

## SARTRE INTEGRATING ETHICS AND POLITICS: THE CASE OF TERRORISM

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Sartre reflected on questions related to terror and terrorism throughout his career and these questions shaped his understanding of ethics and politics. In exploring these connections I link Sartre's controversial remarks about the terrorism he observed during his lifetime to our more recent experiences of terrorism in the USA, Bali, Madrid and London. In *Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism*, Robert Young claims that Sartre moves from ethics to politics in his account of colonialism, understanding that shift as one from a concern with individual freedom to commitment to political causes.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, Azzedine Haddour says that *Anti-Semite and Jew* and 'Black Orpheus' demonstrate 'the inextricable link between ethics and politics in his critiques of anti-Semitism, racism and colonialism.'<sup>3</sup> While Sartre condemns these phenomena in ethical terms, some of his statements in response to them appear to suggest that ethical assessment is irrelevant. For example, describing Algerian rebels, he says 'Sons of violence, at every instant they draw their humanity from it'.<sup>4</sup> I aim to make some sense of this seeming inconsistency in Sartre's views. On the one hand, he takes an ethical stance and on the other hand, he seems to suggest that ethics has no place in judging revolt by the colonised against the colonisers or by the oppressed against their oppressors. Since ethics provides criteria for judging political actions as right or wrong rather than understandable or inevitable, Sartre appears to have changed his mind a number of times about political violence. Or is he, as Ronald Santoni argues, 'curiously ambivalent'?<sup>5</sup>

A popular interpretation of Sartre's work is that he had at least two, possibly three ethics, during his lifetime.<sup>6</sup> The first is the 'ethics of authenticity' of 'Existentialism and Humanism' (1948) and *Notebooks for an Ethics* (1992), the second his dialectical ethics or ethics of integral humanity of *Critique of Dialectical Reason I* (2004) and subsequent essays and lectures, and the third is his sketchy 'ethics of the we' mentioned in *Hope Now* (1996) and in interviews. I shall consider how these conceptions of ethics are inflected in his political statements, particularly those concerning terrorism.

There has been a great deal of debate about Sartre's views on terror itself. He famously supported the Palestinian 'Black September' group that kidnapped and was responsible for the deaths of members of the Israeli Olympic team at the Munich Olympics in 1972 in a piece in *La Cause du peuple*. In that short article, Sartre says that the group has no other alternatives and that 'the principle of terrorism is that one must kill.'<sup>7</sup> In contrast, he also states that 'it remains inexcusable after an explosion to see mutilated bodies or a child's severed head.'<sup>8</sup> Sartre's stance seems to articulate the logic of terrorism rather than to approve of it, leaving one uneasy about his failure to condemn that attack.

Likewise, Sartre's preface to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1967) has been taken to advocate indeed to glorify violence. For example, in *On Violence* Hannah Arendt writes: 'Sartre, who in his preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* goes much farther in his glorification of violence than Sorel in his famous *Reflections on Violence* — further than Fanon himself, whose argument he wishes to bring to its conclusion — still mentions "Sorel's fascist utterances."<sup>9</sup> Arendt also quotes Sartre from that essay, saying 'irrepressible violence ... is man recreating himself', 'To shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone ... there remains a dead man and a free man'<sup>10</sup> and 'violence, like Achilles' lance, can heal the wounds it has inflicted'.<sup>11</sup> These quotations suggest support for rebellious violence but I will argue later in this paper, against Arendt's claim, that Sartre does not glorify or advocate violence in that preface.

Yet while Sartre does not explicitly condone a violent response to oppression, his account implies that it is at least understandable. Now, to understand violence is not to accept it. Sartre's words are an interpretation of the specific actions of colonial subjects who wish to be sovereign and independent and whose violent actions have specific goals. The understanding Sartre recommends is limited to terrorist groups belonging to a nation that had suffered generations of oppression and the outrages of torture, as in Algeria. In his discussion of the events at the Munich Olympics Sartre says that he can also understand and accept the actions of the Israeli government: 'Similarly, while we disagree with the Israeli government on all other points, we can understand that, being at war with the Palestinians, Israel would reject all concessions.'<sup>12</sup> These remarks seem to express the same 'understanding' that is more appropriate to those involved in such conflicts.

Thomas Flynn claims that Sartre was a moralist all his life and was disappointed that the communists were interested in power rather than justice.<sup>13</sup> But is Sartre taking an amoral, Realpolitik approach to the question of ethics in politics in these cases? Sartre himself said that he adopted an 'amoral political realism' around 1950 when he gave up his first ethics, a position that he was uneasy with.<sup>14</sup> He called it a period when ethics was sent on holiday.<sup>15</sup> Although Sartre's position appears to shift between different periods, we cannot understand Sartre's politics or his views of terrorism unless we understand the role that his ethics plays in them and that the role is an evolving one rather than a series of dramatic changes in attitude.

