

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

Jean-Paul Sartre: Fear of Freedom and Inclination to Marxism
BACHELOR THESIS

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is the work of my own and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature is attributed and cited in references.

In Bratislava, February 15, 2021

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Signed: _____

Abstract

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In this thesis I wish to argue that Jean-Paul Sartre's shift to Marxism from existentialism may be understood in light of his fear of radical freedom. Nevertheless, many scholars in academia have totally forsaken Sartre's relevancy after his purely existential period came to an end, while other scholars gradually have neglected his genius due to the political pressure stemming from reality of the Cold War. However, there are many indications in his texts regarding freedom as something that gives us the ultimate power and responsibility over ourselves and thus also allows us to breach our own nature. Such a controversial approach towards freedom only validates Sartre's theory of not living in 'bad faith', ergo there is a natural presence of continuity to be proven. In regard to these connections, I will strive to highlight as many threads holding these phenomena as possible, hence the completeness of Sartre's lifetime works shall be properly clarified.

Keywords: Sartre, existentialism, Marxism, radical freedom, bad faith, Cartesian dualism

Abstrakt

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Cieľom tejto práce je dokázanie zotrvačnosti Jean-Paula Sartra a jeho dvoch filozofických období definovaných existencializmom a Marxizmom, na báze jeho argumentu radikálnej slobody. Veľa akademikov súdi Sartreho prínos do filozofie čisto z existenciálneho hľadiska, prehliadajúc jeho neskoršiu fázu života dedikovanú Marximu najmä pod politickým nátlakom, ktorý pramenil z prítomnosti studenej vojny. Autor bude tak pracovať s rôznymi Sartreho textami, ktoré indikujú realitu, kde radikálna sloboda garantuje ľuďom absolútnu moc a zodpovednosť za ich existenciu a teda povoľuje taktiež prístup ku graduálnej sebadeštrukcií. I napriek kontroverznosti danej teórie, Sartre predstavil ďalšiu teóriu, ktorá sa zaoberá fenoménom plynutia existencie v zlej viere, slúžiac ako ďalší pilier argumentácie pre spomenutú zotrvačnosť. Autor tak dedikuje svoj zámer na vyhľadanie a následnú utilizáciu dôkazov z primárnych zdrojov, a tak dokáže plynulosť a kompletnosť Sartreho diel.

Kľúčové slová: Sartre, existencializmus, Marxizmus, radikálna sloboda, zlá viera, karteziánsky dualizmus

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Table of Contents

Declaration of Originality	iii
Abstract	iv
Abstrakt	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Introduction	8
Chapter I.....	10
Jean-Paul Sartre and his Life as a Philosopher	10
Relevant Schools of Thought	12
Essential Concepts	15
Chapter II.	19
Existential Marxism or Marxist Existentialism?.....	19
Sartre as a Non-Cartesian Dualist	21
Chapter III.....	24
The Consistency of Sartre’s Philosophies.....	24
Cartesian Dualism as a Remedy?.....	28
Relevancy of Sartre’s Message in the Contemporary World.....	29
Conclusion	31
List of References	33
Resumé.....	35

Introduction

There is an on-going and never-dying debate whether Jean-Paul Sartre shifted his theories smoothly and naturally or rather spontaneously. What could ever lead him to think that totalitarian approaches to politics are the ones that suit people the best? Was he just trying to restrain physical freedom, as such, in order to diminish the inevitable ‘dizziness’ of it? It is truly fascinating how the philosophical shift from existentialism to Marxism eventually blended together and emerged into a phenomenon called ‘existential Marxism’; providing a large number of writings to follow and understand the relevance of such philosophical views, namely, those written in the latter period of Sartre.

Firstly, this thesis will meticulously explain and elaborate on the key elements of Sartre’s early existential works in order to supplement it with relevant arguments. Following a predominantly chronological order, the evolution in Sartre’s ideas, as well as its consistency, shall prevail in a gradual fashion. In academia, there are many opinions either in favor of Sartre’s political shifts or not, but these leave the question of its consistency and unity unanswered. Trying to trace any relevant proofs back into his very first writings, one bumps into a vast circle of arguments that wish to prove the facts as well as disprove. For instance, as Flynn points out, in the novel *Nausea*, which Sartre himself calls the most personal work of his, the story highlights and even glorifies the lifestyle of a solitary man and his capabilities of being introspective while disrupting the whole principle of communism, thus life in a community (Flynn, 1986). Later, Sartre in his play *No Exit* controversially points out “hell is other people” (Sartre, 1989) as well as in *Being and Nothingness* claims that being-for-others essentially means to lose yourself for the sake of the other (Sartre, 1964, p. 482). However, these instances could be regarded more in a symbolic fashion that helps us to comprehend the ultimate ‘freedom of thought’ humans are naturally granted.

Moreover, it is the absolute freedom that allowed Sartre to reshape his standpoints. The phrase ‘bad faith’ represents a reality where anyone is totally free to transform into anything and yet in denial of it. That being said, a waiter is first and foremost a person

and not a waiter, thus their existence does not force them to be a waiter and not to become something else according to their dreams and will (Sartre, 1964). In other words, Jean-Paul Sartre applied this rule to himself by not restraining his 'existence' within the professional 'essence' of being an existential philosopher; being unable to proceed onwards with his theories purely because of his prior status would result in living in the 'bad faith'. Therefore, even the early and essential writings of existential philosophy argue in favor of Sartre's consistent shifting and eventually consider his existence *per se* as a singular continuous unity instead of being halved and disrupted by sudden changes.

