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Organized Freedom
and Progressive Reflection

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Abstract: The present article provides an account of the chapter of
volume one of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* entitled "The
Organization." It is guided by the following questions: In what ways
is the organization an advancement over the group in fusion and the
statutory group? How does the organization contribute to the pro-
gressive dimension of Sartre's progressive-regressive method? What
is the status of the future within organized groups? It develops
Sartre's theory of power, rights, and duties, and shows that these
concepts exist independently of the *Polis*. This makes possible a con-
trast with Plato and allows us to develop the implicit Sartrean con-
cepts of moderation and justice in this chapter. I further show the
internal structures and functioning of the organized group, Sartre's
concept of personal identity in such action, and the manner in which
the future becomes concrete in such articulated action orientated
toward an ultimate, collective aim.

Keywords: function, future, metastability, organization, personal
identity, *praxis*, reflection

The chapter entitled "The Organization" occupies a position of
central importance in volume one of the *Critique of Dialectical Rea-
son*. It comes at a crucial point in the text, namely, after the forma-
tion of the pledged group, which was itself developed with the
explicit purpose of maintaining the internal cohesion of the group in
fusion[1] after its action had been completed. The statutory group,
having fulfilled its function through the invocation of the pledge
and the concomitant fraternity-terror, requires further articulation if
the goals and objectives of the group are to be achieved and main-
tained. For instance, if the citizens of Paris hoped to maintain their
security after the storming of the Bastille, the initial, spontaneous

allegiance to the group in fusion would be inadequate for its peren-
nial existence. Further, internal consistency of the group is required.
Moreover, the statutory group itself demands further "differentia-
tion," the introduction of an order which will serve to tighten the
unity of the group through the "distribution of tasks" and responsi-
bility.[2] *This is precisely the role of the organization.* In what follows, it
will be our task to demonstrate the manner in which the organiza-
tion serves to develop the two previous group-forms, and to show
that through this development the *Critique* as a whole shifts and
gains a determinacy which allows it to realize the progressive aspect
of the progressive-regressive method which was hitherto not possi-
ble. Finally, in addition to realizing a shift in the text, we would also
like to propose a shift in emphasis from the group in fusion to the
organization, which is to say that the group in fusion is not "the
true group," or at the very least, is not the *only* "true group." [3] We
will therefore see the respects in which the organization is able
to address problems that the group in fusion does not have the
resources to address. Finally, we would also like to show that within
the organization the other has a positive role, and that it is not the
case that "other people are essentially, in themselves, and by their
very existence, a danger to us."[4]

We will divide our analysis into three sections, while following the
development of the text and limiting ourselves to the first section of
the chapter on the organization, which is entitled "Organized *Praxis*
and Function." First, we will introduce the concept of the organiza-
tion, discuss the themes of homogeneity, spatiality, and temporality,
and compare the organization with the prior group-forms to illumi-
nate its nature as an advancement over them. Second, we will
address the question of what it means to be a member of an orga-
nized group. This discussion will involve the concepts of individual
function, personal identity, as well as that of the nature of organized
action as a whole. Moreover, we will show the role that the concept
of metastability plays within the context of a group.[5] This concept
was central to Sartre's analysis of bad faith in *Being and Nothingness,*
and we would like to emphasize its importance for his later thought,
showing the manner in which the organized group has the further
goal of addressing a possible metastable regression of this group
form, as well as a point of continuity between the young and late
Sartre.[6] We will also see the manner in which the concepts of rights,
duties, and power that Sartre develops in this chapter are indepen-
dent of the *Polis.* As such, Sartre has redefined certain of the funda-
mental concepts found in Plato's *Republic,* particularly moderation

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and justice, and we will see just how these concepts are operative in Sartre's work and allow for the unity of a group independent of a political, governing body.