In a recent discussion of Sartre's likely response to the 9/11 attacks in *Sartre Studies International*,<sup>16</sup> three basic positions are set up. The first, claimed by Ronald Aronson, is that Sartre defended terrorist violence in a number of plays, essays and *The Critique of Dialectical Reason*, thinking of violence as emancipation from oppression that humanises the self, which might give us reason to think he would support the attacks. However, Aronson points out, Sartre had not experienced attacks of this kind — suicide attacks on such a large scale, and the aims of the attacks are shadowy, not liberation from oppression, so he is unlikely to have supported them.<sup>17</sup>

As he argues generally throughout his book, Santoni holds that Sartre would have been ambivalent about violent revolt. According to Santoni, whereas Sartre justifies violence in his preface to Fanon's book and in his 1964 Rome Lectures, in *Notebooks for an Ethics* he says that terrorist violence is a dead end.<sup>18</sup> Santoni concludes that Sartre would have seen 9/11 as a response to the injustices of the world but also would have seen it as 'criminal and inimical to the end of creating a new autonomous, integral humanity.'<sup>19</sup> Thus Sartre would be in two minds about the attacks.

The third interpretation (Robert Stone's) is that Sartre would have condemned the attacks because they do not meet the criteria he set out in his Rome Lectures. In these lectures Sartre outlined four criteria for assessing whether terrorist violence can be excused. The first is that terror must not become 'a system itself' but remain a 'provisional expedient'.<sup>20</sup> The second is that 'An ideology of terror' and a 'morality of suspicion' must be avoided.<sup>21</sup> The third is that there is 'no justification [for terror] beyond its necessity' 'never making it the easy solution when a more difficult one is possible'.<sup>22</sup> The fourth and final is that because terror is 'a deviation from humanity as end due to urgency' a 'pause' in liberation, terror is acceptable only if 'it issues from the people'.<sup>23</sup>

As Stone notes, the 9/11 attacks would not meet the criteria because of the specific character of al-Qa'ida as a terror system. Its attacks come from 'an ideology of "holy war" taken as indiscriminate terror'. Furthermore, other means could have been used (presuming there was a strategic goal). Finally, al-Qa'ida is without popular roots.<sup>24</sup> In summary, Sartre 'would almost certainly join us in condemning it'.<sup>25</sup> This level of disagreement between commentators on Sartre suggests there is an important issue here in understanding how he conceived the relation between ethical concerns and political ones, and that the issue is acute when it comes to questions of terror.

## UNDERSTANDING SARTRE

In what follows, I intend to put Sartre's comments about terrorism in the context of the development of his work. The main sources I will use are the notorious preface, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (2004, 2006), and the criteria he sets out in the Rome Lectures. Santoni's book, *Sartre on Violence: Curiously Ambivalent* (2004) will be useful in explaining that context, despite its weaknesses. Santoni criticises Sartre for not distinguishing between forms of violence, and yet does not make those distinctions himself. Throughout his book, he refers only to 'violence'. Furthermore, his entire analysis of Sartre is based on a pacifist position that would not justify violence of any kind, even in self-defence. He begins the book by saying that "'Self-defence" and "necessity" have been characteristic words offered to "justify" violence.<sup>26</sup> Such a position, assuming that violence can never be justified, is itself in need of justification.

For his part, Sartre fails to be clear about what he means by violence, and to distinguish terrorist violence from other forms. Yet he makes his position clearer than Santoni does his own. In *Colonialism and Neo-colonialism* Sartre distinguishes clearly between acts of sabotage and terrorism. In an essay on events in Algeria published in 1958 he notes that sabotage that does not directly harm human beings 'can in no way equate with a terrorist action'.<sup>27</sup> He is also unequivocal in his denunciation of torture. In 'A Victory', Sartre strongly criticises torture, calling it 'quite simply a vile, revolting crime, committed by men against men, and to which other men can and must put an end'.<sup>28</sup> This is not a contextual claim, but universal. Furthermore, in 'Imperialist Morality' Sartre is unequivocal that certain acts of violence committed during the Algerian war are crimes against humanity: 'Torture, the organisation of concentration camps, reprisals on the civilian population, executions without trial could all be equated with some of the crimes condemned at Nuremberg'.<sup>29</sup> And as the Rome Lectures clarify, he does not see terror as a system to be ethically justified. For him, 'colonial aggression is internalised as terror by the colonised'.<sup>30</sup> Sartre repudiates that kind of terror. He also refers scathingly to fanatics in France who want to terrorise the French for losing Algeria. These are all significant distinctions that nuance any claim that he endorsed 'violence'.

The real problems with Sartre's ethical views in relation to these issues emerge at the time of the preface (1961) and *Critique of Dialectical Reason I* (1960) and II.<sup>31</sup> Santoni sees the preface as the consequence of the views detailed in the *Critique*. Apart from Sartre's comments about Munich, these views represent his most extreme statements about violence. As Santoni acknowledges, Sartre is giving a descriptive account of the evolution of violence.<sup>32</sup> But it could be argued that in refusing to condemn terrorism he is justifying it. I would like to briefly trace the evolution of Sartre's views on these issues.

