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The Queer Jew: Gender, Sexuality and Jean-Paul Sartre’s Anti-Antisemitism

ABSTRACT In an attempt to understand the mechanisms that enable the perpetuation of racism, Judaken examines how antisemitic stereotypes can be reinserted in the discourse of those individuals most committed to the eradication of antisemitism. He argues that typologies—mythic images of collective identity—depend upon an associative logic. These associations are engendered in the construction of the Self (both individual and collective), by demarcating in-self from the Other(s), generally through vices of gender, pathology and race. Judaken focuses on Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Anti-Semitism and Jews*, a text which Sartre called ‘a declaration of war against antisemitism per se’, and argues that this unintended effect is the result of how Sartre conceptualizes both consciousness and the relationship between the Self and Other in *Being and Nothingness*. This work of existential phenomenology, that sought radically to critique the western metaphysical tradition, nevertheless misreads dominant assumptions within western culture about gender and sexuality. Judaken shows how Sartre’s re-citation of these assumptions fundamentally determines how he conceives of the relation between the antisemite and ‘the Jew’. He concludes, however, by suggesting that immanent in Sartre’s own position, there is an other way of conceiving of the relation between Self and Other that might offer hope beyond the impasses of the western tradition’s failures in embracing difference, singularity and particularity.

KEYWORDS antisemitism, collaborator, existential, French resistance, gender, masochism, neger, queer, sadism, self, sex

The important connections between class and race have been considered in the study and theorization of antisemitism for some time. However, scholarship on antisemitism has only recently begun to emphasize the need to understand the inherent conjunctions between gender and sexuality and antisemitism. Incorporating the crucial insight of feminism that society is

1 I am deeply indebted to Tariq Modood for his close critical reading and insightful suggestions on several drafts of this paper. I am also grateful to Dominick LeCupre, Martin Jay and Richard Cohen for their comments.

2 Following Shoshan Almog, I do not hyphenate antisemitism because ‘If you use the hyphenated form you consider the words “Semitism”, “Semit”, “Semitic” as meaningful. They sup-

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based upon a sexual as well as a social and economic division of labour, the work of Sander Gilman and George Mosse, among others, has emphasized that "normal" and "respectable" sexuality is a crucial element of the racial imperative. In evaluating the history of antisemitic discourse, therefore, these scholars have shown that Jews and Judaism have been associated with deviant sexual appetites, with prostitution, with feminization and homosexuality. Moreover, since typologies depend upon an associative logic, gender and sexuality cannot be considered as incidental to theorizing or historicizing antisemitism or its opposition; rather they constitute fundamental categories for its understanding.

I would like to call further attention to our understanding of how anti-semitism perpetuates itself along the axes of gender and sexuality through an analysis of the discourse of those most committed to its eradication. My focus will be Jean-Paul Sartre's Réflexions sur la question juive, a text which Sartre called 'a declaration of war against antisemites'.¹ Sartre's Réflexions is a highly personal, polemical essay that addresses the question of antisemitism in a way that is both polemical and provocative. It is a text that challenges the reader to think critically about the nature of antisemitism and its impact on society.


6 See Gilman, Difference and Sexuality, 23.


not only a classic theoretical account of antisemitism, but also a paradigmatic text both for Jewish thinkers, such as Albert Memmi, Alain Finkielkraut, Robert Menasse and Benny Levy, as well as non-Jewish thinkers, like Maurice Blanchot and Jean-François Lyotard, in their considerations of 'the Jewish question' in post-war France. In addition, the Réflexions sur la question juive is fundamental to Simone de Beauvoir's examination of patriarchy and sexism in La Deuxième Sexe, to Sartre's turn towards existential Marxism, and to his opposition to racism and colonialism in Algeria and beyond. Therefore the limitations of his approach in the Réflexions are particularly instructive for how we ought to think of the inter-relationship of race, class, gender and sexuality.

This analysis of the Réflexions demonstrates that, unless the imbrications between gender, sexuality and antisemitism are carefully considered, there is a danger that, in the opposition to racism and antisemitism, we will end up reiterating some crucial components of stereotyping, abjections and scapegoating. Sartre, despite his best intentions, reinscribes images of 'the Jew' that he seeks to critique in antisemitic discourse. After considering his broader ontological analysis in Being and Nothingness, I argue that these contradictions in Sartre's discourse on antisemitism are created because his depiction of the relation between Self and Other is thoroughly sexualized, and his theory of consciousness is predicated on a masculinist conception of gender.

The (re)production of antisemitism

Réflexions sur la question juive, published as a whole in 1946, is a dialectical critique of 'the Jewish question' in France. It poses the problem in terms of a phenomenological analysis of the ontological condition of 'the antisemite' and 'the Jew'. The text has four parts: Part I is a portrait of the antisemite and was first published in December 1945 in one of the first issues of Les Temps modernes.10 Part II discusses the liberal-democratic solution to 'the Jewish question', which Sartre rebukes by calling it a 'politics of assimilation'.11 Part III considers the inter-relation of what he calls the 'authentic' and 'inauthentic Jew', and Part IV proposes a revolutionary solution to 'the Jewish question'. Sartre advances two major theses which are interwoven in the text: the antisemite is a person of 'mauvaise foi' or self-deception,12 and 'the Jew' is a product of the antisemite's gaze.

9 I write 'the Jew' in cases to indicate that it is a constructed category and that to describe 'the Jew' also inscribes the category as a marker of difference whether based on language, belief systems, artistic tradition or gene pool. On this point, in relation to 'race', see Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Introduction: writing "race" and the difference it makes, in Gates (ed.), Race, Writing and Difference (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1985), 5.