Third, we will engage the status of the future in the organized group. The discussion of the future will also involve an analysis of the progressive dimension of Sartre's method elaborated in *Search for a Method,* and will help clarify what is meant by the progressive aspect of the progressive-regressive method. Sartre has defined his method in the following way: "The movement of comprehension is simultaneously progressive (toward the objective result) and regressive (I go back toward the original condition)."[7] We will accordingly focus on the first half of this definition, and explain how organized action is able to contribute to the intelligibility of, and the ability to describe, the "objective result."[8] Moreover, we will further engage the theme of spatiality, and come to see the manner in which the articulation of space through organized action is linked to the temporality of the group and in fact serves to ground the phenomenality of the future within the organization.

The Origin and Structure of the Organization

Sartre begins by stating that the organization is "the action on itself of the statutory group."[9] In this sense the organization is reflective. It takes itself as an intentional object. The statutory group grasps itself as a group with a particular history with various accomplishments, and which requires a backward glance, a reflection on its past for its organization toward future ends. This reflexive action is meant to maintain equilibrium, and thus to prevent any metastable changes in its organization. And this aim of progressing toward the future while securing the organization from its possible dissolution is reflected in the two meanings Sartre assigns to the term. In one sense, it signifies the manner in which the group structures itself reflexively. In another sense, the term signifies the manner in which the group acts as a totality toward "external," "transcendent" objects, such as other groups or material objects "in the practical field."[10] The organized group, it follows, becomes clearer to itself immanently and transcendently, with regard to its own internal relations as well as its relations to externality. This dual sense, moreover, is part of the character of the organization as an advancement over the previous two groups. The group in fusion was contingently brought together in and through an apocalyptic moment, and the statutory group had the

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explicit task of maintaining the unity of the group after the action of the group in fusion had come to an end. Both, however, though integral to the organization, lacked the capacity for sustained, concerted action because they lacked an adequate infrastructure. If long-term goals are going to be capable of being realized, then the action of the individuals must be organized, and, as we will see, the individuals of this third group-form must attain a particular identity.

Sartre complements his initial definition of the organization by further qualifying it as "a distribution of tasks."[11] The organization *necessarily* gives itself tasks and sub-tasks, and must accordingly assign individuals and subgroups to fulfill them. Furthermore, it is capable of giving itself these tasks because it preserves the prior group-forms and their tasks despite the fact that it has transcended them. In its status as an organization, it preserves the *significance* of the threat that led to the group in fusion, as well as the pledge requisite for group membership. The past, it follows, has a particular presence in the present state of the organization. Both previous group-forms are preserved, though in different ways, the first being the movement out of seriality for the sake of a common goal, and the second being the preservation of the group *qua* group, which demonstrates the weight and the pressure of the past in the present of the group in its new status as an organization. Distributing tasks is then a reflexive act of the group that preserves and appreciates its history. Thus, there is a particular necessity built into the order of the organization. The "distribution of tasks," as an "internal" necessity, corresponds to the history and future of the group, the reason it was founded, the character of its members, and the objectives it sets for itself in so far as they depend on particular relations within the group. In addition, the organization takes on an "external" or "transcendent" necessity in so far as it confronts other possible groups and works on objects "in the practical field" on the basis of its personal history.[12] Its past serves to condition the manner in which it interprets the present and future. Sartre writes, "Organization, then, is *both* the discovery of practical exigencies in the object *and* a distribution of tasks amongst individuals on the basis of this dialectical discovery. In other words, the organizing movement settles the relation between men on the basis of the fundamental relation between group and thing."[13] The organization has an internal and external orientation; the latter, however, is "indirect," since, as Sartre says, "it acts on the object only in so far as it acts upon itself; and its action upon itself—which, as we shall see, is its only action as a group—defines itself on the basis of a *praxis*."[14]

