The concept 'dialectical reason', as used by Marxian theorists, involves spurs within it a number of theoretical problems, which have significance for those who and how we may use dialectical reason. There are three issues, in particular, on which reflective clarity is both always needed and often lacking. Firstly, what precisely distinguishes 'dialectical reason' from 'analytical reason'? Secondly, how does one legitimize the use of dialectical reason—that is, are there laws of dialectical reason that one follows, and to what may they be applied? Thirdly, given that the central concept of dialectics is that of 'specificity', and that it is therefore assumed that the observer is always part of the totality being observed, how, if at all, does one escape from historical particularism?

It is these problems that Sartre is dealing with in The Critique of Dialectical Reason. This important contribution to the understanding of dialectics has not been widely discussed in English-language circles, and there are certainly many 'existentialists' who have never interrogated it. So it seems to me to be useful to give a brief account of the introduction to the critique, in which he formulates the problem of the limits and the applicability of dialectical reason. This involves a critical discussion of orthodox Marxism, and in particular of its epistemological roots, and of the 'doubling mechanisms' of the dialectics of Hegel. Sartre points out that the concept of a unified and unmediating dialectic of nature with its atemporalistic and/or teleological implications, tends to destroy the specificity of human history, and leads to Engels' showing 'men being produced by the system without making us see the system being produced by men, and reducing human conflict to believing no more that a symbolic expression of the contradictions of the economic process' (p. 12).

If human history is to be made the result of the working of a universal law or process, it becomes impossible for it to be understood as intersubjective philosophy, one's claim to know that this is in fact the case. For this world of which we claim to know must itself be a result of the process, just like any other process. And thus, in some way, which my stage can be independently verified, by pointing to some sort of autonomy from external historical determination. I cannot claim that it is true, that is, that the intuition of the 'metaphysical' principle which makes certain begin with reflection.' (S. 52-53). This is the starting point from the revolutionary discovery that it is in man who does the thinking, and trying to discover the truth, and thus every theory which in principle denies this autonomy constrains its own basis. The difficulty with this methodological principle is that we must get confused with the ontological principle to the effect that ideas or ideas in the mind can exist in idealist philosophy in which only reflective knowledge finds a place. The critic of the outside world never gets made. So Sartre stresses that such a methodological principle 'in no way contradicts the anthropological principle which defines the concrete person or his interiority.' (S. 53)

Considering the dialectic of nature on a practical level leads to an analogous recognition of some sorts of individual autonomy, for a materialist dialectic the future is real and personal and urgent. The individual is involved in it through his choices, and so, even if it could be shown that inorganic nature works dialectically, it would still be necessary to show how to intervene in the work of the individual to create the historical dialectic.

Sartre then says that to sketch the purpose of his book on the relation between the individuals, the world in which he produces his means of existence, his fellows, with whom he enters into specific relationships in his productive activities, and the social, political, and ideological forms which arise out of the unity of these relationships. This unity was transformed into an integrating form for the study of social forms and historical changes, and used very fruitfully. However, at this point it seems to have succeeded to them that they had only sketched a theory, and that it was not necessary to showing, from an account of the nature of the individual, why it is related to the world in this particular way. So they or, rather, essentially Sartre is in the 'anti-Darwinism' and in today's common sense of classical material philosophy and in the concept of the 'dictatorship of nature' or fill in the gap.

Sartre's argument here is that the implications of this theory are such that it corrects rather than complements the first theory. (a) that Marx and Engels do not use it in their social analysis, and (b) that the new account of 'being human' in fact does provide an adequate foundation for their historical theory.

The introduction to the Critique of Dialectical Reason is divided into Part I. 'Dialectical Criticism and Critical Dialectics: 1. Part I: 'Critique of Critical Experience'. In these two sections Sartre attacks the metaphysical foundations of the dialectic and dialectics and sketches out the form in which the attempt to provide such foundations must take. His two major criticisms are: (1) that a philosophical theory must at the very least justify its own existence, and this historical existential has failed to do; 'I was really confined in everything except my own essence' (S. 111). (2) That the necessity of the laws of the dialectic is either given or else 'practical' empirically, but both these are inadequate approaches; and that no attempt is made to explain why, if the laws of dialectics are to be so.

(b) knowledge is universal. It always involves an escape from the particular, from the immediate given. This makes a problem of the nature of our knowledge of being.' (S. 121). A true statement in such a thing in a word, a particular fact, and also a truth about the world. We have to account for this dual status, and in particular we have to take this
that no theory we are putting forward does not deny one or the other of these aspects of thought.