Sartre's first ethics of authenticity, expressed in works such as *Existentialism and Humanism* (1948) and *Notebooks for an Ethics* (1992), suggest a condemnation of terrorism and violence in general, although *Existentialism and Humanism* (1948) does not deal with this question explicitly. The ethics of authenticity requires us to make choices about how to live and to take full responsibility for them. Critics of this ethics have objected that one could be 'authentic' but choose a way of life that is violent so long as one is clear-sighted and not in bad faith about it.<sup>33</sup> One way around this problem is to take freedom as a value that one must promote. In consequence, authenticity would be incompatible with oppression and violence.

Sartre argues that good faith demands consistency: 'once a man has seen that values depend upon himself, in that state of forsakenness he can will only one thing, and that is freedom as the foundation of all values.'<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, Sartre contends that when we make a choice we commit humanity: 'of all the actions a man may take in order to create himself as he wills to be, there is not one which is not creative, at the same time, of an image of man such as he believes he ought to be.'<sup>35</sup> It is also important to show the link between individual freedom and the freedom of others. In *Existentialism and Humanism* Sartre suggests that 'as soon as there is a commitment, I am obliged to will the liberty of others at the same time as mine. I cannot make liberty my aim unless I make that of others equally my aim.'<sup>36</sup> His reason is that each person's freedom is dependent on that of others. Each of these arguments needs further elaboration. As Sartrean scholars have combined and reconstructed them, his arguments indicate that choices to act violently must be justified in terms of the image of humanity they create and the effects on the freedom of others.<sup>37</sup> Such a reconstruction restricts the reasons for and the scope of violence.

In the *Notebooks* Sartre touches on the subject of violence many times. In a short section on the nature of violence, he describes it as the destruction of human organisations, people, and other living things.<sup>38</sup> Violence for him opposes human lawfulness. He says that violence is 'unproductive' and that terrorist violence is 'a dead end, the unique and individual discovery by a subject of his free subjectivity in tragedy and death. This is an experience that can benefit no one.'<sup>39</sup> At most violence can prevent resignation and at this point Sartre does not believe that it can overcome oppression. While Sartre was not satisfied with the ethics first developed in the notebooks (they were not published in his lifetime<sup>40</sup>) the problem was not simply how his first ethics related to terrorism. He came to realise that the framework of what he said there was in no way adequate to deal with political issues.

Sartre's second ethic, as it appears in the *Critique*, belongs to what is sometimes called his 'amoral realist' period. (Or should it be called his 'immoral realist' period?) His account appears to imply that ethical relations are not possible between oppressed and oppressor. In the *Critique*, Sartre defines scarcity as the difficulty of satisfying needs.<sup>41</sup> Scarcity and the struggle against scarcity is the background against which both conflict and fraternity develop. Oppression is on a kind of sub-ethical and subhuman level where only negative forms of reciprocity can be expected. In colonialism, specifically the Algerian example Sartre discusses, the colonisers intensify scarcity for the colonised through superexploitation and use violence to deny the colonised 'any possibility of reacting, even by admiring his oppressors and seeking to become like them.'<sup>42</sup> Thus, it could be argued that Sartre neither endorses nor condemns non-ethical relations between coloniser and colonised because they exist in a pre-ethical realm.<sup>43</sup> Santoni calls Sartre

to account for using ‘weasel’ words in describing these relations as necessarily and inevitably ‘marked by conflict and violence’. But when Sartre says that, for example, the violence of the Algerian rebellion was a ‘negation of the impossible, and the impossibility of life was the immediate result of oppression’<sup>44</sup> he does not thus *endorse* rebellious violence; his words simply accept violence as the result of oppression.

In *Critique II* Sartre discusses a boxing match to show that individual struggles are linked to or unified by the scarcity that dominates social groups. He also ties the violence of the boxing match to the violence of oppression and colonisation, saying ‘Thus Fanon points out that the colonised man — when he has not reached the revolutionary stage — hits the colonised man. Induced violence, which in him is violence against man (because he has been made subhuman), finds an outlet only by attacking his *fellow* (i.e. his brother).’<sup>45</sup> In subhuman relations, the oppressed attack each other and the boxers themselves exemplify this phenomenon.