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Let us look more closely at the internal structure of the organization. The organization guides the action of its members through its policies, objectives, and so on, and this is possible through a variety of means. In fact, Sartre goes so far as to say that "the group can *produce* the common individual" to carry out its tasks, that is to say, it can train the individual such that she will be capable of carrying out a task which contributes to the overall objective of the group.[15] This notion of "producing" individuals is another advancement of the organization. Strictly speaking, we cannot say that "individuals" were produced in the prior group-forms.[16] An external threat led to the fusing of seriality, and the pledge turned everyone into a "self," rather than an "other." An individual *qua* individual only begins to emerge after the group further differentiates itself. And this process of differentiation involves assigning every member of the group a function, role, or part in the activity in the group such that each member can distinguish herself from all others on the basis of her function. Individuality develops with the "distribution of tasks."[17] And this can be seen in a few forms. On the one hand, we can simply focus on the individual as being given a task, function, and identity. On the other hand, we can understand the differentiation of this group to involve the formation of "special apparatuses" or subgroups with various tasks, functions, and identities, such as those formed to take care of various administrative responsibilities.[18] However, as Sartre states, this "is still a very abstract conception of *praxis*: the group, united in a common, but still inadequately determined project (a combatant community, a vigilance committee, a team of technicians or an association for buying and selling property on the moon) produces its first differentiation in order to give itself the means of proceeding to this determination."[19]

But what is this inadequately determined project? And is it not problematic for the unification and organization of the group? Is this not a tension in the text? Here the link to the immediately preceding form of the group is very significant. Sartre writes, "And there should be nothing to surprise us in this differentiation, in itself, since it is simply a pledged statutory group acting on itself—a group, that is, whose internal relations have been explicitly constituted so as to respond to the demands of the situation and to make differentiations possible."[20] The group organizes itself under certain circumstances with a view to a particular objective; the possibilities for further action that reveal themselves in the context of the statutory group "are simply the *unveiling of its tasks through its morphology*."[21] The pledge therefore serves as a transcendental condition for internal differentiation; it

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establishes a firm enough basis for internal differences. Without a more primordial identification with the group, the individuals would not remain united with a common purpose and would not be able to sustain their relations after the apocalyptic moment had subsided. In this sense, differentiation presupposes a prior identification. And the act of swearing allegiance to the group—be it verbal or written—is an immediate belonging to the group independently of a clearly determined personal identity.[22] The spontaneity of the utterance or possible drafting of a document requiring the signatures of all members ossifies, transforming the initial spontaneous act of expression into an inert fixture that imposes order. *It becomes the look of all third parties.* Language, in the context of the statutory group, has a practical function, in truth a practical necessity, in so far as it unifies all of the third parties and makes possible a further differentiation that will not lead to dissolution. Nevertheless, "the pledge is not a subjective or merely verbal determination: it is a real modification of the group by my regulatory action."[23] It is the security of pledged identity that is the condition of the possibility for the differentiation proper to, and essential for, personal identity and ordered group progression.

Organized *Praxis:*
The Unity of Heraclitus and Parmenides

Now that we have seen some of the fundamental structures of the organized group as well as certain of its advancements over the previous groups, let us look more closely at organized action, at the *praxis* of the organized group. To begin, there is a transformation of the common individual, a transformation of immanence in that the individual moves from a purely pledged individual to a function within the organized group. The common individual of the group in fusion, "the interiorized multiplicity of third parties that unifies the multiplicity through *praxis*," is first transformed in her status in the pledged group. Here, the unity of the group "posits itself for itself" in the need for separation, for internal articulation, and therewith introduces the possibility of relapsing into seriality if the pledge is broken.[24] This common character of the individual is "his being-in-the-group," and further gives each member a new, though abstract, "juridical power."[25] This abstraction of the statutory group is concretized in the organization. However, we must ask at this point: what is the notion of power at work in the organized group, and how does it relate to group *praxis?*