Despite the unclarity of Sartre's stand insofar as Cartesian dualism is concerned, there are some hints to be found in the assumptions of this thesis. This kind of dualism, first introduced by Descartes, tries to unfold a human being into two units (physical and mental) believing there is an interconnection between them, hence existence as a synthesis of both. Such synthesis is however introduced also in Sartre's works, where he argues that one's being is essentially composed of two components; being-in-itself (i.e. the mind) and being-for-itself (i.e. the outside body). This allows us to see Sartre's attempts to restrain the 'body' by living in a system that is more prone to be authoritarian as a gateway to diminish the 'dizziness of freedom' which would gradually reflect in the 'mind'. That means, taking existence as a synthesis of the both into consideration, they both naturally affect each other. Ergo, to live and believe in such regimes, could represent a sort of a responsibility waiver for those who are scared of their own capabilities, but still 'condemned to be free', that also includes the responsibility of survival and such.

Chapter I.

Jean-Paul Sartre and his Life as a Philosopher

The ungodly godfather of existential philosophy, Jean-Paul Sartre, has shaken the world with his unorthodox approach to freedom. Dismissing all the deterministic values, Sartre's philosophy advocates for one's absolute responsibility over themselves. These are ideas that may appear as contradictory to his views on society, predominantly later on in his academic career. Despite Sartre's early works and their dedication to crack predominantly existential problems, there are, nonetheless, many hints arguing for his everlasting sympathy for Marxism. However, after a meticulous examination, there is an evident degree of continuity between them and thus they naturally support each other regardless of Sartre's indirect vocality during his early career. So, in this chapter, the main focus is cast upon Sartre's early writings, involving works of fiction as well as essays like *Being and Nothingness* that made his name so resonant among other not only existential scholars.

Jean-Paul Sartre's early works and writings heavily tended to represent an introspective behavior of individuals in order to accept and comprehend themselves. One of the most famous novels he had written is *Nausea*, a story of an antisocial historian who has severe troubles blending in with society as well as gaining comfort with his own being, despite the general acknowledgment of its actual importance. As a matter of fact, Sartre himself designated the book as the most personal and the reasons for such claims are quite evident -- throughout the book, readers come across a lot of moments that keep them thinking if it is a work of fiction or just the author's diary, depicting his life before the year 1938 when it was initially released. Whether it be a fairly long monologue of the protagonist analyzing his appearance in a mirror or trying to understand why he unreasonably sticks to his routines, these all are the very roots of Sartre's significant existential run.

“It is the reflection of my face. Often, during these wasted days, I stay here contemplating it. I can understand nothing about this face. Other people’s faces have some significance. Not mine. I cannot even decide whether it is handsome or ugly. I think it is ugly, because I have been told so.” (Sartre, 2020, p. 30)

Nausea, with its emphasis on the abandonment of social ties in order to find peace with yourself, is definitely not the only work of Sartre’s that paradoxically attacks the relevancy of a community yet realizing its importance in order to be self-aware through the eyes of the other; six years later, the play *No Exit* gained its notoriety essentially thanks to a single quote “hell is other people” (Sartre, 1989). Now, the plot is highly metaphorical, psychological, and symbolic -- three people happen to meet each other, post-mortem, in a rather cozy and fashionable room, which represents hell, and so they gradually start to realize that they are the ones torturing themselves not the hell as such. However, these introverted perceptions of reality in a community are not completely dismissive of other people but rather try to stress the natural importance of human bonds and relations within it (i.e. humans are born dependent on interaction and collaboration, even though it may make them feel uncomfortable), hence the act of being able to “leave” the room but unwilling to do so due to fear of the unknown or even possible change (i.e. being in bad faith). The unknown embodies nothingness that may be an option after one’s death, thus leaving the room represents the act of suicide, as widely interpreted.

Unlike his famously close friend Camus, Sartre took a writing shift and almost neglected the creation of fictional works for the sake of his development in philosophy. In 1943, Sartre finished his principal text on existentialism, *Being and Nothingness*, which has shaped the existential philosophy as it is known nowadays. It is truly fascinating how a person achieves to compose such a huge chunk of writing while being able to maintain the status of a wordsmith and a pioneer of the field. The essay essentially introduces its readers to all of the important concepts regarding existentialism as well as establishes and labels freshly discovered phenomena within the field. Controversially enough and to oppose Kierkegaard’s Christian take on the existential dilemmas, Sartre’s view and

approach to them remains completely secular, which is more accessible to the modern world by far. As the time proceeded, Sartre found himself eager for political activism for several reasons; France, just like the rest of Europe, was significantly dazed and weakened by the horrors of World War II, which naturally resulted in a polarized society that grasped for an imaginary glue holding it back together. One of the ways of his political activity took the form of writing and thus helping with the theoretical aspects of achieving a brighter future; Sartre introduced his audience to works such as *Search for a Method*, which took the form of a preface for the latter *Critique of Dialectical Reason* following its release in 1960. Exactly these two works left some of his followers stunned and heavily confused since his inclination to Marxist ideologies started to prevail in a rather radical manner.

Moreover, Sartre always affiliated himself with the left. Even though he never actually was a part of the French Communist Party, he openly paid respects and supported it nonetheless. Not to mention, there was a huge internal fight in his own mind as he kept condemning the imperialistic behavior of the United States and yet admired the totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union. As a matter of fact, Sartre had visited the USSR and Cuba several times believing that Stalin's politics were the ones worth his admiration. Eventually, he saw the wrong-doings of his and thus regretted the affiliation and sympathies. On the other hand, his acquaintance with Fidel Castro led to him being spied on by the Central Intelligence Agency, which kept a large record of his activities along with attempting to "decrypt" his works for potential revolutionary content (Martin, 2021). The period of the Cold War polarized the world into two extremes whose consequences are still present nowadays, namely among the older generations.

Relevant Schools of Thought

Many authors have registered the problem of alienation as real and actual, however, not many of them addressed it with a functional remedy. Aside from Marx's theory introduced later, the first most acknowledged thinker to confront the phenomenon of self-

awareness was Friedrich Hegel. Starting with his major work, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, a community is crucial for people in order to be self-aware individuals. On a more transcendental level, Hegel proposes an idea of a person being able to recognize themselves only through the eyes of others. Describing it as a movement between two self-consciousnesses, where one self-consciousness comes out of it-self, introjects to the other self-consciousness, and returns back to it-self. This theory thus establishes a stable ground for further exploration of ideas regarding one's position and importance within society; among other individuals with whom interactions appear as necessary.