But can one become the ‘integral human’ of Sartre’s second ethics by refusing these subhuman relations? If so, it is the responsibility of each individual to become part of the ethical realm and positive reciprocal relations. Sartre never uses the language of bad faith here but perhaps overcoming bad faith could play a role in ending oppression. One expression of bad faith is that of the oppressors and another is the complicity of the oppressed. There is something troubling about his acquiescence in a realm outside the ethical because it seems to abnegate the responsibility so important to the ethics of authenticity. As we shall see, Sartre soon tried to integrate his ethics with his account of politics and history and to construct an ethics that applies even within oppressive situations. To describe inevitable conflict is not yet to make ethical judgements. In any case, the condition of material scarcity and superexploitation Sartre believes holds in such situations is not relevant to the current issue of terrorism, which is generally carried out by middle-class agents — even if in the name of an oppressed religion or culture.

Another difficulty in Sartre’s work concerns the function of terror in his account of groups. In *Hope Now* Benny Lévy refers to terror emerging instead of fraternity in Sartre’s work.<sup>46</sup> Taking up this theme, Santoni quotes Sartre from the *Critique of Dialectical Reason I* as saying that violence is ‘called *terror* when it defines the bonds of fraternity itself; it bears the name of oppression when it is used against one or more individuals, imposing an untranscendable statute on them as a function of scarcity.’<sup>47</sup> In our day-to-day lives, we form ‘series’, waiting for a bus, watching television, and so on, in which we are competitive and have no common goals. Sartre gives an account of the way groups form, first spontaneously in response to a threat (the fused group), then through a pledge, later becoming an organisation and even an institution, and then dissolving back into a series. Santoni cites Sartre’s view that a pledged group is able to unite everyone through terror, and takes that to mean Sartre believes terror is justified.<sup>48</sup>

However, Santoni seems not to have understood that the kind of terror Sartre is talking about is not terrorism. The pledged group is one that is formed through taking an oath and maintained by the threat of terror over anyone who betrays it. What Sartre is talking about here is terror exercised over the members of the pledged group to make sure that they do not defect or betray the group, not terrorism against civilians of another group. He also seems to be describing rather than endorsing such terror. (Santoni admits that the most one can say is that Sartre does not condemn it heartily.)<sup>49</sup> The kind of control terrorist groups exercise over their members can be understood using Sartre’s account of the pledged group, which applies as much to organised conventional army units as to terrorists. This account of terror relates to Arendt’s account of the terror of totalitarianism, which terrorises both the population and the members of the dominant or powerful group. Nevertheless, while Sartre says that the limitation on freedom of the pledge is ‘accepted mutilation’<sup>50</sup> he seems quite tolerant of the terror exercised in these groups, partly because he does not see how else a group of this kind can be kept cohesive. In *Critique*

*II* Sartre refers to the ‘Terror’ of Stalinism in the 1930s as a result of losing contact with the masses, clearly not a laudatory reference.<sup>51</sup> Elsewhere he refers to the ossification of the hierarchy in the USSR.<sup>52</sup> Is terror exercised within groups the only kind of terror Sartre accepts?

### THE ‘WRETCHED’ PREFACE

Published soon after *Critique I*, the preface to Fanon’s book is often understood as an application of Sartre’s views on violence and terror to a particular situation, that of Algeria. Using the distinction between the subhuman situation of colonialism and oppression and a truly ethical realm, we can interpret Sartre’s remarks about Fanon and Algeria as pertaining only to the sub-ethical context. In that context, Sartre is concerned with violence as a pure response to oppression. This is perhaps what Sartre means by his claim concerning Fanon that ‘the doctrinaire in him saw in violence the ineluctable fate of a world in the process of liberating itself, but the man, deep down, hated it.’<sup>53</sup> In an ideal world, such violence would have no place.

However, in this world where terror of one kind or another has become almost a commonplace, one should not be surprised when such violence comes, as it will be ‘the same violence rebounding on us just as our reflection comes from the depths of the mirror to meet us.’<sup>54</sup> This statement suggests that those who use violence to subjugate peoples must expect violence, not that violence is endorsed. Nevertheless, Sartre does not condemn violence by the oppressed subjects of colonialism against the colonisers. He describes it as inevitable and caused by the violence and dehumanisation of the oppressors. Other statements suggest violence is understandable, that such violence is ‘no less than man reconstructing himself’ and makes the subject a ‘free man’ and that it allows the colonised to find their humanity.<sup>55</sup>

As a consequence, Santoni glosses Sartre’s argument like this: ‘If nonviolence against oppression equals passivity, as Sartre states, and passivity in this historical context places one in the “ranks of the oppressors” then clearly (Sartre is saying) counterviolence against the oppressors is morally justified as well as liberating and humanising.’<sup>56</sup> But here Santoni fails to understand Sartre’s project, along with the context of the whole essay. Sartre’s preface introduces Fanon’s work to a wide reading public, including a Western, particularly French, public. Sartre presents a stark alternative for the colonised: either acceptance of subjugation by the oppressors or violent reaction against them. For the colonisers however, Sartre presents a range of possibilities: negotiate, withdraw forces, allow independence, and stop the torture, and he emphasises these possibilities repeatedly throughout his anti-colonial essays. In that sense, he appears to be expecting the oppressors to take ethical responsibility for improving the situation and moving it beyond the pre-ethical realm to one where positive reciprocity is possible.

