

Simone de Beauvoir and Jean Paul Sartre: Regarding their conceptions of freedom and the relations these conceptions may have to ethical theory

Dusan Galic

University of Kansas

William Shakespeare once wrote “To be or not to be, that is the question.” Jean Paul Sartre would more than likely have dismissed this question in its entirety. According to Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*, each human being as an individual consciousness is at the same time what it is and what it is not. “What being will be must of necessity arise on the basis of what it is not, [i.e. nothingness],” writes Sartre.¹ This activity of nothingness that we as consciousnesses assume lies at the heart of Sartre’s analysis of human freedom. He argues that we are trapped within an ambiguous situation in which we are torn between our factual existence as a being in itself and the free and undefined existence as a being for itself. It is this latter existence that we exercise this notting activity, freely and spontaneously choosing “not” to be determined by the world and its inhabitants and creating meaning and interpreting the world as we as individuals see fit.

This ontological notion of freedom is most famously shared by Sartre’s lifelong companion, Simone de Beauvoir. Beauvoir admits that Sartre’s analysis serves as the foundation for all freedom. However, in *The Ethics of Ambiguity* she revises his analysis by distinguishing between the aforementioned freedom that is a universal fact of human existence (freedom as consciousness) and the freedom that is a moral choice (moral awareness). This further enrichment of the notion of freedom as offered by Beauvoir is prompted by her recognition that there are people, such as women and laborers, who find themselves in an oppressive state in which they are prohibited from exercising this fundamental freedom and must result to various forms of political action such as revolt to overcome this oppression. This revision of Sartre’s

philosophy has led Beauvoir to criticize Sartre's analysis of freedom as being somewhat abstract and underdeveloped. In the following essay I will flush out Beauvoir's criticism through her discussion of oppression, moral freedom, and the importance of "others" and provide a plausible response on Sartre's behalf with the help of both of his later and earlier philosophical works. Through the viewpoints of these various Sartrean pieces I will attempt to illustrate that while they might initially seem to offer a reasonable reply, they ultimately fail to fully refute Beauvoir's particular criticism.

Before we can begin to expound on Beauvoir's notion of a moral freedom, we must first understand her reasons for its introduction. In *The Ethics of Ambiguity* Beauvoir clearly writes that there is an ethics only "if there is a problem to solve. The ethics which have given solutions by effacing the fact of the separation of men are not valid precisely because there is this separation. An ethics of ambiguity will be one which will refuse to deny a priori that separate existents can, at the same time, be bound to each other, that their individual freedoms can forge laws valid for all."² It is well known that Beauvoir's development of an ethics (of ambiguity) was written against the backdrop of Sartre's text *Being and Nothingness*. And while Beauvoir concedes that each individual's freedom as consciousness in which one is a being for itself is fundamental and essential for an individual, the question that remains is why one should adopt this ontological notion of freedom if we, are as Sartre claims, condemned to be free. That is to say, Sartre might have successfully provided a descriptive account of our natural human freedom but has failed to provide a prescriptive ethical theory demonstrating why we ought to choose freedom. Beauvoir's ethics is then an attempt to offer reason(s) behind this choice and her answer is none other than the problem of oppression or injustice. To further clarify this reason she critically evaluates Sartre's analysis of consciousness. According to Sartre, every human being as a for itself (consciousness) is equally free and thus a slave's consciousness is just as free as his master's and even if the possibilities of action are minimal or nill the slave can still freely interpret internally his situation. And the only thing that could potentially and briefly limit our freedom is the facticity

in which we find ourselves. However, Beauvoir argues that although Sartre recognizes that facticity and situation limit an individual's freedom in the sense that one's freedom is always contextual, he does not allow that there are differences amongst our situations that create inequality with regards to an individual's capacity to exercise her freedom. Beauvoir stresses that we are embodied creatures deeply shaped by and embedded in society and its institutions, living in a community of intersubjectivity with other humans. And all of these things modify our individual capacity for recognizing and exercising our freedom as active, moral choice makers. Therefore, according to our different social situations and unequal status, people are unequally free, i.e. there are oppressors and those that are oppressed. However, if we were to simply accept Sartre's ontological notion of freedom as the only type of freedom, then it would make no sense to speak of oppressor and oppressed, for according to Sartre even in a state of oppression one has the internal freedom of thought to reinterpret her situation and make it her own. This denial of concrete reality in which oppression /injustice run rampant in today's society is why Beauvoir criticizes Sartre's analysis as an abstract and disembodied freedom that results in an attitude of inaction towards alleviating the ills of mankind. And the oppression that Beauvoir alludes to not only refers to one type experienced by one group, rather she speaks of physical oppression felt by slaves, economic oppression felt by laborers and an oppression of sexism felt by women. The oppressed are simply "those beings whose life slips by in an infantile world because, having been kept in a state of servitude and ignorance, they have no means of breaking the ceiling which is stretched over their heads."³