“Thus the movement is simply the double movement of the two self-consciousnesses. Each sees the *other* do the same as it does; each does itself what it demands of the other, and therefore also does what it does only in so far as the other does the same. Action by one side only would be useless because what is to happen can only be brought about by both.”
(Hegel, 1994, p. 112)

However, one of Hegel's most prominent students, Karl Marx, rejected the idealistic aspects of Hegel's philosophy and reduced them to maintain the communitarian idea on a purely materialistic level. With the upcoming industrial revolution, Marx tackled the topic of negative reflections on a community by explaining that workers were estranged from their own products (i.e. alienation). This approach to society automatically bipolarizes it into two distinguished groups: a) blue collars (proletariat) b) white collars (bourgeoisie). Such 'us and them' perception of the world brings about negativity and thus it is making a lot of distortion in the society by forceful polarization and radical accusation of 'them' being an enemy -- essentially begging for revolution and change by appealing to one's emotional discomfort (i.e. populism). Yet, exactly this perception of the world signals the present inequality among the folk, since, as mentioned before, the workers eventually are not able to enjoy the pleasure of the products they create for they are being exploited and thus the products become unaffordable (Marx & Engels, 2020).

Marx's loud shouting at capitalism's existence has become a tradition to those who feel oppressed, neglected, and/or exploited and hence evolved itself to many other ideologies. Firstly, it is not solely built on hatred against capitalism as such but against imperialism as well; encouraging other thinkers who embody anticolonial values. Franz Fanon, a philosopher and a psychiatrist from the French colony of Martinique, breaks through with a book called *The Wretched of the Earth*, loudly pointing out the immoral principles of colonialism, that has left the countries weakened both socially and economically. As a matter of fact, Sartre himself was a big fan of Fanon's works and even contributed to the book with a concise foreword. Moreover, the neo-Marxist standpoint also reached the field of international relations, thanks to Immanuel Wallerstein and his 'world-systems theory', highlighting the exploitation of the periphery states (third world countries) by the core states (first world countries, namely ex-colonizers) (Wallerstein, 1982). Even though the ever-lasting message of Marxism appears to be the empowerment of those who feel disadvantaged, undermined, and asking for equity, Marxism remains strongly demonized due to the unfortunate history of the USSR and their evil deeds, on the premises of Marxism being the roots of Leninism and the communist utopia.

While Marxism was fully emerging, the very first contours of existentialism were drawn - - to describe something as existential has become a quite regular phenomenon since it vaguely depicts a situation that questions one's being/meaning. Regardless of its absurdity and shallow simplicity, the question remains too complex to answer, ergo challenges many thinkers to seek a way of responding to it. Despite many philosophers attracted to this quest, the majority of scholars would argue that the very first existentialist was Kierkegaard, due to his ontological dedication for discovering the meaning of life. In his work *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard claims that the unhappiest one is the one who cannot die and is never present to himself, hence the meaning of life is simply death and actuality (Kierkegaard, 2004, p. 214). This idea had stuck to his writings onwards and recurred on works such as *The Sickness unto Death* and more. However, even though Kierkegaard is widely considered the father of existentialism, the very definition of existentialism did not exist until Jean-Paul Sartre introduced it to the world, witnessing an outbreak of thinkers sharing these values (e.g. Heidegger, Camus, etc.).

Where Kierkegaard suggested taking the ‘leap of faith’ in order to maintain some sort of stability and to reject responsibility for our freedom, Sartre refused to throw himself under the wings of Christianity and started building on the premises of radical freedom and ultimate responsibility of one’s choices. Therefore, to be an existentialist also is to believe in the ultimate freedom of both thought and will.

How does one then become an existential Marxist? Both of these instances may, at the first glance, appear as representing somewhat contradictory ideas but there are many aspects complementing each other nonetheless. In 1957, Sartre’s first significant work that openly compliments Marxism, *Search for a Method*, started to argue for existentialism being rather an ideology than a self-sufficient, standalone school of thought but nonetheless finds it as a counterpoint and rescue for Marxism, whose name has been darkened by the actions of the Soviet Union and so forth. Moreover, Sartre argues for Marxism being the only relevant and contemporary way of perceiving the society to be left, since the society suddenly got fragmented by the second world war’s tragic consequences and thus Marxism superseded the outdated idealism; the economic post-war crisis naturally highlighted the uneven ownership of citizens’ property, presence of citizens’ alienation, and ergo set up new grounds for the social discourse.

Essential Concepts

As mentioned before, existentialism is the devil’s advocate insofar as those who argue in favor of fatalism are concerned. Imagining people being born with a clean slate that gets “dirtier” or more “colorful” solely based on our choices and steps that are taken throughout one’s life. In other words, every single individual is a fully self-responsible human being and thus every choice, commitment, or move they make is the result of their own free will. The radical freedom, people are both blessed and cursed with, logically carries and demands an enormous amount of responsibility over it. For hundreds of years, philosophy had built its principles on the notion of nature as the most valid and strongest pillar of human’s existence, however, existentialism being existentialism, Sartre

introduced a reversed formula where 'existence precedes essence'. That being said, one's existence predetermines their essence and it is rather a gradual process than something which comes about instantly (Sartre, 1964, p. 588-589). In other words, humans are granted with total responsibility for everything, namely their lives as such since such responsibility also means to be responsible for your own survival. Hence, for example, moral questions may also appear as quite important, given the reality of those who are "inherently" bad people, since based on this theory they are behaving only as bad as the results of their freedom of choice allows them to; it is solely up to their choice to act and be, for example, selfish. On the contrary, there are many counter-arguments claiming this way of thinking as immoral itself, since it begs a lot of questions associated with those who are born unfortunately (e.g. following the logic of Sartre's argument, one may assess that slaves are being slaves voluntarily since it was not predetermined by their nature). However, the argument might be deconstructed and countered by realizing the fact of the oppressive aspects being against basic moral principles by themselves and thus intervening with one's nature, which establishes a new phenomenon concerned with such disruption. One of which would then be also a totalitarian leader since such a figure 'sadistically' undermines the subjects and disassociates them of the freedoms involuntarily.