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Moreover, we have seen that the organization distributes tasks and functions for individuals and subgroups, but what exactly is a function, and how does it serve to further structure the group? According to Sartre "a function is a positive definition of the common individual."[26] The negativity of the pledge is transformed into a positivity; the freedom of the individual is no longer defined primarily or solely by allegiance to the group. The individual now also makes a positive contribution: she has her own tasks, her own role within the organization, her own identity. She advances the group in carrying out her own objectives. An individual, furthermore, can be assigned a task for several reasons. For example, either her physical capabilities or her previous training may make her fit for certain tasks; the individual is not purely constrained, not wholly fixed by the look of the other third parties. Her individuality, her identity, is her function, her task, her assigned place in the group. In this case, her identity is *given* to her by the group on the basis of what she can contribute and has contributed. It is freely received, yet not freely chosen independently of the group. The group therefore serves as the facticity of the individual, to which she has sworn allegiance and in which she will choose to affirm her identity through fulfilling her function. *Personal identity, it follows, is originally given by the other.* There is, moreover, a negativity present here in so far as her function *is not* that of another common individual; even if she has the same function as an other, her identity is constituted by *not being* that particular other fulfilling that function and can be further distinguished from the performance of the other in the comparison of her results, efficiency, and so on. The difference constituted by this negation is essential for her identity; it retains the negatively given limit imposed by pledged-terror but also introduces a negativity constitutive of function; the original negativity of the pledged group, the "simple Terror" meant to preserve the group at all costs, is overcome yet preserved in the "distribution of tasks."[27] Thus, Sartre writes, "Function is both negative and positive."[28]

We have said that an individual is her task and only her task; she is limited in her freedom, her relation to others, the objects of her work, and the group. She is her function by *not being* that of others; but in only doing what she is assigned to do, she is still acting, contributing, obeying a "creative imperative."[29] To fulfill one's obligation within the pledged group is to force each member to maintain the architectural integrity of the group: "it is the right of each over all, just as it is a right of all over each."[30] This, again, is transformed in the organization, and power in part becomes the right of the indi-

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vidual to carry out her function; her power is her realizing the task or function that has been assigned to her. Sartre uses the example of a soccer[31] team to clarify this point. Within the context of a soccer team every position is determined by its function or task, and "for a new young player" serves to outline the possibilities involved in her joining a team.[32] Sartre writes that she will be recruited for a certain function, and the power of the team lies in its assigning to her a function, and in forcing her to live up to the requirements of her task. The team, it follows, has a responsibility to the individual to train her, and so on, and likewise the individual has a responsibility to the team to perform. She nevertheless has rights, in accordance with which she can demand that others fulfill their respective functions, that they allow her to fulfill hers, provide her with the necessary resources for the goal to be reached, and so on. Sartre further claims that rights and duties are identical within the organization, and in so doing opposes the "classical distinction" between rights and duties, according to which duty is a right over others, and in which right is a duty toward others.[33] Moreover, this theory of rights and duties is independent of the *polis*. These rights and duties are not guaranteed by a government or political, sovereign body, but are rather pre-political in that they are internal to this group formation as such. The rights of individuals and their roles in the play of the team are not— or perhaps not yet—secured by a state constitution. As such, while the code of the organized group and the oath of the pledge could have been written down, they would not be enforced by a governing body or agency, but by the look of the group, that is, the constant threat of violence and death through the other members of the pledged group and the demand that the individual fulfill her function in the organization. Therefore, the juridical power that we discussed earlier is in truth a *pre-juridical power*, or a power that precedes and makes possible the eventual juridical power of a legal system. There is, therefore, a pre-political notion of rights, duties, and power, in so far as the group develops and imposes these structures independently of the *polis* and a state constitution. *The organization, it follows, is a pre-historical and pre-political sovereign community.*

Within this community and its assignment of roles and tasks, wherein individuals are defined by their functions and performances, it is also important to emphasize the element of spontaneity, which is constitutive of function. In a soccer team, for example, the defenders under attack, as opposed to the attackers of the same team passively watching the game unfold, have to think differently, more quickly, more spontaneously, and can potentially act out of line with their