This reality of oppression then sets the stage for her discussion of a twofold moral freedom: recognition and the adoption of my own freedom and the freedom of others. In other words, in order to reach the utopian society in which all have achieved this moral freedom, one must first become aware of the injustices in one's own situation and then those in the situations of others before any action to overcome and revolt against this oppression can occur. She writes, "In order for men to become indignant or to admire, they must be conscious of their own freedom and the free-

dom of others. Thus, everything occurs within each man and in the collective tactics as if men were free."⁴

How then do we achieve this moral freedom on first a personal level? Beauvoir stresses that one must first realize one's ontological freedom for that is the original condition of all justification of existence through which she is able to create meaning and value. However, it is only through the reflective, decisional manifestation of this original freedom that moral freedom is achieved. In other words, one must will to positively adopt one's natural freedom and through this choice one will in effect obtain moral freedom. "To will oneself free is to effect the transition from nature to morality by establishing a genuine [moral] freedom on the original upsurge of our existence."⁵ According to Beauvoir, this achievement of moral freedom necessitates the call for action, i.e. action that will serve to end the oppression that one as an individual experiences and the oppression that many others have to endure and suffer through. Therefore, this moral freedom is one that can be described as an ethics of action and also one that is clearly lacking from Sartre's philosophy. Beauvoir claims that "it is contradictory to set freedom up as something conquered if at first [as Sartre claims] it is something given."⁶ What then makes this moral freedom a necessity in the real world and how does it serve as a criticism to the analysis of freedom as spelled out by Sartre? Beauvoir argues that if we merely ended with our given, natural freedom there would never be any need to act out against the injustices and oppression that many people experience. Beauvoir, when speaking of Sartre, comments that "if a door refuses to open, [he would respond by saying] lets us accept not opening it and there we are free. But by doing that, one manages only to save an abstract notion of freedom. It is emptied of all content and all truth."⁷ Therefore, Beauvoir's notion of a moral freedom is one that not only forces one to become aware of herself as a free, conscious being but to actively and positively choose to live by this original freedom. In this sense "to will oneself moral and to will oneself free are one and the same decision."⁸ This moral freedom for Beauvoir is described as a process of self-surpassing or transcendence. As we strive towards an authentic existence as morally free beings she claims

that as consciousnesses we go beyond what we are and what we have been in our past and we can do so only by owning our reality and accepting fully responsibility for it. Unfortunately, we often evade this choice and the responsibility that accompanies it. She recognizes that failure is part of any ethical theory; however, in spite of our inevitable mishaps we must seek a genuine development of our will thus empowering us to free ourselves from oppression. "A freedom can not will itself without willing itself as an indefinite movement. It must absolutely reject the constraints which arrest its drive toward itself. Thus, just as life is identified with the will-to-live, freedom always appears as a movement of liberation."⁹ According to Beauvoir, the way in which we fail with respect to this movement and allow ourselves to fall into a state of oppression is eerily similar to the way in which an adult falls back into her nostalgic and worry-free past as a child. For example, a woman may choose to accept and live by the values that society has deemed as being feminine such as those of humility and coquettishness. However, Beauvoir stresses that the difference is that "the child's situation is imposed upon him, whereas the woman chooses it or at least consents to it."¹⁰ Thus, as a result of this woman's consent and upon the awareness of her childlike values and oppressive situation, she is without excuse and is obliged to resist these unjust limitations on her freedom for the sake of preserving her own freedom.