To elaborate and introduce the other side of the problem, Sartre addresses one's unwillingness to admit their absolute responsibility over themselves as living in 'bad faith'. Not exactly due to believing in the incorrect but because such people constantly restrain themselves from any possible progress and thus fall into the abyss of stagnation. Such an approach to life then naturally leads to grand despair where, in the best situation, they finally realize they have been following the wrong life formula. However negative this all might sound, Sartre presents this idea in *Being and Nothingness* as fairly positive, since its purpose is to help overcome the mentioned neglect of possibilities. Some people dedicate themselves to the imaginary essence of their existence that they forget about the freedom to change. A great example set by Sartre in his work describes a waiter in a coffee shop as a child playing with their body in order to realize the way it functions, but instead the waiter plays with his condition but to achieve the same results nonetheless. He

also later mentions a grocer who dreams about the future but cannot do so for the sake of a buyer's satisfaction with their service.

“But what is he playing? We need not watch long before we can explain it: he is playing at *being* a waiter in a cafe. There is nothing there to surprise us. The game is a kind of marking out and investigation. The child plays with his body in order to explore it, to take inventory of it; the waiter in the cafe plays with his condition in order to *realize* it. [...] A grocer who dreams is offensive to the buyer, because such a grocer is not wholly a grocer. Society demands that he limit himself to this function as a grocer.”

(Sartre, 1964, p. 102)

In other words, a person is not first and foremost a grocer or a bartender but a free human being, possessing the ultimate freedom to make choices, even if it would mean losing their job, status, joy, sadness, or even life. Society demands such an approach towards people's “roles” in their lives in order to maintain the machinery principle of its functioning.

At first glance, addressing freedom in a negative way appears somewhat contradictory, since freedom as a phenomenon usually intends to be glorified, however, not only Sartre points out that the individual freedom is radical but many other scholars along with him. Kierkegaard pointing out the possible dizziness of freedom kind of overlaps with Sartre's notion -- the nauseous vertigo of our existence and its absurdity strikes one's mind unexpectedly and frankly hard. For instance, if there was a man casually walking across a bridge, there is no one but him to make him take a leap off of it, as well as not to take that leap. A sudden realization of such possibilities and the ultimate freedom may strike one as uncomfortable and even scary, which gradually evokes a feeling of some sort of nausea or dizziness, vertigo. This is also partially the origin of the book's name, *Nausea*, since the protagonist encounters with yet several nauseatic feelings stemming from his uncertainty and existential crisis.

After explaining existentialism as a philosophy of individual freedom and anti-fatalistic movement, along with the principle theories of Sartre's in order to comprehend his philosophy, the contradictions, as well as, correlations within existential Marxism's body come out more clearly. This chapter primarily followed the history of ideas, so the roots of all concepts could get unveiled. Coming from the pre-established grounds, following chapters shall henceforth focus on the hypothetical aspects of Sartre's philosophical evolution and thus delivering arguments becomes less difficult.

Chapter II.

Existential Marxism or Marxist Existentialism?

Interestingly enough, the weight of importance set upon the introspective, if not even introverted, approach to one's existence by Sartre seems a bit off while compared to the other approach to humankind, that argues for the cruciality of a community. Along with him stressing one's freedom, Sartre shook many scholars by making a fairly vocal shift to Marxism, especially whilst sympathizing with all the dictators of such countries following and remaking ideologies introduced by the left. He strongly believed that Marxism is a political ideology with the biggest potential for development and growth, hence the most utilizable and practical one. Despite all of the actors attempting to form Marxism and put it into practice wrongly, Sartre saw the answer in fusing existentialism with it, as proposed in *Search for a Method* that helped to pre-establish the grounds for his latter work *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (Sartre & Barnes, 1969).

Sartre did not appreciate Marxism being that black-and-white yet overcrowded with stains of historicism since his initial philosophy argues for one's life being a product of an individual's choices. On the contrary, Marxism is essentially built on the idea of an unfairly bi-polarized society, where one of the sides is exploited whereas the other is the exploiter. Frankly a black-and-white way of perceiving society that may be seen even as shallow and populist at some points. Nonetheless, this would then mean there is some sort of a precondition that defines one's life and role in the world, and therefore a great contradiction with the already established existential philosophy of Sartre's would emerge. In order to overcome the possible contradictory results, Sartre tries to re-shape the notion of society on the premises of existential philosophy -- the power and importance of individual beings that altogether form a community. Insofar as the reasons for such formations are concerned, they may vary in the details but preserve one common aspect, which is to collaborate in order to achieve a goal.

“As we have seen, the necessity of the group is not present *a priori* in a gathering. But we have also seen that through its serial unity (in so far as the negative unity of the series can, as abstract negation, oppose seriality) the gathering furnishes the elementary conditions of the possibility that its members should constitute a group. But this remains abstract. Obviously everything would be simpler in a transcendental, idealist dialectic: the movement of integration by which every organism contains and dominates its inorganic pluralities would be presented as transforming itself, at the level of social plurality, into an integration of individuals into an organic totality. Thus the group would function as a hyper-organism in relation to individual organisms.” (Sartre, 2004, p. 345)

Moreover, Sartre argues that groups of people are not determined *a priori* but formed in the name of solidarity, for instance, when there is a group of people that feel oppressed by someone else, solidarity is the unity that gives them both hope and power to exist (e.g. human rights movements, people of color movements, feminist movements, and so forth).