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assigned function. Thus, though there are clearly defined roles and rules of the game, the "players" must adapt to circumstances, improvise, and, in a sense, continuously recreate their functions, which is to say that they must continuously redefine their roles within the group. This is a further differentiation and identification of the group members on the basis of external circumstances. Identities *qua* functions fluctuate, are metastable, though in a determinate sense. Defenders, for example, can change their roles with other defenders, or even with attackers, but each player of necessity reverts to her own function when the threat, opportunity, and so on, subsides. And here we can see two senses of metastability at work within group formations. The first, which we described earlier, signifies a threat to the group, its possible dissolution due to a lack of internal coherence, the dominance of an external threat, and so on The second, however, pertains to the members of the group, to both the individuals and the subgroups. The organization assigns roles for the sake of a given end; however, under certain circumstances it may become necessary to modify the roles for the sake of the end, which is to say that an individual who has been assigned one role may suddenly alter the manner in which this role is played or, if necessary, assume the role of another member in order to achieve the goals of the group. This form of metastability is the opposite of the first. It is positive. Rather than a danger, it is a necessity. It signals the need for the members of the group to constantly reflect on their roles and the group as a whole to ensure that the tasks assigned and the means to fulfill them are commensurate to the ultimate ends of the group, which is to say, to the future of the group. The organization is a unity of Heraclitus and Parmenides a fixture that is always changing. Thus, contrary to what we find in Plato's *Republic,* and what for him is an ideal *Polis,* there is a sense in which it is absolutely necessary *either* for the members—regardless of their "metal"—to exchange roles when necessary, and not in the innocuous manner in which blacksmiths or leatherworkers of the bronze class exchange roles, but in the threatening and "evil" manner in which a bronze would exchange her role with a gold metal, *or* for the nature of the "metals" to change, such that what it would mean to be an "auxiliary," perhaps in the context of a soccer team a "defender," changes in nature depending on the circumstances.[34] The exchanging of roles, it follows, is in fact a good, both for the individual and the group.

This necessity for the modification of roles further leads to a redefinition of the concept of "moderation" or "soberness" which we find in book four of Plato's *Republic,* namely, "the concord of the

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naturally superior and inferior as to which ought to rule in both the state and the individual."[35] Now, as we have seen, the organized group and its structures are independent of the *Polis*. However, the notion of this "concord" itself must be re-understood in light of this pre-political context.[36] Within an organization, a hierarchy is established, but it is not permanent, the "recognition" of the "superior" and "inferior" can change according to circumstances, and therefore the community is organized around the permanent possibility of its inherent order transforming for the sake of the group.[37] In this sense, the "concord," or the harmony of the group, adjusts itself around a dissonant tone, and the "superior" and "inferior" are constantly reversing their roles.[38] The perception of this order by the group members, which is to say the reflection of the group on itself, is situated and constantly changing. And, in addition to transforming the meaning of this term, we must account for the concomitant change in the notion of justice. For Plato, as it is stated in book four of the *Republic,* justice is defined as "the having and doing of one's own and what belongs to oneself."[39] However, as we have seen, not only is there a shift in the recognition of the necessity of the hierarchy in the organization, but there is also consequently a change in the concept of justice since precisely what it is that one has been assigned to do can and must change under certain circumstances.[40] The justice of the organization, it follows, as well as existing prior to a political state, is fluid, and each member should only do what is required of her to the extent that it is required of her, and can therefore change her role as necessary. The Sartrean concept of justice within the organization, while serving the group, is ultimately, and necessarily, metastable. Thus, though there is an order or a hierarchy, it is not totalized but rather totalizing such that despite its solid foundation it is capable of constantly changing.

This constant re-structuring of the group also corresponds to what Sartre terms "sub-possibilities," which pertain to "the social future."[41] With regard to this constant re-structuring, we may ask: how does the future become phenomenalized in organized action? These sub-possibilities and the changing functions we discussed reveal a particular indeterminacy in the future of the group, in truth in the progressive element of Sartre's method, since both the means to attaining a particular end, and even the fundamental end of the group itself, what we could call the basic life choice of the group, are capable of changing. The progression toward the future is a potentially metastable progression toward an open future, though this progression and its future are pre-outlined in accordance with the

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aims of the group. Furthermore, there is a dual sense of the future in the organization. The sub-possibilities of the members correspond to a second-order future encompassed by the primary future, which is the ultimate objective of the group. These sub-possibilities, and gradations of sub-possibilities, further structure and help realize possibilities that are more closely related to the realization of the objective of the group. For instance, in temporarily changing metals, one individual may contribute to helping another subgroup reach its end, which was in turn helping another subgroup, and thus the action of one individual contributes to the realization of a higher-order sub-possibility of another subgroup within the group. Sub-possibilities, it follows, can become the conditions of the possibility for the goal of the group as a whole being reached. They help orient the organized group toward its future.