Hegel reduces to being thought. Marx establishes against Hegel that "being remains irreducible to knowing." (RD 12). But it appears to fail to establish that autonomy of knowing which is necessarily to justify its own determination. Hegel's historical materialism has, in regard to contemporary ideologies, the practical supremacy of being the ideology of the rising class. But if it was only the single inert expression of this ascension, or even of revolutionary praxis, if it did not turn round on it to illuminate it, how could one speak of a progress in becoming conscious? How could the dialectic be presented as the progressive history of history by history's being itself? (RD 123)

The crude materialism of contemporary marxists seems to accept that their theory is "the simple law of expression of this ascension." But at the same time they claim their theory to be universal. This is dialectical idealism: "an idealist materialism which is basically nothing more than a discourse on the idea of matter." (RD 12a). This type of theory ends up "giving a vance and constituted theory, that is, making of thought a form of being of the world conditioned by the world (which it is), while omitting to tell us that it is also knowledge of the world." (RD 127)

(2) Sartre quotes Engels' account of the "most general laws of natural and social history": "They can be reproduced..." (Sartre's emphasis) essentially to these: The law of the transformation of quantity into quality and vice-versa. The law of the interpenetration of opposites. The law of the negation of the negation. All three are developed by Hegel in his idealist manner as simple laws of thought. The mistake consists in imposing these laws on Nature and History as laws of the world. (RD 127, Engels' error)

He points out that these laws, if they are to be necessary, cannot be 'deduced' or 'induced' from Nature by observation. Why? Because "nothing in experience gives the fact but not necessity." (RD 130). Further, if he were to simplify, it would be stated, it is necessary that the relation between them should be explained, which Engels does not even try to do.

Before giving an account of Sartre's own solution to these problems, I shall present a schematic outline of what I understand by the concept 'dialectical'.

In our ordinary common-sense thinking we think of objects to be "this", or "there", and "in" or "outside" something else. As Hegel put it, the central logical category of this form of thought is the category of "being". Nothing is "this" or "there". Nothing is a "thing". It is distinct from other things. However, further analysis reveals that the thing is in fact in relation to other things. For example, if I am writing on only is where it is and what it is because the rest of the universe has a certain configuration. If, say, the sun were suddenly to disappear the desk would cease to exist, as a desk, for all of the factors which keep it in its present position and in its present shape is the fact that it is connected to the sun in a particular field of force. If the sun were to be annihilated, the field of force would change. In a very important sense the desk is relation with the rest of the universe. It is a specific, determinate, way of not being the rest of the universe. Language may be rather odd, but the thought is not. For what is being implied is that, to understand any particular thing we have to unravel the ways in which it is related to all other things. We have to treat it as an interdependent part of reality, rather than as a self-sufficient identity.

Dialectical logic is the logic of totalities, and dialectical reason is the attempt to make sense of totality. Hegel's categories of language and dialectics becomes perfectly intelligible if viewed as from the point of view of totality. (RD 127)

Let me now attempt to state this with a little more rigour. To speak of dialectical logic is to imply that the 'laws' of the dialectic are formal, rather than substantive laws. They are what Kant terms categories. The statement "all events must have a cause" is a formal law, in that it makes no attempt to specify the cause of any particular event. "Germ cause decay of a spontaneous ferment" is a substantive law. What it specifies is the cause for a particular class of events. Real historical laws are not formal. They are first type. And only if they are formal laws can it be claimed that they are universal - that is, absolutely discovered laws can never be necessary. They must always be open for possible falsification.

The laws of the dialectic are, then, an attempted formulation of those categories which necessarily have to be used to describe any totality or whole. Justifying the application of these laws therefore always involves two steps, (a) showing that these categories are logically implied by the concept 'totality' and (b) showing that the phenomenon to which they are being applied is in fact a totality.

For something to be experienced by me it must enter into some relationship with me, and thereby also directly or indirectly into some relationship with all the other things which I may or may experience. If there was something in this room which had no effect on me or on any other thing in the room, then it would not be meaningful to say that it was in the room. It would be in a different universe. To say that something is in the room is to say that it is in interaction with every other thing in the room. That is, for something to be experienced by me, it must be a part of totality of which I am myself a part.

And the first law of this totality is the law of interconnectedness, of what Engels here calls "The law of interpenetration of opposites." There are no polar opposites within a totality, no entities which are outside of, or other than in terms of their relations to other entities.