To reflect on Marxism’s notion of society, which is accordingly shaped by the historical events and thus irresponsible of its own situation, Sartre tries to flip the cards and give away the contrapositive view on it, where a person is the responsible one for both their existence and historical events that are just a mere outcome and reflection of one’s choices. Indubitably, the preconditions based on one’s background and environment may bend the way of their path, but they are always free enough to redirect themselves nonetheless. If the possibility of redirection comes to be questioned, it only shows that the one who is to question lives in ‘bad faith’. However, this phenomenon based on the reversed notion of Marxist society signalizes how groups of people actually are bonded together; individuals share common objectives that overlap with their consciousnesses and thus a group is rather a fusion of multiple valid individuals than a singular existence on its own. Materialism needs to be enriched by focusing on the human factors and acknowledging the importance of self-consciousness in order to maintain its relevance

and validity. In other words, a formation of a group of people is not prior to them but the contrary, since its creation is motivated purely by one's will to achieve something that is easier to be achieved by cooperation and thus seeks another entity with the same goal to accomplish the quest.

Sartre as a Non-Cartesian Dualist

“Those who call Sartre a Cartesian dualist are only half wrong. He never accepted a two-substance ontology or an inside-outside epistemology. Yet neither did he reject the cogito as a philosophic point of departure.”
(Flynn, 1986, p. 196).

In other words, Sartre himself did not claim to be a Cartesian dualist but could not escape being recognized as one, since many of his ideas shared common aspects with it. Just as when he stressed that he did not follow the values and ideals of the French Communist party but rather supported it by believing in those of his own creation, it appears as he tried to flee any attempts of putting labels on himself in general. So, what Flynn means is that Sartre's philosophy shared quite a lot of common notions regarding ontology in the fashion of Cartesian dualism nonetheless the rejection of some of the others.

To be a dualist means to distinguish two opposites of a given phenomenon that describes the functioning of something greater (for instance; virtue/vice, good/evil, and so on). However, in philosophy, the perception of dualism took a drastic turn and has henceforth paid attention primarily to the distinction of body and mind (i.e. the physical realm and the mental realm). Such a metaphysical way of looking at the problem emerged in ancient Greece when the famous thinkers realized the duality of things that are observable from the outside and those which are not. To elaborate on the idea, one may perceive and recognize the body of another but cannot really apprehend what is going on in their minds (Robinson, 2020). This reality then intrigued and influenced the aims of other philosophers up to the point when Rene Descartes started his search for the absolute truth.

His formula for this quest was rather simple to formulate yet hard to accomplish; Descartes started to doubt and question every single phenomenon he came across in order to find the indubitable, which would represent the absolute. Finally, he came to a conclusion that the mind is the indubitable and defining existence, hence the famous quote “*Cogito ergo sum*” (I think, therefore I am) (Descartes, 1994, p. 18). Nevertheless, what he found interesting is the fact how one’s mind does affect one’s body as well as the outside world, thus came to a conclusion that the human body and mind together create an indivisible unity and synthesis.

Even though Sartre rejected the idea of the body being somewhere “out there”, he did not fully reject it as well as he was fully conscious about the synthetic part of the problem. It is especially evident while subscribing to the notion of the mind affecting the body based on choices that are mere products of one’s free will.

“We discovered consciousness as an appeal to being, and we showed that the *cogito* refers immediately to a being-in-itself which is the *object* of consciousness. But after our description of the In-itself and the For-itself, it appeared to us difficult to establish a bond between them, and we feared that we might fall into an insurmountable dualism.” (Sartre, 1964, p. 785)

In other words, the mind is the inapprehensible unit that coordinates all of our actions, therefore represents the starting line of essentially everything. This realization of this relationship ends the ongoing flow of influence between the body and the mind and may actually change many ways of perceiving Sartre’s philosophy since the ultimate freedom (of choice) would play an even bigger part in the questions regarding ontology.

The reason why Sartre is so greatly mistaken to be a Cartesian dualist is rather simple, he established a way of looking at one’s existence through two levels: being-in-itself and being-for-itself. The prior describes one’s consciousness since it exists only within the ontological synthesis (i.e. one’s existence as a whole). Whereas the latter argues that being-for-itself represents the outside part of a being that is changeable on the premises

of the prior. To elaborate on the given subject, being-in-itself represents all what is internalized and cannot be observed by the others -- it is the very core of existence that has both the potential and aspiration to affect the outside reality that is directly connected and associated with being-for-itself. The latter is then naturally affiliated with the body since it is “out there” and interacting with the space that surrounds it. Essentially, the argument is that the mind is the point of departure while the body and its whole essence becomes transformable for the sake of being-in-itself and choices that emerged from it (Sartre, 1964, p. 24) This shall thus help accommodation of the reversed version of the movement that argues for the possibility of affection that comes from being-for-itself instead of being it the other way around (the shift of the points of departure). That would grant the ability to understand how some of the outside factors may affect our inner selves; the environment has a significant effect on what existentialists consider the individual’s core of existence. Such knowledge comes about as necessary for successful comprehension of argumentation in the next chapter.

Chapter III.

The Consistency of Sartre's Philosophies

Due to its controversial status gained during the 20th century, Marxism became the rejected political theory and thus anyone affiliated with it fell into either complete or at least partial neglect, insofar as institutions are concerned. Nonetheless, Sartre's existentialism became so revolutionary that one cannot simply deny his contribution to academia. However, many scholars and commentators used to overlook his later philosophy based on the "communist boogeyman" which accompanies it. Due to these reasons Sartre's life as a philosopher, as well as his accomplishments, remained separated into two periods -- the existential and the Marxist one. Perceiving one's existence as sliced into two halves is not quite the right way, meanwhile considering them the crucial part of a movement reductively based on the premises of their early works.