Praxis, Sense, and the Future

We have now reached a point from which we can more clearly establish the significance of the future for the organization and to evaluate the status of the organization within the *Critique* as a whole. This will require us to further build on what we have seen concerning groups, and to further articulate the future-oriented dimension of Sartre's method. This significance begins to emerge in Sartre's statement that in the organization "we encounter the organic individual as an isolated agent in the first moment of his concrete truth."[42] From the initial discussion of the material situatedness of the practical organism and its relation to its surroundings, the individual has further established and determined herself through becoming a member of the group in fusion, "losing himself through the pledge" in order to create and sustain the common individual, and finally attains a more solid identity through being assigned a function.[43] In truth, this can be seen as the first concrete moment of individuality, since the individual assumes a function within the group reflecting on itself to preserve its past and further takes on a positive, progressive dimension. Within the pledged group, the future is still a certain present because it is a future of the pledged group *qua* pledged group as it is, which is not only ruled by the terror of the possibility of dissolution, but also lacks the internal resources to progress and realize further goals of the group. It is for this reason that Sartre defines "the fact of swearing as a precaution against the future," and "the eternity *of presence in the future.*"[44] In this we are able to see the necessity of

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the organization for the progressive element of this work, for the realization of a certain future, one which may require revolution, but one which in light of what we have seen must be organized in order to be achieved, maintained, and continuously developed.

The work of the individual, certain aspects of which we saw in the previous section, needs to be more clearly connected to the future of the group. The individual becomes a common individual through making a pledge, but is irreducible to this pledge because of her free *praxis* which is oriented toward the realization of certain of the organization's objectives and ultimately the overarching objective of the organization as a whole. She is, in Sartre's words, "*below* and *beyond* the common individual."[45] In establishing a place within the group through the pledge, transcending this through *praxis*, she is always in a sense more than her function. And this "beyond" is not a result of the fact that she can potentially take over another function temporarily—for this too would be replaceable—but, more importantly, she would be "beyond" this function too in her action.[46] However, given the moment of the *Critique* we have reached, Sartre says that the individual "is no more than the common *praxis*," and that, despite her spontaneity, and so on, she is still at a level where her action realizes the objective of the organized group by "transcending" the group; in this sense, the organization is the progressive moment of individual action, and her action therefore maintains this contextualization in transcending it.[47] Sartre further describes the status of the common individual within the group when he writes that her "function is a technical bond with a particular instrument."[48] Her function is her technique, a certain style, a method and implementation, which she herself may have invented or which may have been handed down to her through other members of the group. The instrument *qua* technique, and the reverse, has a sense that belongs to the individual in light of the group as a whole, and thus this sense, a sort of collective, group-sense, mediates her relation to the tool; the style is affected within the group and for the group, and is mediated by the group. But on the other hand, the common individual herself becomes an instrumentalized individual, a particular use of the organization, and becomes such through her use of the instrument. But what exactly is the status of the instrument that is used? We have still discussed it only abstractly. And how does it relate to the future? Sartre writes that the instrument itself "exists as an *exis*," as an inertia to be manipulated by whomever fulfills the given function, takes on a certain task, and so on.[49] There is a pre-outlined style of life within the group determined on the basis

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of the particular instrument to be used, which therefore helps determine and delineate the future of the group. Within the organization, there is a historicity, in truth a pre-historicity, of the tool, of the individual in her commonality, which precedes and makes possible the historicity proper to history itself, which we have not yet reached, and which does not truly come until Volume Two of the *Critique*.[50]