Furthermore, because Sartre’s essay addresses a French audience, he is *warning* the colonists of the results of their actions by saying that violence by the colonised will be ‘the same violence rebounding on us just as our reflection comes from the depths of the mirror to meet us’<sup>57</sup> and ‘It is the moment of the boomerang, the third stage of violence: it comes back and hits us, and, no more than on the other occasions can we understand that it is our own violence.’<sup>58</sup> At the beginning of the preface he notes that it is common for French people to say: ‘We’ve had it!’ but then to add ‘Unless...’. Sartre comments that ‘In short, it is a threat followed by advice and these comments are all the less shocking because they spring from the shared national consciousness.’<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, he admits that he is using a similar strategy: ‘I, too, say to you: “Everything is lost, unless...” I, a European, steal the book of an enemy and use it as a means to cure Europe. Make the most of it.’<sup>60</sup> Sartre is also exhorting the French people to do something about the situation in Algeria. Otherwise, he says, passivity makes *bystanders* ‘on the side of the

oppressors' *not* as Santoni misinterprets him as claiming, that passivity places the oppressed on the side of the oppressors.<sup>61</sup> He urges people to reflect on themselves, to speak out and declare solidarity with the Algerians. As Sartre says

This book had no need of a preface. Even less so because it is not addressed to us. I have written one, however, to bring the dialectic to its conclusion: we, the people of Europe, are also being decolonised, that is to say the *colon* within each of us is being removed in a bloody operation. Let us look at ourselves, if we have the courage, and see what is happening to us.<sup>62</sup>

These comments make clear that Sartre is trying to bring about a transformation in French attitudes, not encouraging violence in Algeria.

Moreover, Sartre is presenting Fanon's writings in a sympathetic light by pointing out that his arguments deal with actions within colonisation. What Sartre says does not morally justify violence but records it as the result of a terrible situation in which human beings are dehumanised and within which people can conceive of no alternative to violence. Santoni is right, however, that Sartre does not present any limits to this violence or even sketch the precise conditions in which it becomes a more open choice among a range of alternatives. This is what he attempts to do in his later work in the Rome Lectures and the Cornell Lectures, where ethics and politics are integrated.

## INTEGRATING ETHICS AND POLITICS

In the *Critique*, Sartre only hints at the possibilities of positive reciprocity and does not explain how one can act ethically in spite of relations of conflict. The ideal level of ethical relations emerges more strongly in his writings following the *Critique*. On this ideal level lives the integral human. The 'integral human' can have positive and reciprocal relations with others, of true fraternity, because their fundamental animal and human needs have been met.<sup>63</sup> In the Rome Lectures Sartre reintegrates his ethics and politics, bringing ethics back from its holiday, and this is perhaps why Simone de Beauvoir saw them as the 'culminating point' of his ethics.<sup>64</sup> By giving criteria for justified violence, he is at last defining limits to what is ethical in politics, even in liberation struggles. Santoni is surprised that Sartre to the last, even in the *Hope Now* interviews, held to the position that 'violence in certain circumstances is both necessary and justified.'<sup>65</sup> I am surprised that Santoni is surprised. Apart from extreme pacifists who believe that one should not even respond to violence in self-defence most thinkers hold that violence can be justified. We may disagree with Sartre about the causes he took up, but still agree that circumstances arise where extreme action such as sabotage or other forms of violence are necessary *and* justifiable ethically. Such circumstances include action against violent occupations, totalitarian regimes, and in wars.

In his Rome Lectures, Sartre integrates his ethics and politics by placing ethical constraints on the actions of the oppressed to overcome oppression. In terms prescient of Jacques Derrida's understanding of ethics, he proposes that moral norms are unconditional: 'Thus the norm, the most ordinary as well as the most exacting, is understandable as *the future which must be created*, and is capable of determining the present simply because it is given as an unconditional possibility.'<sup>66</sup> Similarly, in the Cornell lectures, he reports a survey of high school girls, 90% of whom admit that they lie and 95% of whom condemn lying, as illustrative of the unconditional nature of ethical imperatives.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, he argues that the content of these norms is conditioned by particular social systems. Here Sartre also considers the relations between means and ends and says that 'All means are good except those which denature the end.'<sup>68</sup> For example, Sartre contends that Khrushchev's invasion of Hungary was incompatible with the

revolutionary end of autonomous integral humanity. He characterises terror as a ‘night time moment’ where someone reduced to subhumanity uses themselves as a means to make themselves human against the oppressive system.