10 Jean-Paul Sartre, Portrait de l'antisémite, Les Temps modernes, no. 3, 1 December 1945.

11 Sartre, Anti-Semitism and Jew, 57 (corrected translation).

12 On the translation of 'mauvaise foi' as self-deception, see Walter Kaufmann, Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre (New York: Meridian 1973), 280.
Despite Sartre's vitriolic opposition to anti-semitism, there are a series of anti-semitic images that are recollected in the course of his text. First, Sartre does not deny that there is a 'Jewish race.' As a result, he does not adequately critique the anti-semitic conception, from Drumont to Darquier de Pellepoix, of what Sartre himself calls the 'marked Semitic type,' evidenced by 'a hooked nose, protruding ears, and thick lips.' While in one breath Sartre warns against understanding race as an 'indelible complex' of somatic characteristics and intellectual and moral traits, in the next he asserts that the Jew is an 'inescapable ensemble in which the psychological and physical, the social, the religious and the individual are closely mingled' in a 'living synthesis.' There are thus hereditary racial characteristics that significantly influence the personality of 'the Jew' even if they do not determine Jewish identity. In fact, in one description, Sartre creates a family portrait of the Jewish character:

Here is a Jew seated on his doorstep in the rue des Rosiers. I recognize him immediately as a Jew: he has a black and curvy beard, a lightly hooked nose, protruding ears, steel-rimmed glasses, a derby pulled down over his eyes, black clothes, quick and nervous gestures, and a smile of strange and dolorous goodness. How am I to disentangle the physical from the moral? His beard is black and curly; that is a somatic characteristic... Is his son any less a Jew for being clean-shaven?

This constitutes the slippery slope of Sartre's position on the question of the Jewish race.

Sartre also invokes the image of the Jewish poet, unsparingly explaining that the Jews' obsessive love of money is created by the Jewish desire for integration. Furthermore, Sartre states that their 'middle-class' vocations require Jews 'to seduce' and 'to captivate' in order to make a living, and that Jews are 'artificial products of a capitalist (or feudal) society.' He thus reconfigures a dominant conception within socialist discourse—from the French Utopian socialists through Marx's 'On the Jewish question' and beyond—that identifies 'the Jew' with the exploitation of modern financial capitalism.

14 Sartre, Anti-Semitic and Jew, 61.
15 Ibid.
16 Sartre, Anti-Semitic and Jew, 64. For Sartre's use of the terms 'savant' versus 'soul,' see Suleiman, 211.
17 Sartre, Anti-Semitic and Jew, 64: 'We must therefore envisage the hereditary and somatic characteristics of the Jew as one factor among others in his situation, not as a condition determining his essence.'
18 Ibid., 63.
19 Ibid., 128.
20 Ibid., 73.
21 Ibid., 135-6.
In addition, Sartre denies any basis to modern Jewish identity or to a Jewish claim to history: "We have attempted to show that the Jewish community is neither national nor international, neither religious, nor ethical, nor political; it is a quasi-historical community." As a result of his ‘progressive’ view of history, Sartre unreciprocally accepts both the Enlightenment's and Hegel's depiction of Judaism as atavistic and anachronistic. Thus, Sartre sums up Jewish history as ‘one of wandering over the course of twenty centuries; at any moment . . . the Jew must be ready to pick up his stick and his bundle.’

Here Sartre reiterates the image of Ahasuerus—Le Juif errant. "The Jews", unlike the French, are denied a collective history and must accept only a collective memory of exodus, admonishment, basseânil and exclusion: in short, a memory of collective martyrdom and suffering. Moreover Sartre claims that the Jewish religion is only an inauthentic substitute for the rootedness of national community: there is a secret and deep-seated need to attach oneself to tradition and, in default of a national past to give oneself roots (s’emancipier) in a past of rites and customs. Since for Sartre ‘the Jew is not yet historical’, he floats on, uncertain, uprooted (deraciné)." The ‘Jew’ is refused access to French values on principle because


23 Sartre, Anti-Semites and Jews, 345.


27 Sartre, Anti-Semites and Jews, 66.

28 Ibid., 84.

29 I use ‘anti-semitism’ to differentiate it from the more conventional ‘philosemitism’ and to locate Sartre within a tradition of French left intellectuals, from Zola's role in the Dreyfus Affair and throughout the twentieth century, who have significantly defined their political and intellectual positions in their interventions on behalf of Jews and Judaism in the context.
of cultural class. Since for Sartre it is the antisemite who creates 'the Jew' and because Sartre only challenges the antisemite and his world-view but not the antisemitic image of 'the Jew' itself, there is an ambiguity in his discourse that constantly threatens to collapse the reality of Jewish existence with the image of 'the Jew' in antisemitic discourse. This points about Jews Sartre's anti-antisemitism ends up replicating the very stereotypes that he shows antisemitism has produced in further developed below. This ambiguity constitutes one of the dangers of anti-antisemitism.

Sartre, Anti-Semitism and Jew: 82: for the antisemite, 'the Jew' is 'a Jew precisely in that he does not even suspect what ought to be understood... there is formed around him an implosive atmosphere, which is the same' in France, with its genuine values, its genuine taste, its genuine morality, and he has no part in it.