Yet, this woman is not alone in her struggle and movement towards liberation for there are many people that share her pain and exist in similar oppressive situations. Thus according to Beauvoir, to truly live as an authentic and morally free agent one must also become aware of and adopt the enlargement of the freedom of all individuals as one's universal moral ideal and engage oneself in actions concretely directed to that end. This requires the full recognition that human reality is social and not just merely individual. She writes, "Every man has to do with other men. The world in which he engages himself is a human world in which each object is penetrated with human meanings. He must disclose the world with the purpose of further disclosure and by the same movement try to free men, by means of whom the world takes on meaning."¹¹

This endeavor to preserve the freedom of others then serves as Beauvoir's third and final part of her criticism of Sartre's analysis. That's to say, while Beauvoir stresses the importance of communal activity and being with others, Sartre finds the world of others as problematic and inherently ridden with conflict. In one of his plays entitled *No Exit* he goes so far as to claim that "hell is other people." On the other hand and despite her emphasis on social reform, Beauvoir reminds us that her own ethical analysis of freedom is not one that denies in some a priori sense the separate existences of concrete individual human beings. Thus the focus is still on the individual, but this does not imply that these individuals cannot be bound together in communities where they can exercise their freedom in joint projects to liberate their fellow man from oppression and forge universal laws that would ensure their liberation. In fact, it is only through our interactions and relations with others that we are able to fully become morally free beings. "One can reveal the world only on a basis revealed by other men. No project can be defined except by its interference with other projects. To make being 'be' is to communicate with others by means of [authentically] being. Only the freedom of others keeps each one of us from hardening in the absurdity of facticity."¹² This collective struggle to solve the problem of oppression then takes the form of a revolution. According to Beauvoir, each one of us must actively commit ourselves to revolt against the oppressive situation and the men that have placed many of us there robbing our lives of all meaning and accomplishment. She writes, "The oppressed has only one solution: to deny the harmony of that mankind from which an attempt is made to exclude him, to prove that he is a man and that he is free by revolting against the tyrants."¹³ However, our revolutionary activities and the violence that we might employ are to some extent limited. Beauvoir states that "violence is justified only if it opens concrete possibilities to the freedom which I [as an oppressed person] am trying to save."¹⁴ In fact she would exclude such things as the killing or torturing of our oppressors. She writes, "In order for a liberating action to be a thoroughly moral action, it would have to be achieved through a conversion of the oppressors [as well]. Only then can there be a reconciliation of all freedoms."¹⁵ She concludes by arguing that

she cannot provide any recipe on how exactly we are to conduct this revolution. She actually thinks that no ethics of action can do so, for the path towards moral freedom is left up to each responsible individual and the collective to which she belongs.

What then can we make of Beauvoir's criticism of Sartre? Many supporters of Sartre claim that the primary later work in which he attempts to address this criticism is *The Critique of Dialectical Reason: Volume One*. After his first hand experience with the horrors of WWII and his interest with the Marxist plea to end the ongoing alienation of laborers, he felt that the reality of oppression and injustice must be made aware of and furthermore overcome. However, he knew that his ontological analysis of an intuited personal freedom would be insufficient in properly addressing these present ills of mankind. Therefore, he sought to provide a sociological explanation for them by "situating" our freedom. The method that we are to employ in order to bring our situation to light is what he refers to as the Progressive-Regressive method. "It is progressive because it seeks part of the explanation in the aims and actions of conscious beings and it is regressive because it looks at the historical and social conditions in which each conscious being pursues his objectives."¹⁶ Sartre argues that men both make history and yet are made by it through the force of "scarcity." In other words, in our drive to freely create meaning in our lives we struggle against a shortage of things such as food, money, and time that we utilize in creating this meaning. Scarcity then defines the relationships we have with one another and the social structures that we construct. Sartre further claims that scarcity cannot be eradicated but it can be overcome through cooperation. In uniting myself with others (sharing scarce goods) we make it easier to achieve our desired ends. On the other hand, "this intimate relation in its reality is the negation of *unity*."¹⁷ That's to say, one realizes that the others who exist are the very reason that scarcity exists and in working together to overcome scarcity one is only worsening the situation. Our condition can then be described as collaboration among rivals. Despite our quarrelsome predicament, we march forward with life, freely creating individual values and meaning. In fact as a result of this situation, Sartre argues we perform concrete actions that seek to make our world a much