In setting out these conditions, Sartre is attempting what he says we should do in *Hope Now*: ‘So there are two approaches, and both are human but seem not to be compatible; yet we must try to live them both at the same time. There is the effort, all other conditions aside, to create Humanity, to engender Humanity; this is the ethical relationship. And there is the struggle against scarcity.’<sup>69</sup> Ideally, oppressed and oppressors would unite to change the system. Even under the limited conditions Sartre thinks terror might be permissible he believes it should be acknowledged as inhuman and temporary. For example, Sartre did not support institutionalised terror in the USSR. Interestingly, however, in his comments on Munich in 1972 he does not *explicitly* apply the criteria for assessing terrorist violence he developed in 1964. He perhaps thought that the Palestinian struggle met the criteria and was thus excusable. However, it is difficult to see this attack as a ‘night time moment’ or ‘provisional expedient’.<sup>70</sup>

In Anderson’s reading of the criteria, Sartre adds to the list the condition that there must be a good likelihood of success.<sup>71</sup> In the article on Munich, Sartre says that what happened must be assessed in terms of the results intended, and also claims that there was no alternative strategy: ‘It is a terrible weapon but the oppressed poor have no other.’<sup>72</sup> Sartre speaks similarly of the Algerian and Vietnam wars: ‘In the Algerian war, I always refused to place on an equal footing the terrorism by means of bombs which was the only weapon available to the Algerians, and the actions and exactions of a rich army of half a million men occupying the entire country. The same is true in Vietnam.’<sup>73</sup> As Santoni points out, Sartre does not clarify the nature of the terrorist means he thinks could be used, and does not properly distinguish between violence against oppressors and terrorist attacks involving innocents. Nevertheless, we can take from his construction of the two different attitudes to the world that he advocates in *Hope Now* (1996) an ethical approach that will engender humanity and bring the ethical future closer rather than continuing the cycle of violence.

I agree with Stone that Sartre is likely to have condemned recent terrorist attacks as they do not meet his criteria for justifiable or excusable uses of terror. These attacks do not constitute a provisional expedient as they are on-going and an ideology of terror has developed. The terrorist attacks do not seem to be the only alternative available, although they may be perceived by the perpetrators to be so. Nonetheless, Stone may have dismissed the idea that recent acts of terrorism have popular roots too quickly, as there is support for the attacks in some countries, although the level of support varies greatly between countries and over time. For example, one survey asks whether ‘suicide bombing and violence against civilians’ are sometimes justified, and the survey in Jordan in 2005 records majority agreement, whereas in Turkey only a minority (14%) of those surveyed agree. Notably, there is a very low level of support for terrorist attacks within the specified country. Support for violence against civilians has declined in the Muslim countries surveyed (Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Indonesia, Turkey, and Morocco) since 2002 by between 10-30% from between 27% (in Indonesia) and 73% (in Lebanon), except in Jordan where it has increased and Turkey where the change is insignificant. Furthermore, support for suicide bombing in Iraq, for example, does not necessarily correlate to support for Osama Bin Laden.<sup>74</sup> Joseph Schwartz believes al-Qa’ida can ignore the question of winning ‘hearts and minds’ as it does not need support from the population of any one particular country.<sup>75</sup> This possibility is a consequence of the international nature of al-Qa’ida. However, it needs some support in some places in order to continue.

A comparison with Sartre’s analysis of anti-colonial terrorism is fruitful because although the conditions of superexploitation and dehumanisation were not the original basis for the 9/11 attacks, perpetrators



may have perceived these conditions to obtain or have come to be the case due to America and its allies' response to 9/11.<sup>76</sup> The invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the occupation of Iraq, the treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib, the practice of rendition and use of torture begin to replicate the conditions leading to political violence Sartre describes.<sup>77</sup> Another apparent difference, as I noted earlier, lies in the fact that many of the attacks are carried out by well-off actors, such as the doctors involved in the recent UK bombing plot, in countries far removed from the site of exploitation or humiliation.<sup>78</sup> In this case, a fourth group is involved in addition to the three identified by Sartre — colonised, coloniser, and bystander — that is, the agent who sympathises because he/she shares a religious tradition with the oppressed.

Furthermore, the targets are not directly the oppressors or members of the oppressor group, but those linked with them, as in the bombing of commuter trains in Madrid and London, although they may be perceived as linked to the oppressors due to their governments' support for the Iraq war. A feature of Sartre's analysis that is particularly illuminating is his account of the mirror of violence. As the occupation of Iraq goes on, the circle of perpetrators, the techniques of violence, and the scope of targets continually increases, just as he describes in relation to colonial violence. With regard to chances of success, this becomes less likely as the goals become less clear or too broad, as is the case with the 'war on terror', which aims to eliminate terrorism altogether.<sup>79</sup> One of the difficulties in addressing this question is knowing what would count as success. It has been claimed that Spain's withdrawal from Iraq is a kind of success. Alternatively, as Thomas Schelling observes in a 1991 article focussed on the question of why there is not more international terrorism (!) 'if the terrorists want to cause confusion and panic, disruption, economic loss, and a demonstration of civilian vulnerability to catastrophic harm at the hands of a comparatively small terrorist squad, success does not seem out of reach.'<sup>80</sup> For Sartre, these possibilities would only count as means to some other end, and unless the effects were strictly limited, they would be undermining of the goal of creating integral humanity. Neither the terrorist attacks nor many counter-terrorism measures appear compatible with Sartre's end of integral humanity; rather, such an end seems to have been lost sight of altogether.

