris Manuscripts Marx adds to this account of cultural alienation motifs from Hegel’s own dialectic of work (taken from the much earlier master-slave stage of the Phenomenology); but he simplifies and distorts Hegel’s account by omitting the cultural, literary, and linguistic dimensions of alienation, con-
centrating exclusively upon the economic, social, and—to a de-
gree—psychological aspects of "alienated work" (die entfrem-
dete Arbeit). Sartre's version is equally one-sided: it omits the
cultural and literary dimensions of alienation, concentrating
upon the psychological, and—to a degree—social aspects of "be-
ing for others."

As Mrs. Warnock has observed, Sartre's description of bad
faith (as a sociopsychological phenomenon) partly echoes the
description of alienation in early Marx.53

Marx had charged that Hegel confused alienation with ob-
jectification and, while praising Hegel's attempt to overcome
human alienation, had rejected his parallel effort to overcome
objectification.54 For Marx, every significant action or produc-
tion (praxis) must be an objectification, leaving its permanent,
external, objective mark on nature and history. Only under
capitalism, with its private ownership of the means of produc-
tion, is productive objectification an alienation. Beyond capital-
ism alienation will disappear, but objectification will remain as
a necessary and permanent aspect of all production.

It should be stressed that existential inwardness, decision,
passion—so long as they lack objective expression, so long as
they remain unobjectified (unvergegenständlicht)—are of no
interest or value in Marx's eyes. The process of objectification,
the act of objectifying, is incomplete so long as it has not is-
issued in an objectificatum, a thing objectified, a product, an er-
gon, in one of Aristotle's senses of that term, namely, the sense
in which ergon is related to energēia as product to process of
actualization—as what Hegel and early Marx called Werk is
related to what they called Verwirklichung. For Marx praxis

53. Warnock, op. cit., pp. 157f. In his "phenomenology of shame" Sartre
interprets "the alienation of myself" as (the effect of ) an "act of being-looked-
at," the result of which is that "I cause myself to learn from outside what
I must be" (BN 263, 290). ("... l'aliénation de moi qu'est l'être-regardé
... "; "je me fais prendre par mon dehors ce que je dois être" [EN 321f,
350].)

54. Sartre alludes to Marx's critique of Hegel on this point at CRD 20
(English translation: Search for a Method, p. 13).
stands beyond existence (hexis) in virtue of its collective, historical, and objectifying action.

Thus, to Montaigne's question: "What have I done [i.e., made, objectified] today?" Sartre, but not Marx, can reply, with Montaigne, "What, have I not lived [i.e., existed]?" To exist, for Marx—even young Marx—is not enough. To be human, or rather to become human, one must make, must produce—which means that one must objectify, impose an enduring human shape on what is nonhuman.

In Being and Nothingness Sartre rejected the positive Marxist evaluation of objectification. (In the Critique he accepts it in a vulgarized form that equates objectification with "materialization." See Section VI.) To be sure, for Sartre objectification was never the bête noire that it was for Berdyaev, who saw in it a prime threat to freedom, creativity, and the "spirit." What is objectified, for Berdyaev, is alien, hostile, "intolerably banal." Still, Sartre would agree with Berdyaev's claim that "every outward action" is doomed to "tragic failure" because it necessarily involves objectification.55 In Sartre, as in Berdyaev, the realm of the objectified is the realm of the given—of facticity, inertia, determination.

On Hegel's view, both alienation and objectification must and will be overcome through the dialectical movement of spirit; on Marx's view, alienation, but not objectification, should and will be overcome through the dialectical movement of history; for Sartre, neither alienation nor objectification can be overcome, which is another way of saying that every ek-stase is doomed to failure and that, in consequence, man is a "useless passion."56