10 Ibid., 16. 81
11 Ibid., 83, see also 81.
12 In addition, Sartre evokes the image of 'the smart Jew' and relies upon the stereotype of Jews in his acquaintance, which leads him to assert that Jews lack 'courage'. On these points, see Christian Delage, 'L'idee de race et la pensée juive contemporaine' (Paris: Fayard 1983), 96. On the image of 'the smart Jew', see Sander L. Gilman, Sartre: His Construction of the Image of Jewish Superior Intelligence (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press 1995).

34 See Sartre, 218. While I have re-voiced the notion of an 'antisemitic effect' in Sartre's work, in no way do I wish to suggest that Sartre's Reflections is an antisemitic text or that Sartre's work is antisemitic. As Sartre himself emphasizes, and as the history of antisemitism has emphasized, antisemitism is a symptom of thought. Thus to restate certain antisemitic words does not make Sartre antisemitic. To emphasize what deserves repeating, the point of this paper is to examine the underlying structure of thought within Sartre's opposition to antisemitism in order to examine how antisemitic stereotypes and racial typologies are perpetuated in precisely those individuals who seek to denounce racism and antisemitism.

and in his last interviews, suggest that he was simply ignorant about the Jewish religion and Jewish history. Some have gone beyond the dichotomy of Sartre’s ignorance and subsequent enlightenment. Christian Delcampagne, for example, has suggested that Sartre was ‘a man of his time’ and that these anti-Semitic fragments constituted a ‘normal opinion in his milieu’ and that ‘it is very difficult to rid oneself of such opinions.’ Michael Walzer, in his new preface to Anti-Semitic and Jew, suggests that ‘it was shaped by a specific political orientation’. Suleiman’s analysis, which attempts ‘to study in detail how the “anti-Semitic effect” was produced on the level of Sartre’s language and rhetoric, and also to document the intertextual context from which his own discourse unfortunately “took off”’ has perhaps accomplished the most nuanced task.

In explaining why Sartre’s Réflexions produces its anti-Semitic effect, I wish to assess how it produces this effect. Therefore, before moving on to my fundamental argument, which stresses reading Sartre’s text in terms of an analysis of sexuality and gender, I want to add two other important points to what previous critics have suggested. First, Sartre’s Réflexions needs to be understood within the dual contexts of Sartre’s observé and the larger French post-war cultural context. The Réflexions needs to be situated as part of a series of texts Sartre wrote in the wake of the Second World War, including ‘Paris sous l’occupation’, ‘La République du silence’, ‘La Libération de Paris’, ‘La fin de la guerre’ and ‘Qu’est-ce qu’un collaborateur?’ Read together, these texts, which constitute Sartre’s testimony about the war years, evidence what I call a ‘double strategy of forgetting’. In these texts, Sartre on the one hand allegorizes and mythologizes the resistance, making the Resistance the essence of the French response to the stricures of the German occupation. At the same time, Sartre represents collaboration as a quintessentially un-French activity and unattainable to French culture. Thus, the double strategy of forgetting names Sartre’s contribution to what Henry Rousso calls the visiannatudaine of the Gaulist myth of the Vichy years.

37 Delcampagne, 27.
39 Suleiman, 238.
41 I have capitalized ‘Resistance’ where it is used as the personification of an abstract idea or where Sartre has capitalized it.
In Sartre’s call for the authentic Jew to join in the French socialist-humanist revolution at the conclusion of the text, (French) authenticity is linked to the continuation of the heritage of 1789 via 1830, 1848 and the Commune, and finally channelled through the Resistance, with its attendant cultural values. This history serves as the source and the model for the reconciliation of internal French divisions in Sartre’s post-revolutionary image of France. These divisions are all represented by Sartre in his image of ‘the Jew’: distinctions between rich and poor, between labouring and owning classes, between legal powers and occult powers, between city-dwellers and country-dwellers, etc., etc.—they are all summed in the distinction between Jew and non-Jew.\textsuperscript{19} Rather than disrupting the antisemite’s image of Jews and Judaism, his revolutionary solution to ‘the Jewish question’ attempts an épuration of the antisemite from the community of French culture, while enabling Sartre to define himself as the French intellectual, the true conscience of the French nation, the progenitor of the French revolution, past and future.

Second, Sartre reiterates a series of antisemitic stereotypes because of the structuring of his anti-antisemitism, which follows a strict dialectical necessity: ‘the Jew’ is the negation, the antisemite is the negation of the negation, and the synthesis is Sartre’s nationalistic-socialist-humanist revolution. The possibility of disrupting and specifically challenging the antisemitic image of ‘the Jew’ is disabled by the closed dialectical structure of Sartre’s analysis which insists: ‘The Jew is one whom other men consider a Jew: that is the simple truth from which we must start. . . . it is the antisemite who makes the Jew.’\textsuperscript{20} The constitution of ‘the Jew’ is thus always already a negation. ‘The Jew’ as a category is an empty signifier against which the antisemite defines his own essence as the ‘True Frenchman’. In the process, ‘the Jew’ is figu- ratively martyred: constituted as a negativity, a ghost, ‘a phantom personality, at once strange and familiar, that haunts [French culture].’\textsuperscript{21} Sartre’s testimony for these ghosts in October 1944 positions ‘the Jew’ between the Scylla of self-effacement and the Charybdis of the antisemites’ essentializing gaze.

Sexuality and ontology: the queer logic of inauthenticity

The contradictions at work in the Réflexions are generated by a more fundamental problem in Sartre’s corpus: the structuring of his ontological project in the Second World War that has three phases: ‘Jew a process that sought to minimize the importance of the Vichy regime and its impact on French society . . . second, the construction of an object of memory, the “Resistance,” whose significance transcended by the sum of its active part (the small groups of guerrilla partisans who did the actual fighting) and whose existence was embedded chiefly in certain sites and groups, such as the Gaulois and Com- munist, associated with fully elaborated ideologies; and third, the identification of this “Re- sistance” with the nation as a whole, a characteristic feature of the Gaulist version of the myth.’