But this interdependence is not undifferentiated. If every thing in the universe is causally interrelated, then no way as every other thing affected me then experience would be possible. Further, just as any interrelated things imply that different fields are connected in some way, so that what is involved in an interconnectedness of things implies that different states are changed and they cannot be changed. And this connectedness is structurally. To say it structurally is to say that it is made up of structures. This fact is formulated in terms of a law of change. A structure has a relative independence, a relative finiteness, within which change can occur within it without affecting its relationship to other structures. However, if changes within it go beyond a certain point, the changes in its relations change have occurred within these relations then the state the universe has changed. It has become a qualitatively different entity. This is formulated in the law of reformation of quantity into quality. Quantitative changes are changes within a structure, changes which can occur independently, but which if they go beyond a certain limit change the qualitative nature of the structure as a whole.

So far we have seen that the individual is necessarily a part of a totality of interconnected substructures. Our experience is temporal, and therefore the totality of which we are a part is itself temporal as well as spatial, diachronic as well as synchronic. Here we encounter a problem. The structure of a totality is a structure of interconnectedness. Causal relations within a totality are always twoway, rather than unidirectional as is the case for the past and the future be part of a totality? For we can observe an unidirectional causal process. What happens in the past is causal to what happens in the future. Only if we can show that the future affects the present can we meaningfully speak of a temporal totality.
It is here that we can draw on Santé's phenomenological account of being human in being and consciousness, where he shows that "human reality is temporarily interconnected. Consciousness is a project. The specific way in which a human reality interacts with the whole of what it is a part of is by projecting a future and acting in terms of that future. That is, consciousness委temporarily integrates the totality. My present is a particular way in which my past is organized in relationship to be perceived: having oneself is its past in terms of not being in it. In Hegelian terms, the for itself is the determinate negation of its past."

The formal law of totality is the "law of the negation of the negation." In dialectical terms, the negation of negation is an affirmation, and the law of the negation of the negation asserts (a) that change occurs through a process of successive 'negations'; and (b) that the end result is an 'affirmation', or a positive development in reference to the initial state. This only makes sense if the initial state is a "consciousness" or totality, in such a context change occurs through action, which is the negation of the given in terms of a projected future. Each action is the determination of the totality in terms of the goal. It therefore has to be negated once more by a further action which gets a little closer to the goal. Each negation is an affirmation in that it integrates what is being negated into itself. Thus the concept of the 'negation of the negation' is an attempt at a formal description of the ambiguous relationship in human reality to its past and to the natural world. As Marx wrote in the 18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past." (Tucker, 427). That is they are both conditioned by their history and free to make something new of their condition. They are both in a situation and also in shaping their own meaning. In the Critique, Marx describes this as "the perpetually resolved and perennially unresolved relation between man and the product" (158). Each new human transcendence dialectically supercedes the old.

Thus the totality of which the experiencing (and hence acting) consciousness is a part is a structure of interdependent subsumes in which development takes place as a result of the 'negating' character of the experiencing consciousness.

I began the analysis of the concept of dialectics by pointing out that in the application of dialectical materialism to action, the emphasis is on events to which it was being applied was in fact a totality. On my analysis of the concept, has itself revealed one element which must be present in any process for it to be dialectical - the element of negation. Negation is part of the structure of the experiencing consciousness. Nature, independently complete, as a totality is not dialectically totality. We cannot say that development develops its totality. Nature is always simple negation. States succeed one another. Only a consciousness can relate them to one another and relate them to us.

It is therefore possible and legitimate to treat certain elements of the totality 'human reality' within our dialectical framework. When changes of state inside a distinct star cannot of themselves be subjected to dialectical analysis, it is because as they are experienced and integrated into an individual's consciousness, we are only in the second stage of the process of development by changing both the ideas and eventually the order of the elements which have formed them. (153)

It is important to notice here that the 'categories' of the dialectic do not have exactly the same meaning. For example, for Kant, the categories are applied to phenomena from outside a 'transcendental' consciousness which does not seem to itself in any way part of the process. Here, however, the knowing consciousness is itself an integral part of the totality operated on by the categories. Consciousness is essentially creative action, rather than simply observation. They are referred from doing to knowing and from knowing to doing in the unity of a process which is itself dialectical. (135)

The intelligibility of the dialectic comes from the fact that "the so-called 'laws' of dialectical reason are over to the creation of it under what otherwise, or else dialectical reason would cease to be itself a dialectical process, and thought, in the praxis of the theoretician, would necessarily be discontinuous. Thus the fundamental concept of dialectical reason - it is to exist - is that of a totalisation. Or, in return to the distinction between being and knowing, there is a dialectic if there exists, at least in the transcendental sector, a totalization which totalizes itself ceaselessly in its very comprehension of the totalization from which it starts and makes which makes itself its object." (137)

Thus full dialectical relations occur only in the human world. But we still need to ask in precisely what respects of the human world they occur. And this is Sartre's essential problem in the Critique. The experience of the individual is necessarily dialectical, and each individual's personal history is a dialectical whole. But can we go beyond this? Can we, as Marx does, treat society and the history of society as dialectical wholes?