more bearable place to live. This constructive action is what Sartre so famously describes as "praxis." Thus, Sartre has demonstrated that instead of freedom being merely a given that humans choose to become aware of, it is now an activity of self-creation that we carry out in our situation of scarcity. He writes, "Freedom, here, does not mean possibility of choice, but the necessity of living constraint, that is, of fulfilling a demand through a praxis."¹⁸ However, according to Sartre not only is our world constructed by our present actions and those of our forefathers, but by nature itself, which is completely inert and indifferent to our various projects. This world of what he now calls the Practico-Inert then creates antagonisms between man and nature and even more perilously, between men themselves. According to Sartre, the collaborative relationships that men construct soon then begin to develop on a somewhat larger scale forming a society and the social structures that accompany it. Social structures for Sartre can assume one of two types: a series or a group. "A series is a collection of people who are united only by external proximity. It does not exist as a whole 'inside' any of its members."¹⁹ An example of a series would be something such as a bus line made up of various anxious people all realizing that although the seats are few, they will wait in line anyway so as to avoid fighting amongst themselves. On the other hand, a group "is a collection of people who, unlike those in a series, do have a common objective or end. Each member converts his own individual *Praxis* into a common or social *Praxis*."²⁰

A group for Sartre truly is different from a series for in a group each of its members are required to vow their allegiance to the group's ideology and doctrine. To enforce this pledge terror and threats of violence are employed by authorities who are said to embody the group's beliefs. These violent tactics for Sartre are then the beginnings of an oppressive situation for any group. He writes, "Oppression can be realized only in the form of permanent violence, that is to say, in so far as it is practiced by an anti-human species whose freedom is essentially the freedom to do evil."²¹ Therefore, to put an end to these man-made evils a public revolution must occur with the aim of reorganizing our social structures (groups) and providing a solution to the problem of scarcity from which these groups emanate. However, Sartre reminds us that while

these very structures are sinister both in their makeup and purpose, we can extract and utilize the one positive thing from them to ensure their destruction, i.e. cooperation. Sartre stresses the idea that as revolutionaries the only way to bring about positive change is if we work together in our cause. Thus, the very thing that once oppressed us now gives us the opportunity for our liberation.

Two additional and rather short pieces that could be employed to refute Beauvoir's criticism are *Portrait of The Anti-Semite* and "Materialism and Revolution." In fact both of these Sartrean pieces were published fourteen years prior to the *Critique* thereby refuting the myth that Sartre's earlier works are abstract and disembodied as Beauvoir claims of *Being and Nothingness*.

In 1945 after having been a prisoner of war and witness to several atrocities, Sartre felt prompted to convey the hatred that made these atrocities possible in his book *Portrait of The Anti-Semite*. He writes, "If a man attributes all or part of his country's and his misfortunes to the presence of Jewish elements, and if he proposes to remedy this state of affairs by depriving the Jews of certain of their rights, by debarring them from economic or social positions, by expelling them from the country, or by exterminating them wholesale, then that man is said to hold anti-Semitic opinions."²² According to Sartre, these opinions developed as a result of economic, political, and historical factors that have been used by anti-Semites to portray the Jewish people in a very negative light. He speaks of the 19th century Polish uprisings in which the Jews of Warsaw took an indifferent attitude towards the insurgents and have thus been deemed by many as traitors or cowards."²³ A Jew then is defined as the embodiment of such reprehensible traits that could be interpreted as indicative of their past; or should one say rather a lack thereof. For Sartre argues that Jews "have no common homeland, and no history. The only tie which binds them together is the hostile contempt in which they are held by the communities surrounding them."²⁴ However, he mentions that to be considered an authentic Jew "one must [freely] assert himself in and through the contempt shown towards him. [While] inauthentic Jews are those whom other men regard as Jews, and who have chosen to flee from this unbearable situation."²⁵ This individual authenticity in which one asserts one's freedom to create and in-

terpret one's own life then becomes a common cause for all Jews thereby signifying a collective authenticity. Unfortunately, he claims that many have chosen the path of inauthenticity and thus there is a "scarcity" of authentic Jews that are able to bring about positive change. Sartre further argues that "although the way to prove oneself authentic may well be to assert oneself as a Jew, [Jews] have failed to grasp the fact that authenticity is made manifest through revolt."²⁶ According to Sartre, the only way in which Jewish authenticity is feasible is if they revolt against their evil society; for a social order that infringes upon an individual's freedom could never allow authenticity to become realized in the first place. Moreover, he stresses that in this battle against anti-Semitism, the participation from "others" is crucial for he writes that "the cause of the Israelites would already be half won, if only their friends found in their defense a little of the passion and perseverance that their enemies devote to their destruction."²⁷