\textsuperscript{43} Sartre, Anti-Semite and Jew, 149.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 69.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 78.
itself and, more specifically, his conception of the relation between Self and Other as elaborated in *Being and Nothingness*. Here I want to draw attention to the problems with Sartre’s analysis of the antisemitism, since most critics have focused their attention on Sartre’s much more dissecting discussion of the relation between the authentic and inauthentic Jew.

Part 1 of Sartre’s *Réflexions* is a social and existential analysis of antisemitism that theoretically develops the portrait of the antisemite portrayed in Sartre’s novella, *L’Enfance d’un chef*, written in 1938. From the outset of the *Réflexions*, the basic contradiction that Sartre seeks to reveal and oppose through his theory of antisemitism concerns the tension in freely willing the unfreedom of the Other. Therefore, while Sartre’s analysis weaves together the economic, social, political and cultural components of antisemitism, he insists that in order to understand antisemitism in its totality each of these needs to be subsumed within his phenomenological ontology.

This ontological analysis reconstitutes the basic categories of Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*: he depicts antisemitism as an inauthentic response to man’s situation in the world and being-with-others. According to his analysis, the antisemite fears himself, especially the truth about his own limits, finitude and failure, and sees in his image of ‘the Jew’ a totalizing explanation of the world. With this model of the degraded and perverse Other, the antisemite ‘is under no necessity to look for his personality within himself. He has chosen to find his being entirely outside himself, never to look within, to be nothing save the fear he inspires in others.’ Thus, for Sartre, whereas ‘authentic liberty assumes responsibilities’, ‘the liberty of the antisemite comes from the fact that he escapes all of this’. Sartre synthesizes the paradoxical logic of antisemitism in the phrase, ‘wherein one seeks only what he has already found, wherein one becomes only what he already was.’ This is an inversion of the equally paradoxical logic that encapsulates Savor’s conception of authenticity in *Being and Nothingness*: to be what you are not and not to be what you are. Sartre concludes, therefore, that the origin of antisemitism is to be found in the self-deception (mavatsofa) of the antisemite: ‘Antisemitism, in short, is fear of the human condition. The antisemite is a maqil who wishes to be a pitiless stone, a furious torrent, a devastating thunderbolt—anything except a man.’

Prima facie there are problems with Sartre’s position that go beyond the paradoxical logic of his conception of authenticity and inauthenticity. The antisemite’s ‘original choice’ is the freedom to will the unfreedom of the Other, 46 47 48 49 50

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46 Ibid., 21.
47 Ibid., 32.
48 Ibid., 18.
49 Ibid., 33-4.
50 The conception of an ‘original choice’ is discussed in *Being and Nothingness* and developed in Sartre’s biography of Baudelaire, *Cesare and Flaubert*. The ‘original choice’ of the antisemite is determined by his response to an Other outside himself. This response is the basis of a totalizing view of the world determined by the fundamental assumption that he pursues the eradication of ‘the Jew’.
the liberty not to assume man's responsibility. In the *Réflexions*, Sartre names this original choice a 'passion', which he says is 'an engagement of the soul' that has certain 'bodily manifestations' which can include impotence. Sartre flirts with the idea that this 'passion' is an innate 'disposition', which he compares to madness. The elements of Sartre's analysis that emphasize the etiology of hatred as an inherent inclination that induces antisemitism violate the axioms of Sartre's existential analysis, which refuse any deterministic explanations. Moreover, when Sartre elaborates upon the 'passion' of the antisemite, this original choice is a non-choice: it is a pre-logical, emotional, non-rational response to the world. Therefore, in the *Réflexions*, Sartre resorts to an unfree freedom, an original choice which is a non-choice, which becomes the basis of his critique of the antisemite.

Since there are these difficulties in Sartre's analysis of the etiology of hatred, I want to return to Sartre's original discussion of the issue in *Being and Nothingness*, in order to show that the basic terms of Sartre's ontology are responsible for the problems in the *Réflexions*. The first half of *Being and Nothingness is* concerned with developing the central categories of Sartre's ontology through an elaboration of the distinction between the in-itself (être-en-soi) and the for-itself (être-pour-soi). While the être-en-soi has the objective being of the phenomenon—that is, it can be perceived, touched, felt, quantified, measured etc.—the être-pour-soi is separated from (but also connected to) the être-en-soi by nothingness or le néant. In short, whereas a being in-itself is—it is an object—the for-itself is not. There is also a third kind of being that Sartre discusses, which occupies the second half of *Being and Nothingness, being-for-others (être-pour-autrui)*. Man inhabits a world always already inhabited by others and therefore also exists as an object for others.

The basic structure of being-for-others is determined by the gaze. I see the Other and see them seeing me and know that they judge my choices. The Other's gaze turns me into an object in his world, a character in his life drama, and thereby takes away my freedom to freely determine my own essence. When I am looked at (être regardé), I become objectified and my subjectivity is fixed by my being-for-others; this can be avoided by returning the gaze and objectifying the Other. On the basis of this structure, Sartre describes all concrete relations with others as forms of conflict or struggle. Indifference is impossible: it is a kind of self-deception that amounts to the refusal to see that others gaze at me. Indifference is solipsistic; it is 'blindness' in a refusal to accept that I am alienated from my own objectivity. My desire for this objectivity—my desire to be the foundation of my own essence—to constitute myself as an essence, to be an être-pour-soi, which is the essence of self-

51 Sartre, anti-Semite and Jew, 8.
52 Ibid., 10-11.
53 Ibid., 12.
deception—is the human desire to be God, and is what creates the inherent conflict in my concrete relations with others.