We can see in Sartre's different views of terrorism expressed at different times an evolution in his conception of ethics in relation to politics. As Flynn notes, one can classify Sartre's ethics into his ethics of authenticity, his dialectical ethics, and his final ethics of the 'we'.<sup>81</sup> The strange inconsistencies one finds between different texts represent his evolving attempt to solve the problems which existed within his ethics and in the relation between ethics and politics. His apparently disparate opinions on terrorism reflect his struggle with these questions. Thus Sartre's views evolve from a condemnation of terrorism as having no place in his ethics. He came to recognise violence as an inevitable response of the oppressed and during that period did not evaluate it ethically. Eventually, he tried to integrate his ethics and politics by providing criteria for the justification or excuse for violence. Throughout this evolution of his work Sartre condemned absolutism, extremism and fanaticism as well as racism, oppression, and exploitation. His developed position would not countenance the recent terrorist attacks. At the same time his position constitutes a critique of many of the typical responses to terrorism that will not look beyond the violence itself.

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NOTES

1. I would like to thank the participants in the Sartre Centenary at the University of Melbourne and Damian Cox for comments on an earlier version of this paper, and the Australian Research Council for supporting my research. I am also grateful to two anonymous readers for *Parrhesia* for their thoughtful reports.
2. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth'. *Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism*. Trans. Azzedine Haddour, Steve Brewer and Terry McWilliams. London: Routledge. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth' (*Situations V*, Paris: Gallimard, 1964.), viii.
3. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 8.
4. *Ibid.*, 149.
5. 'Sartre on Munich 1972'. *Sartre Studies International*. Vol.9. No.2, 5-10.
6. Anderson, Thomas C. 1993. *Sartre's two ethics: from authenticity to integral humanity*. Chicago: Open Court, 1993; Flynn, Thomas R. 1994. 'Philosophy of Existence 2: Sartre.' *Routledge History of Philosophy* Vol. VIII. Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy. London: Routledge, 1994. 74-104.
7. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 7
8. *Ibid.*
9. Arendt, Hannah. *On Violence*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1970. 12.
10. Arendt, *On Violence*, 12.
11. Arendt, *On Violence*, 20; Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 155; Bowman and Stone say that in that particular situation, violence is healing because it is the only way the oppressed can act. Furthermore, any 'free and fearless act' would be seen as violence. Bowman, Elizabeth, and Stone, Robert V. 2004. 'The end as present in the means in Sartre's morality and history: birth and reinventions of an existential moral standard.' *Sartre Studies International*. Vol.10, No.2, 2004, 9.
12. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 8.
13. Flynn, Thomas R. 1994. 'Philosophy of Existence 2: Sartre.' *Routledge History of Philosophy* Vol. VIII. Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy. London: Routledge, 1994. 76.
14. Sartre's claim is cited in Anderson (1993, 111). Anderson's view is that because Sartre tended to explain the actions of the Communist party and the Soviet Union, that had the effect of justifying them.
15. Quoted in Bowman and Stone, 'Dialectical Ethics: A First Look at Sartre's Unpublished 1964 Rome Lectures Notes.' *Social Text*, No.13, 1986. 196.
16. Aronson, Ronald, Santoni, Ronald, and Stone, Robert. 'The New Orleans Session — March 2002.' *Sartre Studies International*, Vol.9, No.2, 9-27, 1994.
17. *Ibid.*, 9-11.
18. Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Notebooks for an Ethics*, trans. David Pellauer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. (*Cahiers pour une morale*, Paris: Gallimard, 1983.), 406; The Rome Lectures have not been published and are held at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris and the Beineke library at Yale, aside from a short section published as 'Determinism and Freedom', *The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre Volume 2: Select Prose*. Ed. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka. Trans. Richard McCleary. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974. 241-52. They are quoted extensively in Bowman and Stone, *op. cit.*
19. Santoni, *Sartre on Violence*, 14.
20. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 160/133.
21. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 160/134.
22. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 161/134.
23. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 160/ 134-5; Anderson understands the criteria to contain seven points. Two of the extra points can be understood as elaborations of those Stone refers to, but the criterion that the act must have a good likelihood of success is a very important one, and I will return to it later in the paper. Anderson, Perry, Fraser, Ronald, Hoare, Quintin, and Beauvoir, Simone de. *Conversations with Jean-Paul Sartre*. London: Seagull, 2006, 127-8.
24. Aranson, Santoni and Stone, 'The New Orleans Session', 17; Stone observes that Sartre borrows from the chapter 'Ambiguity' in Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1997, 131; 155) where she says that 'human liberation' should be used as the standard for choosing means. In his application of the conditions to the 9/11 attacks, Stone treats condition one similarly to condition four, as concerning the question of whether the terrorism as the support of the people.
25. Sartre, *Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism*, 17.