It is well documented that Sartre was greatly influenced by Marxism and its call to end the exploitation of laborers. In his article "Materialism and Revolution" Sartre speaks of a different kind of revolution, namely a proletariat one. He argues here that a true revolutionary theory will show that "any collective order established by men can be transcended toward other orders [which] are not yet clearly perceived since the society of which they are the expression does not yet exist—but which are invented by the very effort of the members of society to transcend it."²⁸

However, the revolutionary cause initially seems just as futile as in the Jewish effort, if not more so. According to Sartre, the exploitation that laborers endure under the insatiable capitalists will go unnoticed by many due to the workers' repetitive yet minimal level of satisfaction and contentment. Furthermore, any opportunity to become aware of their oppressive situation is stifled by the constant vigilance and threatening tactics employed by their bourgeoisie employers. A worker is then more aware of his duties on the job than his rights, and in fact considers rights as things that are exterior to him and that belong to his superiors. As a result, Sartre contends that the first step towards liberation is to abandon the very idea that rights are possessed only by a select few; for workers are men and individuals just like the authorities that

exploit them. Their decision to revolt and their newly found rights and privileges that will eventually result from this decision, however, are not for Sartre as deterministic as envisioned by Marx. Granted both gentlemen would agree that revolution is the only path to liberation for "the only way the [the proletariat] can get what [they] want is by the destruction of the class that oppresses [them]."²⁹ However, the revolutionary solution for Sartre presupposes man's freedom to seize this solution. That's to say, the rights and revolutionary methods one employs to obtain these rights are simply what ever an individual makes them to be. Thus, as a result of the laborers' exploitative status and commitment to rebel against and alter their situation, they realize that mere thought or any notion of an internal freedom would prove insufficient in achieving their goal. This is why Sartre writes, "Freedom is to be discovered only in the act, and is one with the act. It is not an inner virtue which permits us to detach ourselves from very pressing situations, because for man, there is no inside and no outside. But it is, on the contrary, the power to commit one's self in present action [to] change the present and to build a future."³⁰

At this point and after having flushed out Sartre's ideas in more detail, it is only now that we can evaluate whether or not Sartre could possibly provide a plausible response to Beauvoir's criticism. This criticism once again is that which originates within Beauvoir's text *The Ethics of Ambiguity* and claims that Sartre's philosophy, more specifically his analysis of freedom, is a disembodied one that fails to properly take into account the oppression/injustice that many of us must endure and suffer through and, most importantly, one that lacks an ethics of action that demonstrates to the oppressed, oppressors, and to every "other" individual the necessity for such action that assumes the form of a social revolution. With the help of the aforementioned Sartrean works it would seem that one could easily construct an argument to refute each and every point that this criticism makes. First of all, it is apparent in works such as *Portrait of the Anti-Semite* and "Materialism and Revolution" that Sartre pays special attention to the oppressive situation of various groups and the threats of violence that are employed to keep them there. In regards to the plight of the Jews, Sartre reveals a level of deep sensitivity and contempt towards the

hatred that they receive simply because they are Jewish. And with respect to the proletarian cause, he is concerned about their current yet elusive state of exploitation in which they are deprived of their own rights and privileges that they are to provide substance to like all other free individuals do. Second of all, it is also evident that Sartre has been able to move beyond his intuited notion of a personal freedom that many have labeled as being rather a static or inert freedom, which signals a collective involvement to act and revolt in efforts to constructively reorganize society and change its evil ways. This notion of constructive action is probably best identified with Sartre's notion of "praxis" in the *Critique*. In addition, let us not forget that in *Portrait of the Anti-Semite*, Sartre clearly emphasizes the point that freedom can only be discovered through action. Moreover, to claim that other people are inherently problematic for Sartre would seem to contradict the very ends that our actions are aimed to achieve. That is to say, Jews cannot free themselves from their anti-Semitic labels and workers could not throw down their chains of exploitation without the support of others. Thus, others are just as necessary in a revolution as the individual awareness and action that occur before others even come into play.