The structure of being-for-others as Sartre describes it is both gendered and fundamentally determined by a limited and limiting conception of sexuality. There are only two responses to the gaze of Others: to make oneself the kind of object that you would 'like' to be perceived as (which in its extreme form Sartre names 'masochism') or to try to transcend the other's freedom in order to determine absolutely the meaning of one's own being and simultaneously the meaning of the Other's being (which in an extreme form is named 'sadism'). Masochism is the desire to be the object of the gaze of the other, while sadism is the desire to objectify the other. There are variations on the form of these fundamental attitudes. In 'the case of masochism they include seduction, where I try to capture the other's subjectivity or freedom by 'making myself into a fascinating object'; and love, which Sartre states is actually 'to wish to be loved'.

The hinge that connects masochism to sadism is Sartre's conception of desire. Sexual desire, for Sartre, is not just the desire for the body of the other or the desire for sexual satisfaction, but 'the original attempt to get hold of the Other's free subjectivity through his objectivity—me'. Desire is consciousness making itself body: it is not just desire for a body. It is desire for the consciousness which gives meaning and unity to that body. For Sartre, 'desire is expressed by the caress as thought is by language.' By caressing the Other's body, I touch their free subjectivity, which Sartre calls 'possession'. Desire, like indifference, love, seduction and masochism, is doomed to failure; however, for the satisfaction of desire 'is the death and the failure of desire. It is the death of desire because it is not only its fulfillment but its limit and its end.' Thus, 'desire is naturally continued not by caresses but by acts of taking and of penetration.' The Other is inevitably seized as an instrument, an object, and thus desire is turned from a form of masochism into a form of sadism. The sadist desires the pure instrumental appropriation of the Other, and this objectification of the Other is achieved at its extreme through violence. The sadist desires the complete mastery of the Other's freedom and therefore sadism, too, is doomed to failure because the Other can always return the look, and with the look the sadist will experience the alienation of his being in the Other's freedom.

This ontological structure established in Being and Nothingness is transposed on to Sartre's analysis of the antisemitic and 'the Jew'. In the Réflexions,

55 Ibid., 484.
56 Ibid., 491.
57 See ibid., 500.
58 Ibid., 497.
59 Ibid., 507.
60 Ibid., 508.
61 Ibid., 515.
62 Ibid., 516.
Sartre argues that the antisemite is fundamentally a sadist: "His behavior reflects a curiosity fascinated by Evil, but above all, I think, it represents a basic sadism." One of the primary elements of the antisemite’s passion is a profound sexual attraction toward Jews." Thus, for Sartre, antisemitism is based on the projection of a repressed sadistic desire: The sadistic attraction that the antisemite feels toward the Jew is so strong that it is not unusual to see one of these sworn enemies of Israel surround himself with Jewish friends. Sartre contends that the image of ‘the Jewess’ in literature is consistently figured as a sadistic object: ‘the Jewess has a well-defined function in even the most serious novels. Frequently violated or beaten, she sometimes succeeds in escaping dishonor by means of death." Like his general description of sadism, Sartre argues that the desire for ‘the Jew’ is a desire for pure domination. He concludes this section, near the end of his discussion of his portrait of the antisemite, by asserting that the antisemite is a ‘destroyer in function, a sadist with a pure heart... What he wishes, what he prepares, is the death of the Jew.”

The logic of Sartre’s ontological relation of Self and Other defines ‘the Jew’ as nothing except the object of the antisemitic gaze and thus as masochistic. Already in Being and Nothingness, Sartre defined masochism as a desire for ‘possession’, ‘incorporation’ and (this is the crucial term) ‘assimilation’. In the Reflection he states that ‘the inauspicious Jew is possessed by the consciousness of being a Jew.” ‘The Jew’ cannot escape his objectification as Jew due to its carnal inscription, however, and this inescapable possession makes ‘the Jew’ turn to masochism: ‘This painful and ineluctable situation may lead a certain number of them to masochism, for masochism seems to offer a temporary solution, a sort of respite or repose.” ‘The Jew’ is figured as the masochistic victim of sadism: ‘It might be said that one of the essential traits of the Jew is that...[as] an everyday acquaintance with misfortune...he has learned that modesty, silence, patience are proper to misfortune...And certainly such wisdom can turn into masochism, into a taste for suffering.” The image of ‘the Jew’ here is of the sacrificial victim, the lamb who willingly goes to the slaughter.” The masochistic relation of ‘the Jew’ to himself is due to the refusal to recognize the responsibility of his Jewishness, his need to accept the Jewish situation. However, as I have already suggested, to accept the terms of Sartre’s authenticity is to accept the situation of ‘the Jew’ as too assimilated and unassimilable, to reinscribe ‘the Jew’ as the martyr

63 Sartre, Anti-Semitism and Jew, 46.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., 47.
66 Ibid., 49.
67 Ibid.
68 Sartre, Being and Nothingness, 474.
69 Sartre, Anti-Semitism and Jew, 106 (emphasis added).
70 Ibid., 120.
71 Ibid., 109.
72 See ibid., 46: ‘The antisemite is well aware of this individual weakness of the Jew, which hands him over to pogroms with feet and hands bound’.
in a Christologocentric narrative. Like the hinge of desire that connects masochism to sadism, the masochistic Jew can find himself in the position of the sadistic anti-Semite:

Thus the anti-Semite and the masochism of the inauthentic Jew represent in a sense the two extremes of his possible behavior: in anti-Semitism he denies his race in order to be no more than a pure individual . . . in masochism, he repudiates his liberty as a man in order to escape the sin of being a Jew and in order to seek the repressive and passivity of a thing.82

In Sartre's account, therefore, the 'inauthentic Jew' is described as a collaborator in his own oppression.83

In fact, the image of the collaborator and that of 'the Jew' in Sartre's work are connected. In 'Qu'est-ce qu'un collaborateur?' Sartre argues that collaborators, like Jews, are homeless, marginalized, unassimilable, and that they are fascinated by foreign ideologies. Both figures subvert from within (Sartre calls collaborators intérieurs-émigrés) and are perversions of Sartre's ideal of French authenticity. In contrast to the heroic, masculine and resilient Résistant, who has the genuine authenticity of the French people, Sartre depicts the collaborator as effeminate and even homosexual.84 Sartre thus argues that Driès la Rochelle, Robert Brasillach and others use 'curious metaphors that present the relations of France and Germany under the aspect of sexual union, where France plays the role of a woman.'85 Sartre suggests that this feminization of France is the result of the underlying homosexuality in collaborators: 'It appears to me that there is a curious melange of masculinity and homosexuality. The milieu of Parisian homosexuals, among others, provided many brilliant recruits.86 Whether docile woman or submissive homosexual, Sartre suggests that feminization of the foreigner results in collaborators offering themselves to the German master. The perversion of collaborationist desire alienates them from the male codes of honour so pivotal to French culture.87

For a developed discussion of the Christological elements of Sartre's politics of engagement, see "Sartre's Passion of Engagement and the Project of Universal 'Humanization' in Judaism: Jean-Paul Sartre and the 'Jewish Question'.".88

Sartre, Anti-Semitism and Jew, 209.

Sartre's Sartre claims that it is on the basis of the inauthentic Jew that the anti-Semite 'has forged his general mythology of the Jew'; there is the danger here that the inauthentic Jew is blamed for anti-Semitism. Ibid., 92.

On the other point, see the important argument of David Carroll which was crucial for my own analysis, French Literary Fascism: Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and the Ideology of Culture (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1995), 149-52. In the conclusion of my examination here, which focused on the moral of anti-Semitism, I have tried to respond to Carroll's acute objection to seeing fascism as inherently masculinist by suggesting what it might be appropriate to use the term 'masculinist' without simply reversing, and thereby reaffirming, the binary of masculinity and femininity.


Ibid, emphasis added.

Sartre further argues that collaborators, who so desired assimilation and were rejected, developed a deep hatred for the French. In fact, they hate this society where they were never able to play a role. Collaboration is thus the revenge of those who could not acculturate into French society: 'Because they were never able to succeed in passing to the interior of the French community, they subdued [the French] from the outside; they integrated into German Europe to violate this proud nation.' The collaborators thus accede to German culture to penetrate France from behind. Here the 'stab-in-the-back' theory takes on a sexual resonance. This hatred that results in submission to the German master results, for Sartre, in the possible infection of France: 'Little mattered to them of being slaves of Hitler, if they could infect all France with this slavery.'

Sartre contends that, like the inauthentic Jew, the root of collaboration is self-hatred. Sartre offers this etiology of hatred in an article he wrote for an underground issue of Les Lettres françaises, in April 1943, called 'Dries la Rochelle or self-hatred.' In the article Sartre opens by suggesting that collaborators are men of 'easy virtue,' decadents, and that among them are drunkards and pederasts. These degenerate offer themselves to the enemy in order to quell the disorder and confusion they feel:

Dries wanted the Fascist revolution (because he) hoped that an order imposed from without and upon everyone would succeed in disciplining these weak and unenviable passions that he had been unable to conquer, that a bloody catastrophe would succeed in filling the inner void he had been unable to fill, that the contemptuous power would divert him better than morphia or cocaine thinking about himself.

In Sartre's portrait of Dries, he is depicted as a man of 'bad faith' who is unable to fill the inner void of man's nobleness and who turns to have the hole filled by an order imposed from without. It is this 'unenviable passions that he had been unable to conquer' that leads him to this choice. Sartre concludes that Dries la Rochelle's self-hatred is the cause of his collaboration: 'He has come over to Nazism through an elective affinity: at the bottom of his heart, as at the bottom of Nazism, there is self-hatred—and the hatred of man it engenders.'

The Jew does not remain immune to the chain of associations in Sartre's discourse. An anecdote that Sartre recounts in the Réflexions might serve as a paradigm to synthesize this point:

80 Sartre, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un collaborateur?', 58–9.
81 Ibid., 98.
83 Ibid., 153.
84 Ibid., 154 (emphasis added).
A Jew goes to a house of prostitution, chooses one of the women, and goes upstairs with her. She tells him she is a Jew. He finds himself repulsed, and very soon is overcome with an intolerable sense of humiliation that expresses itself in spells of vomiting. It is not that sexual intercourse with a Jewess is repugnant to him—after all, Jews marry each other; it is rather the sense that he is contributing personally to the humiliation of the Jewish race in the person of the prostitute and, consequently, in his own person. In the last analysis it is he who is prostituted, humiliated; it is the whole Jewish people.86

In the encounter with the Jewish prostitute, 'the Jew' votes, inauthentically resolving his nausea—the tangible taste of an authentic confrontation with the absurdity of his situation in the world—through objectification. Sartre parallels 'the Jew' here in his affirmation that he and the whole Jewish people are prostituted.