It is widely acknowledged that Sartre made the shift to Marxism mainly due to the horrors of the Second World War, which somehow forced thinkers to seek moral rescue and remedy for society. Fascism being the radical ideology of right-wing politics, it embodied the evil deeds of the side and therefore influenced people to find the counter-arguments on the other, many times as well extreme, the spectrum of the political compass. This being said, socialism naturally appeared as the refuge for a better society, since it put people and their well-being in front of everything else, for example, economy and diplomatic power. Societies throughout the old continent, being also communities, felt shaken and distorted, and thus an immediate change of their management became necessary -- some of the countries still lean towards social democracy as it embodies sort of an social insurance. However, this "morally-correct" color painted disguise quickly became a favorite among other political powers such as the Soviet Union, which, as it is generally known, suffered for decades from totalitarian behavior of such figures as Joseph Stalin, often described as bringing even more misery upon the citizens than the war itself. As a matter of fact, one shall not accuse Sartre from being that radical about leftism after all. Despite the initial admiration of the USSR, Sartre himself condemned

Stalinism eventually and called it an “abuse” of the Hegelian and Marxist legacy, in 1960 while finishing *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (Sartre, 2004, p. 50). The totalizing approach to history and society, as utilized by Stalin, has no place in a well-existing state since it interferes with people’s freedoms and thus disrupts the common notions of both existentialism and existential Marxism. Nevertheless, such reality only validated Sartre’s argument for the urge of Marxism’s revision, ideally by implementing the principles already discovered in existentialism. Moreover, Sartre felt disgusted by the hypocrisy of what claimed to be socialist countries since many of them overstepped the almost-utopian boundaries set by Marxism. For instance, the bureaucratic aspects of the French Communist Party or even more extremely, the imperialistic behavior of the USSR towards Hungary and Czechoslovakia. These negative and even contradictory aspects damaged Marxist initial ideas and so Sartre called this phenomenon a ‘sclerosis’ before forsaking the practical side of the philosophy in 1968.

“ ... to understand what caused the “sclerosis” of this philosophy that was “still young, almost in its infancy.” Both volumes of the *Critique* show that the sclerosis stemmed from the Bolshevik Revolution. Sartre’s other studies of the time had also looked at other aspects of the sclerosis, including the bureaucratic French Communist party and its political timidity, and Soviet imperial policy in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. By 1968, Sartre had lost hope in the Communist world, in Marxism’s grand anticipation of socialism’s coming-into-existence” (Aronson, 2019, p. 97).

However, Sartre still believed that capitalism just has to be accounted for and thus claimed that Marxism will rise again enriched by brand new notions that would fit the given time of its presence. Seeing the world nowadays and how societies realize the damages done by capitalism, he was not wrong at all. Not to mention, Marxism, as a philosophy of those whose voices remain unheard, has inspired many movements throughout the world such as those of feminist or ethnical nature (e.g. Black Lives Matter).

As established before, Sartre was not an exception and also supported the left-wing ideologies but instead of subscribing to Marxism fully he meant to reshape it in order to bring its functionality to “perfection”. It would truly be self-contradictory of him to recklessly follow Marxistic ideals while claiming to be the godfather of existentialism and thus the pioneer of freedom as such. As the result, existential Marxism came to its existence, a theory proposed by Sartre trying to implement aspects of individuality present within existentialism in order to stress the importance of separate persons in the community. This fact helps people to understand the approach of Sartre’s toward the shift of his philosophies. In other words, it is not a shift *per se* but rather a subject to evolution and natural development. Claiming this reality, Sartre’s dedication to fusing existentialism as his prior field of study with Marxism as his political belief does not disrupt the continuity of his works but rather adds on regarding the topic being either political or ontological (i.e. while most of his early writings focused on existential questions, there was no need to elaborate on political ones. On the contrary, in the later works, he tackled the topics regarding society and thus politics, which appears as logically correlated with philosophy from the very beginning of its existence). Moreover, he did not forsake any of his prior assumptions and claims for the sake of being Marxist, quite the opposite, he tried to utilize them in favor of his political views. It may have been quite predictable on the premises of his early writings -- in *Nausea*, Sartre successfully depicts such a situation in a community by stressing the loneliness and introspectiveness of the protagonist whilst being an important part of the society that comes about as absurd yet arbitrary.

An interesting remark comes to mind while watching the infamous play *No Exit*, where the three protagonists create a love triangle, *post-mortem* in a setting that represents hell, where one of them always loves the one who does not love them back. This situation brings them to mental distress, making them suffer from each other’s presence that is not escapable and thus symbolizes the inescapable suffering brought by other people and their emotionality. However, on account of Sartre’s *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, where he, as mentioned above, claims that groups of people cannot exist as a precondition, this exact grouping of the individuals, which happens to be the main subject

of *No Exit's* plot, came about prior and hence was predetermined for the individuals. Taking this fact in a symbolic fashion, it not just merely validates Sartre's ideas presented in his later writings regarding Marxism and its notion of communities but also brings up the fact of remaining mentally damaged if such a scenario was possible to happen.

Nevertheless, there is a fraction of communitarian philosophy present in existentialism. According to Sartre, to love is to give yourself away to the 'other' and thus to establish a notion called being-for-others. This conception depicts a situation where, following Sartre's language, love becomes a hazardous game dependent on a compromise that needs to be constantly in check. If the mutual compromise does not longer exist, the lover may become an object, meaning they lose themselves totally for the sake of the beloved which gradually changes into a sadist-masochist dialectic. Such a situation might result in fatal damage and thus one must be aware of it. However, Sartre does realize the importance of love and being-for-others as such since in his words when we are in love our existence seems justified (Sartre, 1964, p. 484). The phenomenon of love then becomes a conflict that can be successfully resolved only by a fair compromise yet is arbitrary for our well-being. This being said, being-for-others is a necessary part of one's existence and thus existentialism does not undermine the essentiality of a community as it may appear at the first glance.