Each individual consciousness is a totalizing process, but history is made up of millions of individuals totalizing separately. If Marx's application of the dialectic to society is to be shown to be valid, we must be able to show that history is in some sense one single totalizing process. Sartre formulates the problem as follows:

It is not a question of negating the human 'abundance', but rather of carrying out the rational experience of consciousness of interiority, or, in other terms, of distinguishing in respect of whatever real enterprises, structures or events, the answer for this question of principle, what are, in the human adventure, the respective roles of interiority and exteriority? Or, in other words, in this total experience which is, in sum, that of my whole life, what is the relation of the exteriority (analytical and positivist reasoning) to the interiority (by practical multiplication) and that it only acts on them (as an historical force) to the extent that it becomes internalization of interiority, we shall find ourselves situated by this research at the very heart of a totalization in process. (146-7).

That is, we have seen that the universe vanishes in a dream if man submits to the dialectic from outside as his mediator, but, if we can show that each individual follows his own laws and that these molecular collisions produce a collective result, we shall find average or statistical results, but not a historical development. (131)

If we are to understand history as a dialectical process, rather than as a mere succession of states, we must, starting from individual processes "follow the logic of each which, from this process, will lead us to the various forms of human ensembles; we must seek an explanation in the ensemble, its real modes of formation from its elements, and then to deduce the unity of the elements which have formed them." (153)
diialectical intelligibility rests on the intelligibility of each new determination if a practical totality, infiltrate this determination more than the maintenance and the prevailing "transcendence and maintenance are infiltrated by a totality type."

As I write these words, I am creating something irreducibly new which is nevertheless only intelligibility or what I have already written. My present writing both maintains and transcends what I have already written. My present act embodies the intelligibility (to me) of my past. That is, it is the determination negation of a past. Sartre formulates this as follows:

If the dialectic exists, we must submit to it as the incommensurable rise of the totalisation which it totalises, or as I put it in three practical point of view as the totalising praxis which we are, albeit deeply or not at all, in which we must find, in the intelligible unity of the spontaneous movement, the unconscious and the indissoluble link of necessity and freedom... necessity as the spatial structure of the dialectical experience lies neither in the free development of interactivity nor in the mere dispersion of metapsychic. It imposes itself, as an irrevocable and irrevocable moment, in the transformation of the exterior and the interiorisation of the interior.

The concept of 'determinate negation' formalises the general relationship between freedom and necessity. Sartre's problem now is to spell out what is implied by this in the field of social relations. To follow his argument, understand that freedom itself, and consequently freedom in society, is not a mere passivity in which human beings are no more than passive objects, but rather an active freedom which changes itself as freedom.

To say that history is merely made up of internal relations is to imply that history is a 'hyper-organism' with a consciousness of itself. What Sartre said that history is the arithmetical sum of purely external relations is to make it unintelligible. The concept of the subject, and of societal needs of the individual who designed to describe the way in which external relations between people become internalized. To do this is necessary to show that I am not act in terms of any relationships of externality which exist between myself and others, and that these relationships become internal relations of a special kind - relations of immanence. The market is of course the paradigm of such an interrelation. The market is the internalisation of the acts of each individual producer, consumer, and worker, and the mutual internalisation it is in its/her relationship to all the others, and at the same time in the impersonal mass of all of them to effect the outcome. However, in the necessity to externalise the act before it becomes a historical factor lies the possibility of moving beyond the impotence of serial praxis to self-conscious group praxis.

"Nothing prevents us, therefore, from starting our discussion with criticism of politics, with raising the question of the life of the people, or, in other words, with the question of the situation in which we find ourselves.

However, Sartre, and all dialectical theorists, are arguing that historical 'movements' are not of this kind. As he shows in later works, the concept of the individual consciousness is free, and this means that it can give new meaning to situations and its role in the formation of itself.

Human praxis is a continuous invention of new meanings, but these meanings are nevertheless interrelated to the act. This..."