This image of 'the Jew' as prostitute serves to crystallize a whole series of tropes that permeate Sartre's image of 'the Jew': the worker who earns an income by seduction, whose sexuality contains the threat of dis-ease,87 whose social position is necessarily that of the marginalized outsider. In short, 'the Jew' is prostituted in Sartre's discourse, which reiterates the antisemetic image of 'the Jew' because of the logic of Sartre's understanding of the relation between Self and Other as necessarily sadistic and masochistic, dominating and dominated, while positing that what he defines as inauthentic is also queer.

Engendering hasred

The foundation of the contradictions in Sartre's discourse is his masculinist conception of consciousness, which is turn engenders not only his conflation of 'the Jew', the collaborator and the queen, but a sexist and patriarchal position on female sexuality. This is evident in the section of Being and Nothingness immediately prior to Sartre's 'Con-tusion', entitled 'Quality as a revelation of being'. In this section Sartre offers an existential psychoanalytic account of 'dimness' (vagueness) and 'holes' which reveals a great deal about the gendered quality of Sartre's categories of 'being' and 'nothingness'. His overt project is to examine the materiality of signification in order to show that the meaning of being(s) is not completely arbitrary. Since he opens by constructing his own position to Rachilde's in Water and Dreams and in The Psychoanalysis of Fire, he begins with a discussion of 'liquidity' (which generally focuses on 'water'). He announces that this will enable him to apprehend 'in its origin and with all its ontological significance... the feminine and masculine poles of the world'.88 For Sartre it turns out that 'water is the symbol of conscious-

86 Sartre, Anti-Semite and Jew, 106 (emphasis added).
87 See ibid., 112-3, where Sartre discusses 'Jewish sexism' and suggests that this is connected to the Jewish anxiety about his own body, which also means that 'the Jew' is incapable of 'considering the condition of man in its nudity'.
88 Sartre, Being and Nothingness, 766.
ness—its moveness, its fluidity, its deceptive appearance of being solid, its perpetual flight—everything in it recalls the For-itself. The fluid transparency of consciousness, however, is endangered by its "anti-value," namely slininess. Slime is "essentially ambiguous; it is the 'imitation of fluidity,' 'an aberrant fluid," which turns out to have all the qualities of the feminine pole: 'Its mode of being is neither the reassuring inertia of the solid, nor a dynamism like that in water. It is soft, yielding action, a moist and feminine sucking." In addition, "slime is the revenge of the In-itself. A sickly-sweet, feminine revenge,"" which will peremptorily haunt consciousness." Sarre draws a direct analogy between slime and a sexually available woman: slime is "a spreading cut—like the flattening of the full breasts of a woman who is lying on her back." Furthermore, slime poses a threat because it can obliterate the clear and distinct thought of consciousness: "it is horrible in itself for consciousness to become slimy... A consciousness which became slimy would be transformed by the thick stickiness of its ideas." Thus as entire axiology structures Sarre's conception of consciousness, which privileges a series of vaunted terms identified with the masculine pole that are opposed to their degrading, feminine anti-values: the for-itself, which is clear, transparent and solid, is endangered by the slimy, obscure, soft, ambivalent, aberrant, yielding of the in-itself.

Sarre immediately proceeds from his analysis of water and slime to an existential psychoanalytic account of 'holes', which not only construes female sexuality in the most conventionally sexist terms, but threatens to fix this construction in the natural order of things. Sarre's discussion of 'holes' posits a pre-sexual ground that proves constitutive of (female) sexuality: "The glory, the sticky, the hazy, etc., holes in the sand and in the earth... all reveal to him modes of pre-psychic and pre-sexual being which he will spend the rest of his life explaining." Sarre's explanation of these 'holes' posits an inherent lack, perversity and abnormality to feminine sexuality:

It is from this standpoint that we can pass on to sexuality. The obscenity of the feminine sex is that of everything which 'gapes open'... In herself woman appeals to a strange flesh which is to transform her into a fullness of being by penetration and dissolution. Conversely woman senses her condition as an appetite precisely because she is "in the form of a hole."

89 Ibid., 778.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid., 774.
92 Ibid., 776.
93 Ibid., 777.
94 Ibid., 778.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid., 762.
98 Ibid., 782.
Having thus identified woman and femininity with one aspect of her physical form, and suggesting that the hole in her being is "the ontological presentiment of sexual experience," Sartre insists that his description is pre-sexual and must still be analysed according to his previous discussion of "being-for-others". Thus, while there is a material substratum to the meaning of both the male and female sex and being masculine and feminine, what matters, as it were, is how this is given meaning through the choices one makes.

Although ambivalent in certain moments, Sartre thus defines the relationship between sex and gender by distinguishing between sexual difference (i.e., biological/sexual characteristics) and sexual differentiation (i.e., gender or the difference between masculinity and femininity). As we have already seen in the discussion of desire in Sartre, the body is not the locus of human sexuality, which always finds its drive within the desire of consciousness to appropriate the free consciousness of the Other. In the final analysis, Sartre poses the notion of sexuality as independent of any physiological determination, because otherwise there would be (whole aspects of human reality that would remain opaque to consciousness and the door would have been opened for a certain determinism. Therefore, for Sartre, sexual difference is a contingent biological fact of existence, but does not have determining force on the level of sexual differentiation. Masculinity and femininity are attitudes of consciousness towards the Other, the world and the body.