Another interesting argument for Sartre's consistency emerges from his most prominent work *Being and Nothingness*, since Sartre deep-dived into his theory of living in 'bad faith', it might as well correspond with the later writings of his. More precisely, if one is to condemn his later works based on the judgment that they are not in continuity with his prior texts and that his philosophical shift embodied a contradiction, somewhat automatically validates the 'bad faith theory. The theory then becomes something like instant insurance for every radical change in one's life. In other words, to condemn someone for suddenly choosing a different path in their lives is to reject the notion of free will and individual freedom as such; Sartre took the opportunity of shifting his academic focus freely and thus did not engage in 'bad faith'.

Cartesian Dualism as a Remedy?

Despite Sartre being negative about his accusations of being a Cartesian dualist quite constantly, one may try to look at his professional development through that lens nonetheless. Especially after realizing the patterns of dualism within his works that elaborate on the principle of the mind and the body being a synthesis. Addressing freedom in a negative fashion became Sartre's mark as soon as he cried that "we are condemned to be free". Perceiving freedom as something radical and unescapable makes one think about Sartre's personal relations with it, even more so after witnessing his acquaintances with many totalitarian dictators across the globe. At some point, Sartre shared rather vocally his admiration for the USSR, Castro's Cuba, or even Che Guevara's activism. Many of these facts involve not that positively known people as far as morality is concerned and yet Sartre saw something positive about them, regardless of his rejection of Stalinism which represented the total extreme of totalitarianism.

Is it possible to reverse the affection of the mind on the body known from Cartesian dualism in order to affect our mind through the body, even more so in regard to Sartre's notion involving the being-in-itself and being-for-itself theory? Such a question is not that difficult to answer, however it leads to other problems in connection to it. The mind, as the point of departure, may also create feelings based on the activities affecting our bodies, for instance, people's minds react and process feelings of pleasure or pain, which are delivered via their bodily receptors. These indeed are very basic examples, however, they may lead to somewhat more complex ones, such as feeling and registering the lack of freedom. If we are to admit this notion, it reveals a lot of uncertainties about Sartre's fascination with some of those already mentioned authoritarian regimes. To elaborate on this argument, Sartre being scared of his own freedom which he calls radical, his attempt to save himself from it may have led him towards the appreciation of restrained physical freedom. Such submission to this kind of restrictive authoritarianism may use the formula of Cartesian dualism, as well as Sartre's notion of the synthetic principles involving one's being, and thus reflect the restraint of the body on the mind; representing an escape from the self-tyranny of nauseous freedom itself. In such a case, Sartre's positive feelings

about socialism could be translated into a situation where one's absolute self-responsibility is reduced by the outside factors, in this case, the state. By granting someone insurance in the form of social welfare means to take care of some of their responsibilities regarding survival, hence reducing their outside freedom nonetheless. In an altered formulation, modern socialist, as well as countries which follow principles of social democracy, restrain one's extremist approach to freedom in the physical world by, for instance, asking them to pay taxes for the sake of assurance in the form of accessible health care or education. Having easy access to such entitlements gradually reduces the discomforts originating in the radical self-responsibility for survival that potentially results in a reduction of the anxiety connected to such problems that dwell in one's mind. Therefore, while following this formula, there is a high probability of decreasing the unpleasant feeling of the so-called vertigo (i.e. dizziness of freedom) that stems from the inside of one's existence and so reduces the possibilities of discomfort on both levels by triggering the radical freedom itself.

Relevancy of Sartre's Message in the Contemporary World

Capitalism has become the predominant economic system that defines the western part of the globe. Many times being associated with democracy and interpreted as the indivisible part of it. Reasons for this reality may be varied but one of them definitely is the fear factor stemming from the past invalid political regimes. However, as time proceeds, capitalism, just like any other theory put in practice, naturally ages and unveils many of its gaps. For instance, the centralization of the world's property becomes stronger every day based on the upcoming monopolies (e.g. Amazon, Google, etc.), which damages the prosperity of business opportunities of regular folk. Moreover, such corporations play the role of an imaginary tyrant using their hegemony and presenting small-businesses owners with only two paths: join us or lose (Blake, 2019). Such behavior is inexcusable and even more so incomprehensible while being used as a positive argument by some of the people.

The conservative values of a capitalist country do not appeal to the youth anymore. This being said, the world, and especially the United States of America, is becoming more bipolarized every day, which hurts society as people are being thrown into essentially two categories forcefully -- the left and the right. Not to mention, economic inequality is becoming more of an important topic each day that passes by -- the world has not witnessed such a gap between rich and poor yet (OECD, 2021). Such polarization greatly distorts society, not making people feel alienated but rather anxious by constantly realizing there is an enemy among them. These feelings and perception of society, from a citizen's view, makes people naturally closed in their own bubbles that only feeds the negative emotions and thus gradually enlarges the gap between the two camps. However, it is rather interesting how liberalism overlaps with the leftist view of the world, since liberals believe in the freedom of individuals, just as existentialists like Sartre. This then begs the question, if the modern left actually subscribes to the initial ideas of Marxism or it is in fact much closer to those presented by Jean-Paul Sartre. As already mentioned several times, Sartre's remedy for filling the gaps in Marxism was the change of focus from groups to individuals, who form them and their importance comes prior to them. Nevertheless, this realization only confirms the validity of Sartre's theory that appears as supertemporal, given its date of establishment and the actual rise of its fashion.

Conclusion

To summarize the results of this thesis, Jean-Paul Sartre remains one of the most resonant figures in modern philosophy, his groundbreaking ideas regarding existential philosophy and ontological questions helped to unveil many confusions about one's existence. The notion of radical freedom appears to be widely recognized and many scholars sympathize with it gladly, since it brings many popular ideas especially in the secularized fashion that suits many different societies regardless of their cultural backgrounds or accustomed traditions. Despite his radical stance towards political questions, Sartre remains highly respected in the academic environment.