Yet despite this somewhat reasonable reply, I feel that Sartre would still fall considerably short of possibly providing a proper and full response to Beauvoir's criticism. First, while he might recognize that oppression and injustices exist, he does not seem to portray them in the same repulsive manner that Beauvoir does that would seem necessary to warrant their eradication from society. In other words, in *The Ethics of Ambiguity* many of the social injustices that Beauvoir speaks of are things such as racism, sexism, and any other prejudice or discriminatory tool arbitrarily concocted by ignorant people to subjugate or objectify others. She explicitly argues that there are unjust distinctions made on the basis of skin color, sex, and wealth that divide the members of our society and that can longer be ignored. However, the Sartrean notion of oppression, which initially is brought about by the force of scarcity, seems to reveal no such unjust distinctions of prejudice. In the *Critique* Sartre admits that scarcity, which eventually forces people into oppressive groups, applies to all individuals and is

simply a universal fact of our human history. Moreover, this reality of scarcity is not only the cause for our oppression but the source for our liberation. However, in a discussion contrasting the life of a child to that of a woman, Beauvoir completely denies the Sartrean idea of universal oppression and the possibility to liberate oneself as result of one's oppression. Childhood is a "particular sort of situation: it is a natural situation whose limits are not created by other men and which is thereby not comparable to situation of oppression; it is a situation which is common to all men and which is temporary for all; therefore, it does not represent a limit which cuts off the individual from her possibilities, but, on the contrary, the moment of development in which new possibilities are won," she writes.³¹ While a woman's situation, on the other hand, is for Beauvoir a particularized state of oppression where she experiences a sexual prejudice from which no positive possibilities or optimism could emanate. One could possibly refute this distinction by arguing that in *Portrait of The Anti-Semite* Sartre does speak of arbitrary distinctions of prejudice and hatred that do not apply to everyone but only to those who are considered a part of the Jewish population. While this point might seem somewhat plausible, this book describing the oppression of the Jews brings up another dilemma of Sartre's with regard to Beauvoir's notion of a moral freedom. That is to say, for Beauvoir as morally free beings we will or desire to fulfill our freedom and thus in the same regard desire to eradicate our oppression. And, on the contrary, just as easily as we can freely adopt our freedom we can at the same time reject it thereby becoming irresponsible and, moreover, inauthentic. Inauthenticity is a concept shared by Sartre but within his analysis it seems much more of a looming problem than it would for his counterpart. In other words, Sartre has a tendency to ultimately ground or base his notion of oppression upon some factual source. In the *Portrait* he argues that anti-Semitism in part originates from "an impersonal and social phenomenon which can be expressed by figures and averages and which is conditioned by constant economic, historical, and political factors."³² While these theories, including the one of scarcity, describing the origin of social oppression might prove to be accurate, Beauvoir has omitted foundational explanations such as these. In fact I believe that

Beauvoir's reason for their omission was to not provide any story or allegory that could possibly sway the oppressed to merely accept their situation as part of the way things just are in the world. This method for Beauvoir would be just as dangerous "when a conservative wishes to show that the proletariat is not oppressed. He declares that the present distribution of wealth is a natural fact and that there is no means of rejecting it; and doubtless he has a good case for proving that [for] he is not *stealing* from the worker the product of his labor, since theft supposes social conventions which in other respects authorizes exploitation."³³ Moreover, not only do these theories deprive one of willing to achieve moral freedom, but of the personal desire to simply want to be with others. In the *Critique* Sartre argues that scarcity forces us to have relationships with others and in the *Portrait* it is the anti-Semitic labels that brings the Jews together. However, nowhere in Sartre's analysis does he ever mention our desire to band together with our fellow man or the comradeship that revolutionaries experience in overcoming their oppression. Thus, one could say about Sartre that our relationships with others are nothing more than a given or natural occurrence of our past just as his ontological notion of freedom is in *Being and Nothingness*.