All of this, we must keep in mind, pertains to the action of the group, which is nothing other than the *praxis* of each of its members. *Praxis* articulates *exis*, it enlivens it. The future-oriented activity of the individual and the subgroups animate the past by integrating it into the present action. Sartre tells us that *praxis* "temporalizes" the *exis* in light of future ends, and brings future possibilities closer to the individual and the group.[51] The *exis* or pre-historical historicity of the tool is taken over, owned by the individual, claimed as her own as she transcends her pledged statute in advancing the group through her function. Instrumental *exis* takes on its true sense within the milieu of the common objective of the organization. It has its own fixity, but one which serves, or at the very least can serve, as the condition of possibility for the *praxis* of the common individual. Sartre writes, "Thus *exis*, as an enriching limitation of the common individual, manifests itself concretely only in and through a free practical temporalization."[52] The temporality of practical action enlivens materiality and creates the space for the realization of possibilities. Here, there is a certain spatializing to the bringing to presence of the future through the carrying out of function, and therefore a particular spatializing moment to the progression toward the future in Sartre's method. The structuring of the group articulates space through the determination of function. Everywhere is a here, but a here that is determined and differentiated in accordance with a certain function whose meaning is determined by its future. Space is unified through the immanent articulations of functions.

This discussion of space and time makes more concrete the progressive dimension of the investigation, the future, and the significance of the future. In a manner reminiscent of the example of the tennis match in *Being and Nothingness*, here the future defines and organizes the sense of the present action, which in fact is itself only performed within an orientation toward the future.[53] Therefore, there is a sense in which the future is itself progressive and regressive, or that the progressive dimension of the method contains a regressive moment internal to it. The individual carries out her function, and as such is moving "toward" the future. However, she is also bringing the future "toward" the group, such that its movement

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toward the future is also the future's movement toward the group, and the closer the future comes to the action, the more clearly is the action of the individual understood. And with each step "forward," the organization must take a step "backward" to evaluate, under-stand, reflect upon the progress, determine if it should be continued or abandoned, and understand the progression toward its future as such on the basis of the realization of its immediate future. Progres-sion, it follows, must not only be understood on the basis of regres-sion, or synthesis on the basis of analysis, but must itself be understood as in part regressive. This understanding of the method only be-comes possible with the organization because it is only at this point in the text that there is a concrete future that corresponds to, or is founded upon, a concrete past, the present of which is the function-ing of the members of the group. The organization, as we saw in the previous section, is constantly "reorganizing" itself, and as a result the future, the method, progression, are constantly reorganizing or reorienting themselves in accordance with an open future which is outlined through the group but which is constantly capable of changing because the goals and sub-goals, possibilities and sub-possibilities, of the group are in a constant state of "stable" meta-stability. For this reason, Sartre defines the organization as "perma-nent reorganization," which ultimately means that the organization is the "permanent reorganization" of the future on the basis of past accomplishments and present circumstances.[54]

Moreover, there is a further sense in which the future itself is both progressive and regressive, and it bears upon the *sense* of the actions of the members of the group. The significance of an action is not fully constituted until it affects the other members. The action, once com-pleted, is consequently also incomplete or indeterminate until the affects it has on the group as a whole have been felt. With regard to action, there is what we can term a first-order determinacy in its rela-tion to the individual or the subgroup, and a second-order indetermi-nacy in its relation to other aspects of the group. "Thus the *meaning* of the particular undertaking—even if, as such, it is successful—lies in the work made of it *elsewhere* in the undertakings of other members of the team (or group)."[55] The sense of an action can change and can continuously affect the group. For example, action may have short-term benefits, and long-term dire consequences. And, though it does not come in the section on the organization, this can be seen in the counter-finality suffered by Chinese peasants through deforestation. Sense is never fully constituted within the context of an organized group. The individual and the group continuously experience their