55. Berdyaev, Dream and Reality, p. 39 (Samopoznaniye, p. 51).
56. BN 615. ("... nous nous perdons en vain; l'homme est une passion inutile" [EN 708].) James Edie has argued that inutile in this context means not "useless" but noninstrumental—the sense in which Baudelaire called a poem an objet inutile (compare Edie's contribution to this volume, n. 41). However, it seems clear from many passages in Sartre that inutile means "(necessarily) unsuccessful." A passion inutile is one that cannot attain its object. Christ's passion—the effort, through suffering, to become human: temporal, finite, etc.—succeeded; man's parallel passion—the effort, through suffering, to become divine: eternal, infinite, etc.—must fail, since the concept of a divine Being, an ens causa sui, is self-contradictory. See also Sartre's
VI

SARTRE AS MARXIST

Sartre's "radical conversion" from existentialism to Marxism—a doctrine which he now calls "Knowledge" (le Savoir, always with a capital letter) and "the inescapable philosophy of our time"—is not strictly the concern of this paper. However, since I have been examining the relation of Sartre's existentialism to Hegel and Marx, and since the "conversion" might be described as a shift from the position of Husserl and Kierkegaard-Heidegger to that of Hegel and Marx-Engels, I shall comment briefly on the main doctrinal changes between *Being and Nothingness* (1943) and the *Critique de la raison dialectique*, I (1960).

Sartre has always been pro-Communist; his conversion is not political but philosophical—a move from subjectivism to objectivism, from individualism to collectivism, from a theory of individual consciousness to a theory of sociohistorical praxis. Sartre has swung from one extreme to another; his new Marxist extreme is reductionist and often vulgarized. Despite a ponderous and complex terminology ("totalized totality"—totalité totalisée, the "practico-inert"—le pratico-inerte, "dialectic in [sociohistorical] situation"—la dialectique située, etc.), his position comes close to old-fashioned materialism. The individual assertion that those who believe that they can reconcile or synthesize the en-soi and pour-soi are "condemned to despair," since "all human activities... tend to sacrifice man in order that the self-cause [i.e., God] may emerge and... all are on principle doomed to failure" (BN 627). ("... ils sont condamnés au désespoir, car... les activités humaines... tendent toutes à sacrifier l'homme pour faire surgir la cause de soi et... toutes sont vouées par principe à l'échec" [EN 721].)

57. After graphically portraying the bitter struggle and frustration involved in all interpersonal relationships, Sartre adds enigmatically, "These considerations do not exclude the possibility of an ethics of deliverance and salvation. But this can be achieved only after a radical conversion which we cannot discuss here" (BN 412n: italics mine). ("Ces considérations n'excluent pas la possibilité d'une morale de la délivrance et du salut. Mais celle-ci doit être atteinte au terme d'une conversion radicale dont nous ne pouvons parler ici" [EN 484n; italics mine].)

58. Iris Murdoch shrewdly notes that Sartre is "infected... with a certain Trotskyite romanticism, the nostalgia for the perpetual revolution" (op. cit., p. 41).
is no longer an agent, or Dasein, or réalité-humaine, but an “organism”—an organism that suffers, runs risks, acts dialectically, “interiorizes” inorganic structures, “materializes itself,” etc. Man is now a “material being” (être matériel), member of a “material group” (ensemble matériel) (CRD 166). The world is entirely material; “matter alone holds meanings” (“la matière seule compose les significations”) (CRD 245). Sartre expresses complete agreement with Marx’s statement that the “ideal” (i.e., the “mental” and/or “conceptual”) is nothing but the “material, inverted and translated in the human head.”

Marx himself was not an ontological materialist, as I have argued elsewhere; rather, he was an “economic objectivist,” who often confused the terms and concepts ‘economic’ and ‘material’. Sartre as a Marxist materialist comes close not to Marx himself, whether “old” or “young,” but rather to Engels, Plekhanov, and Lenin.

Sartre’s version of economic theory is almost a caricature, not so much of Marx as of Adam Smith and Ricardo. What sets human history in motion, generating conflict among individuals and groups, is the “contingent but ineluctable []” fact of “material [i.e., economic] scarcity.” However, the main thrust of the Critique is not economic but sociological. Sartre offers an


60. The bulk of the Critique remains untranslated. Search for a Method, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: 1963), contains only the introductory essay (181 pp. in English). The Cumming volume includes sixty-two additional English pages (op. cit., pp. 421–83), translated by Starr and James Atkinson. Aside from its turgid, prolix, and repetitive style, the Critique is visually forbidding: the type is small, the pages crowded (fifty lines per page); there are few divisions in the text, relatively few paragraph divisions. Many “paragraphs” are three or four pages long; at least one is more than six pages long (CRD 218–24).