As a result of these aforementioned problems that arise within what many deem to be a possible Sartrean response, my contention is that Sartre is simply unable to provide a response that could truly refute Beauvoir's criticism. I attempted, however, to recount the arguments provided by many of Sartre's supporters that claim he does provide an ethical theory by examining both his later and earlier philosophical works; however, even with all this support I still believe that this argument is a futile one. Of course while I am well aware that the particular criticism by Beauvoir was in direct response to Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, my essay tried to deal with the argument offered by many that this criticism applies to Sartre's philosophy as a whole. Unfortunately, I myself cannot make such a strong claim, for there are a plethora of Sartrean texts that I have not discussed, such as many of the literary and dramatic works that he wrote throughout his life. These works convey several of Sartre's philosophical ideas of which I did not go into detail and thus I cannot dismiss. On the other hand, many Sartre-

ans could argue that the texts that I have chosen to examine were not given the fair treatment that they deserve and that an ethical theory could be extracted from them. However, the trouble that I am experiencing is that even if such an ethical theory did exist within the parameters of these works, I just cannot identify it, i.e. it is not made accessible to the very philosophy student that is writing this paper. It would only seem logical that since most ethical theories base their views upon concrete and recognizable beings and the situations in which they live, that their accessibility to be understood should be regarded as recognizable as the views upon which it stands.

Notes

¹ Sartre, Jean Paul; *Being and Nothingness*; Existentialism Basic Writings 2nd Edition (Edited w/ Introductions Charles Guignon & Derk Pereboom); Hackett Publishing Co.; Indianapolis, Indiana; 2001; 311.

² Beauvoir, Simone de; *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (translation Bernard Frechtman); Citadel Press, Kensington Publishing Corp.; New York City, New York; 1976; 18.

³ Ibid.; 37.

⁴ Ibid.; 21.

⁵ Ibid.; 25.

⁶ Ibid.; 24.

⁷ Ibid.; 29.

⁸ Ibid.; 24.

⁹ Ibid.; 31, 32.

¹⁰ Ibid.; 38.

¹¹ Ibid.; 74.

¹² Ibid.; 71.

¹³ Ibid.; 83.

¹⁴ Ibid.; 137.

¹⁵ Ibid.; 96.

¹⁶ Cranston, Maurice; *The Quintessence of Sartrism*; Harvest House; Montreal, Quebec-Canada; 1969; 39.

¹⁷ Sartre, Jean Paul; *Critique of Dialectical Reason-Volume One* (translation Alan Sheridan Smith); Verso Publishing Co.; New York City, New York; 1976; 114.

¹⁸ Ibid.; 365.

¹⁹ Cranston, Maurice; *The Quintessence of Sartreism*; Harvest House; Montreal, Quebec-Canada; 1969; 46.

²⁰ *Ibid.*; 47.

²¹ Sartre, Jean Paul; *Critique of Dialectical Reason-Volume One* (translation Alan Sheridan Smith); Verso Publishing Co.; New York City, New York; 1976; 747.

²² Sartre, Jean Paul; *Portrait of The Anti-Semite*; (translation Erik de Murray); Secker & Warburg. Lindsay Drummond; London, England; 1948; 5.

²³ *Ibid.*; 11.

²⁴ *Ibid.*; 76, 77.

²⁵ *Ibid.*; 77, 78.

²⁶ *Ibid.*; 91.

²⁷ *Ibid.*; 128.

²⁸ Sartre, Jean Paul; "Materialism and Revolution"; *Sartre Literary and Philosophical Essays*; A. Michelson; Collier Books; 1962; 235.

²⁹ *Ibid.*; 225.

³⁰ *Ibid.*; 243.

³¹ Beauvoir, Simone de; *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (translation Bernard Frechtman); Citadel Press, Kensington Publishing Corp.; New York City, New York; 1976; 141.

³² Sartre, Jean Paul; *Portrait of The Anti-Semite*; (translation Erik de Murray); Secker & Warburg. Lindsay Drummond; London, England; 1948; 6.

³³ Beauvoir, Simone de; *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (translation Bernard Frechtman); Citadel Press, Kensington Publishing Corp.; New York City, New York; 1976; 83.