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future, one that has become facticity and transcendence, and have to reassess it or reflect upon it to understand it, to consider the manner in which to respond to an unrealized future, and how the sense of the future which has become past permeates the present and serves as a basis for the future. Therefore, progression transitions into regression, and the analysis of future objectives, the goals which belong to the fundamental project of the individual and group, once realized, become past, ossified, facticity, and have to be understood and analyzed in light of the future that is built upon their basis, and which itself will become past, and so on. The common objective which has to be understood as belonging to the organized group as a whole is in a certain sense a regulatory idea in so far as it pertains to a future which initially appears as what ought to become the present, but which can itself change, become recalibrated, and as such serve as the basis for a reflection which moves the group forward in another direction. The progressive dimension can therefore in principle only be approximate as the goals, senses, and structures of the organization are subject to change.

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Notes

1. The original French term is "le groupe en fusion." See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique de la Raison Dialectique, precede de Questions de Méthode: Tome I, Théorie des Ensembles Pratiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), 452–511. In accordance with both Peter Caws and Joseph Catalano, I am using "group in fusion" as opposed to "fused group," which is Alan Sheridan-Smith's rendering of the French term in the English translation of the *Critique.* See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason: Volume I: Theory of Practical Ensembles,* trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith (New York: Verso, 2004), 345–404. All subsequent references to this text appear as *Critique.* See Peter Caws, *Sartre* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979),

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175. See Joseph S. Catalano, *A Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre's Critique of Dialectical Reason: Volume 1: Theory of Practical Ensembles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 165–178.

2. Sartre, *Critique,* 405, 446.

3. Joseph S. Catalano, "The Meaning and Truth of History: A Note on Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason,*" *Sartre Studies International,* 13, no. 2 (2007): 63n14. Also see his analysis in Catalano, *Commentary,* 165–178. Gavin Rae has also emphasized the importance of the organization; see Rae, "Sartre, Group Formations, and Practical Freedom: The Other in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason,*" *Comparative and Continental Philosophy* 3, no. 2 (2011): 196–202.

4. Mary Warnock, *Existentialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 116.

5. Michael J. Monahan has also shown the importance of the concept of metastability for Sartre's later thought, though he has connected it to the theme of scarcity, particularly the "phenomenology of scarcity." See Monahan, "Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason* and the Inevitability of Violence: Human Freedom in the Milieu of Scarcity," *Sartre Studies International,* 14, no. 2 (2008): 57.

6. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1984), 99.

7. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method,* trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 154.

8. Sartre, *Search,* 154.

9. Sartre, *Critique,* 445.

10. Ibid., 446.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., 447.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 446.

18. Ibid., 447.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., 448.

22. For an analysis of the role of language and its connection to subjectivity, seriality, and groups, see Kenneth L. Anderson, "Transformations of Subjectivity in Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason,*" *Journal of Philosophical Research,* 27 (2002): 267–279.

23. Sartre, *Critique,* 422.

24. Ibid., 449.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., 446, 449.

28. Ibid., 450.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid. Although Sartre uses the term "football," we will use the term "soccer" throughout. We will use the term "football" only when quoting the text.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey (London: Loeb Classical Library, 1953), 674.
35. Plato, *The Republic*, 674. Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 110.
36. Plato, *The Republic*, 674.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., 675.
40. Although we cannot go into it here, with regard to the origin of justice, Sartre seems to have a particular commonality with Hume, for whom justice exists only in a state of scarcity, and would not exist in a state of abundance. Thus, within Sartre's work, we could say that it is possible that for individuals that do not exist in a context of need and scarcity, and who would therefore have an entirely different history from our own, such a concept of justice would either be unnecessary or would need to be fundamentally redefined. See David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983), 20–22.
41. Sartre, *Critique*, 453.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., 454.
44. Ibid., 436.
45. Ibid., 455.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason: Volume II*, trans. Quintin Hoare (London: Verso, 2006).
51. Sartre, *Critique*, 455.
52. Ibid., 455–456.
53. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 181–182.
54. Sartre, *Critique*, 457.
55. Ibid., my insertion.