62. “Instead of the metaphor of indigestion in Nausea, we are faced with actual hunger” (Cumming, op. cit., p. 41).
involved theory of (atomic, disintegrated, merely "serial")
collectives—characteristic of capitalist society—and of their sup-
ersession by (cohesive, integrated, "nonserial") groups—under
"socialism." Sartre's position seems to be a synthesis of Tönnies
and Marx: Gemeinschaft succeeds Gesellschaft through the his-
torical struggle of classes!
Sartre's attitude toward objectification is now close to that
of Marx, both young and old (see Section V), and thus close
to the position which in Being and Nothingness he had re-
pudiated, as entailing the "dogma of the serious [i.e., of the
self-righteous and pompous]": "Marx," he wrote then, "pro-
posed the original dogma of the serious when he asserted the
priority of object over subject."63 Like the appeal to determin-
ism, the "spirit of seriousness" involves bad faith. (Cf. BN 626;
EN 721.)
Feasting on historical humble pie, Sartre declares the existen-
tial position that he had elaborated in Being and Nothingness
to have been only an "ideology," in the special and pejorative
sense of "a parasitical system living on the margin of Knowledge
[i. e., of Marxism], which at first it opposed but into which today
it seeks to be integrated."64
In fact, what we see in Volume I of the Critique is not an
"integration" of existentialism into Marxism. Rather, the doc-
rinaire position of Engels and late Marx—le Savoir—has simply
"swallowed up existentialism."65

VII
Conclusion
My conclusions may be summarized briefly under three heads:
(1) Although Sartre was stimulated by Hegel's Phenome-
nology and by Marx's 1844 Manuscripts, he both modified and

63. BN 580. ("Marx a posé le dogme premier du sérieux lorsqu'il a affirmé
la priorité de l'objet sur le sujet . . . " [EN 669].)
64. Search for a Method, p. 8. ("C'est un système parasitaire qui vit en
marge du Savoir qui s'y est opposé d'abord et qui, aujourd'hui, tente de
s'y intégrer" [CRD 18].)
misinterpreted key points in Hegel’s and Marx’s thought—perhaps deliberately, certainly not without precedent (especially the precedent of Kojève’s Hegel-commentary). Sartre’s is a truncated dialectic; it lacks synthesis and reconciliation and is thus fundamentally un-Hegelian even though it is formulated in explicitly Hegelian categories and concepts.

(2) Sartre takes what for Hegel were low-level, partial, one-sided, abstract phases of a continuing dialectical process and lifts them into permanent universality—e.g., alienation, self-alienation, the struggle with the “other,” the project of mutual enslavement.

Like Marx, Sartre omits the cultural dimension of alienation, which had been central in Hegel’s own account, in the Phenomenology, of “spirit alienated from itself.”

(3) In attempting to assimilate young Marx’s theory of alienation, Sartre effected two distortions: first, as he did with Hegel, Sartre treated alienation not as something phenomenologically or historically mediatable and overcomable, but as a fixed and uneliminable feature of la condition humaine. Second, he overlooked Marx’s insistence on the positive, trans-historical character of objectification, a theme radically incompatible with Sartrean (or any other) existentialism. He tended, as many Marxists have tended—especially among the contemporary existentializing revisionists in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia—to convert the young Marx into a protoexistentialist. But the youngest possible Marx was in fact no more of an existentialist than the Hegel of the Phenomenology—which is to say, he was not an existentialist at all in any meaningful sense of that term.

Since his conversion to Marxism, Sartre, in stressing the (externalizing) objectification of sociohistorical praxis, has been forced, in effect if not in so many words, to renounce his earlier existentialist emphasis on the subjectivity of free individuals. His own existentialism has been organically absorbed into his Marxism.