In the end, then, what determines Sartre's conception of consciousness as masculinist is the structure of the look. According to Sartre's schema, to look (regarder) is to assume the active, virile, masculine position of the possessor, while to be looked at (être regardé) is to assume the passive, emasculated, feminine position of the object. Maurice Cranston has succinctly summarized Sartre's identification of objectification, the natural and the feminine:

Sartre sees natural objects as "vague", "soft", "flabby", "creamy", "thick", "tongue", "dull", "sickly", and "obscene". He is revolted also by women. There is something sickening about all the female characters in Sartre's plays and stories. Woman is seen as corrupt and corrupting; and in the very viscosity of the physical world, half-fluid, half-solid, Sartre discerns what is passive, yielding, and feminine. 99

Sartre's conception of gender, therefore, like the Greeks', is built on the primary bifurcation between active and passive. Moreover, like Freud's theory of sexuality, which is based on the phallogocentric emphasis of possessing a phallus or accepting the lack, Sartre's theory of consciousness only has one gender. There is only a virile, masculine consciousness that can be emascu-

99 Ibid.

100 This discussion of the relation between sex and gender in Sartre is significantly indebted to Andrew Leach, *The Performed Consciousness: Sexuality and Sartre* (London: Macmillan 1989).

ated. The (authentic) existential hero is a radicalization of this masculinist schema, the manly man, who operates within a thoroughly homosocial space, where the antsemitists and Jews are bottom, if you will, penetrated from behind, rather than penetrators. In short, the alterity of the (female) Other is eradicated by Sartre's conception of consciousness, indicative of Sartre's own failure to escape the problem of solipsism, which animates his entire conception of being-with-others. That Sartre's masculinist conception of consciousness threatens to erase the alterity that Sartre himself has posited.

Sartre opens his account of hatred in Being and Nothingness by claiming that 'a for-itself which by historicizing itself has experienced these various avatars can determine, with full knowledge of the futility of its former attempts, to pursue the death of the Other'. 102 I have attempted in this paper to begin the historicization of Sartre's own collusion in the pursuit of the elimination of alterity by working through the complex logic, in which, if speaking for those Others so recently annihilated, Sartre, despite his best intentions, participated in forgetting them. Sartre's Reflections ultimately fails, at times reinforcing the antisemitic image of 'the Jew', precisely because it grounds itself in an ontology that constructs the relation between Self and Other solely in terms of domination and submission, and thus as doomed to conflict and struggle. The problems in Sartre's ontology, in turn, are engendered by a masculinist conception of consciousness. What makes Sartre's theory masculinist is that it erases the gendered categories created by his own analysis, producing a mono-sexual or truly homo-sexual theory of consciousness that ultimately serves to eradicate alterity. Thus, emphasizing the relations between the differing layers of analysis suggests that Sartre's masculinist conception of consciousness, structured by his depiction of the gaze, generates an ontological framework that depts the relation between Self and Other in gendered and socialized terms that prove to have deeply problematic ramifications for Sartre's opposition to antisemitism. In short, Sartre's failure stems from not adequately thinking through the relations between gender, sexuality and antisemitism.

I will conclude by briefly suggesting a redemptive reading, possible within the movement of Sartre's own thought, when he points to a hauntology that comes before ontology, an obligation to the Other that is itself the condition of responsibility. It is within Sartre's conception of the failure of hatred itself that an other conception of the relationship between Self and Other is possible. In Sartre's account in Being and Nothingness, hatred is the most extreme manifestation of sadism: it is the desire for the complete eradication of the other as Other. Sartre distinguishes between despising the Other and hatred by arguing that hatred is the desire to eliminate alterity itself, not only one specific Other among Others:

102 Ibid.
Hate is the hate of all Others in one Other... My project of suspending him is a project of suspending others in general; that is, of recognizing my non-substantial freedom as for-itself. To hate there is given an understanding of the fact that my dimension of being-attracted is a real entanglement which causes me through others. 102

Sartre argues that hatred too is doomed to failure because 'if the abolition of the Other is to be lived as the triumph of hate, it implies the explicit recognition that the Other has existed'. 103 The comprehension of the failure of hatred entails for Sartre that 'the for-itself abandons its claim to realize any union with the Other; it gives up using the Other as an instrument to recover its own being-in-itself... hate implies a recognition of the Other's freedom... it wishes to destroy this object... which haunts it.' 104 While Sartre insists that hatred merely returns the subject to the vicious circle of sadism and masochism, I contend that the apprehension of the failure of hatred within Sartre's own account contains within it a different logic. It demands more than just the realization that the Other is always already there as a ground of my being. The logic of hatred contains within it an ethics of obligation in which responsibility is the result of our 'enslavement' to the Other. This entails a politics that demands that 'after Auschwitz' we refuse to reiterate an assimilationist ontology or epistemology that only conceives of the relation between subject and object as one of instrumentality, appropriation, identification and incorporation, and a view of history that demands that we bear witness to the ghosts of the past that haunt us, while recognizing that it is also our story that we are telling, not only theirs. In short, the logic of hatred contains within it the logic of the trace, a logic of the ghosts who haunt Sartre's account demanding that he tell the story of their destruction. This hauntology is itself the condition of responsibility, an ethics that predates existence, even as existence precedes essence.

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102 Sartre, Being and Nothingness, 533.
103 Ibid., 534.
104 Ibid., 532.