Existentialism has remained totally redefined by Sartre's early works that introduced its readers to many interesting concepts regarding a being. Motivational towards making wise choices as well as celebrating the infamous *Carpe Diem*, Sartre's insight into philosophical questions that embrace the absurdity of life and reality of people being their own directors, refreshed western philosophy significantly. Sartre tried to apply the same formula of refreshment on the political theory of Karl Marx, by appointing what appears to be the factor of imperfection -- the complete abandonment of self for the sake of stressing of a community. Following the contemporary notion of leftist philosophies, Sartre happened to be right about these factors, since one simply has to pay attention to people also on an individual level, in order to maintain their happiness and well-being. This insertion of existential philosophy into Marxism then plays an important part as a bridge, insofar as proving Sartre's philosophical consistency is concerned; he did not merely shift beliefs from existentialism to Marxism but rather complemented each other with the best of both theories. Eventually, the genius of Sartre's cannot be forsaken right after he finished *Being and Nothingness*, since all of his works actually represent his ideas that remain interlinked. As noticeable, his appeal for socialism is also highly present in some of his earlier works that argue for the importance of community and individual welfare. Moreover, even though not all of Sartre's philosophy matches with Cartesian dualism, there are many of them present, which leads some of the commentators, as well as this thesis, to question hypothetically his submission to

totalitarian regimes and admiration for those who were in the lead of such countries. As mentioned before, it appears as Sartre might have sought a way of restricting his freedom of mind through engaging restriction in the physical realm, which would gradually reflect on the mind. Despite his beliefs in the mind being the point of departure, it is evident how our mind may be affected through sensory receptors, thus there is some degree of its functioning on a vice-versa principle.

Lastly, Sartre's remarks on society and assessment of the leftist politics as the most suitable for a modern society may eventually prevail as an accurate assumption, given the actual worldviews shared among citizens across the globe, namely in the western sphere. People need to feel assured and secured in order to diminish anxieties that trouble such modern folk, since such anxieties also may be traced back to their existential origin, therefore, to their roots overlap the individual level as well as the communitarian one.

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Resumé

Cieľom tejto práce je dokázanie zotrvačnosti Sartreho existencializmu a Marxizmu, ktorá je často vnímaná ako spontánny skok namiesto konzistentného prechodu i napriek množstvu dôkazov, ktoré dokazujú opak. Jean-Paul Sartre sám argumentoval jeho inklináciu k Marxizmu ako realitu, ktorá koexistuje s jeho predošlými existenciálnymi dielami.

Prvá kapitola sa primárne zaoberá definíciou rôznych faktov a terminológie, ktoré slúžia v neskorších kapitolách ako piliere navrhnutých argumentov. Počínajúc opisom Sartreho profesionálneho života ako filozof, ktorý definoval hnutie existencializmu vo sfére filozofie, a tak dosiahol označenia krstného otca tohto hnutia. Autor taktiež kladie dôraz na jeho diela v chronologickom poradí, v záujme klarifikovania osobnostnej evolúcie Jean-Paula Sartra. V neposlednom rade sa autor snaží priblížiť významy rôznych filozofických konceptov, ktoré graduálne poslúžia ako dôkazy, respektíve indikátory Sartreho filozofického progresu.

V druhej kapitole autor predstavuje Hegelovú dialektiku, ktorá objasňuje nutnosť komunity v živote indivíduí za účelom sebapoznania. Vďaka objasneniu danej dialektiky autor môže pokračovať na Marxov materialistický prístup voči tejto dialektike, keďže študoval pod krídlami Hegela a teda elaboroval na jeho prvotnej myšlienke v zmysle redukovania prítomnosti elementu idealizmu. Následne autor vysvetľuje konektivitu a pôvod fenoménu zvaného existenciálny Marxizmus, ktorý bol predstavený práve Jean-Paul Sartrom o pár rokov neskôr. Základ tohto hnutia totiž nie je zmesou chaotických presvedčení, ale implementácia dôrazu na individualitu za účelom využitia Marxizmu ako potenciálne prínosnej politickej teórie. Neskôr sa autor snaží vysvetliť základy princípov dualizmu, najmä karteziánskeho, za účelom definovania pohľadu na existenciu ako na syntézu toho, čo tvorí telo a toho, čo tvorí myseľ, keďže Sartre odprezentoval podobnú teóriu v jednom z jeho najdôležitejších diel života.

Zámerom tretej kapitoly je spracovanie už nadobudnutých vedomostí za účelom vyjasnenia spomenutej zotrvačnosti medzi Sartreho zmenou filozofických cieľov. Najprv sa autor snaží odprezentovať argumenty, ktoré dokazujú argumentačnú zhodu medzi existenciálnym obdobím Jean-Paula Sartra, taktiež ako v období existenciálneho Marxizmu. Následne sa kladie dôraz na prítomnosť argumentov v jeho neskorších dielach, ktoré obsahujú množstvo poznatkov z existencializmu. Neskôr sa autor snaží vysvetliť možnosť Sartreho pokusu úniku pred radikálnou slobodou skrz obmedzenia slobody vo fyzikálnom svete, ktoré sa potenciálne odreflektujú na svet mentálny, a teda zredukujú existenciu úzkosti prameniacej z ultimátnej zodpovednosti. Táto teória sa následne utilizuje a oddemonštruje na princípe socializmu, respektíve sociálnej demokracie za účelom komfortu občanov takých štátov. V neposlednom rade sa tretia kapitola snaží priblížiť relevanciu Sartreho filozofie v dnešnej dobe, keďže existuje viac než dostatok faktov argumentujúcich za návrat akejsi aktualizovanej formy Marxizmu, ako odpoveď na neetické praktiky dnešného kapitalizmu.

Vo výsledku sa teda autorovi podarí objasnenie prvotných nejasností prítomných v existenciálnom Marxizme a teda predstaví dôkaz o prelínajúcich sa aspektoch existencializmu a Marxizmu. Tieto poznatky tak graduálne podporia argument, ktorý naznačuje kontinualitu Sartreho filozofie namiesto vnímania tejto filozofie ako niečo, čo je spontáne prerušené a nekonzistentné.