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26. Ibid., xi.
27. Ibid., 65.
28. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 65-77.
29. Anderson et al, *Conversations*, 99.
30. Sartre, *Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism*, 145.
31. *Critique of Dialectical Reason II* was not published in France until 1985, although it was written around the same time as *Critique I*. Sartre abandoned the work unfinished.
32. Sartre, *Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism*, 40.
33. See, for example, Anderson in Anderson et al, *Conversations*, 55, who says this is true of Sartre's account of authenticity in *Anti-Semite and Jew*.
34. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*. Trans. Philip Mairet. London: Methuen, 1948 (*L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, Paris: Nagel, 1946.), 51.
35. Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, 29.
36. Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, 52.
37. In her reconstruction of Sartre's ethics of authenticity Linda Bell uses the idea that 'one who wills the end wills the means.' Bell, Linda A. *Sartre's Ethics of Authenticity*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1989. 48-60.
38. Sartre, *Notebooks for an Ethics*, 172.
39. Sartre, *Notebooks for an Ethics*, 405-06.
40. Sonia Kruks argues that the problem with the *Notebooks* is that they are incoherent because they waver between his early ontology and Marxist ideas. 'Sartre's *Cahiers pour une morale*.' *Social Text*. No. 13, 1986. 184-193.
41. Santoni, *Sartre on Violence*, 123-124.
42. *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Vol.1. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith. London: Verso, 2004. (*Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, tome I, Paris: Gallimard, 1960.), 724.
43. Putting the point differently, Bowman and Stone refer to Sartre's idea of an 'in-between' moral situation, where circumstances are not appropriate for a universal morality. This is the moral situation both Sartre and we experience.
44. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* v.1, 733.
45. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* v.2, 36.
46. Sartre, Jean-Paul *Hope Now: The 1980 Interviews*. With Benny Lévy. Trans. Adrian van den Hoven. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996. (*L'espoir maintenant: les entretiens de 1980*, Lagrasse: Verdier, 1991.), 66.
47. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* v.1, 737.
48. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* v.1, 434-444.
49. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 47; Anderson assumes that for Sartre, the pledged group best satisfies human needs and is a cohesive force as it works even when there is no external threat. Anderson et al, *Conversations*, 99-100.
50. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* v.1, 441.
51. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* v.2, 144.
52. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* v.2, 176.
53. Some interpreters argue that Fanon himself did not advocate violence. See Santoni *Sartre on Violence*, 68-69.
54. Santoni, *Sartre on Violence*, 144.
55. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 148; 149.
56. Santoni, *Sartre on Violence*, 72.
57. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 144.
58. Ibid., 147.
59. Ibid., 138.
60. Ibid., 142; In *Hope Now*, Sartre explains that he has to take the position he does so as not to be on the side of the French, and that it is very different from addressing a group of which he is a part, as in the resistance.
61. Santoni, *Sartre on Violence*, 151; Gordon notes that Sartre is addressing Europeans, primarily 'the liberals among them'. Gordon, Rivca. 'A response to Hannah Arendt's critique of Sartre's views on violence.' *Sartre Studies International*. Vol.7, No.1 (2001), 72.
62. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 150.
63. Flynn, Thomas R. 1994. 'Philosophy of Existence 2: Sartre.' *Routledge History of Philosophy Vol. VIII. Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 88; Sartre briefly refers to this possibility in *Critique I* (736) and *Critique II* (152) This distinction between ethical possibilities, one of oppression and one of reciprocity, strikes me as

similar to the distinction Beauvoir makes in *The Second Sex* between relations of oppression and the reciprocal relations women and men will have when oppression is overcome. However, Beauvoir does not suggest that relations between women and men are necessarily violent, no doubt due to the peculiar nature of women's oppression.

64. This how Beauvoir described the lectures in a letter to Robert Stone. See Stone and Bowman, "Making the Human" in Sartre's Dialectical Ethics.' *Writing the Politics of Difference*. Ed. Hugh Silverman. Albany: SUNY Press, 1991. 111-22.

65. Santoni, *Sartre on Violence*, 79.

66. 'Determinism and Freedom.' *The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre Volume 2: Select Prose*. Ed. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka. Trans. Richard McCleary. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974. 241-52; Sartre's view is very different from Derrida's because he has one single unconditional norm in mind — that of becoming human — and he believes that the oppressed seek this norm, even when unaware of it. Derrida argues that there are a number of unconditional demands, such as forgiveness and hospitality, and that they must always be negotiated with their unconditional forms. See Derrida, Jacques. *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*. Trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes. London: Routledge, 2001.

67. Sartre, Jean-Paul, "Morale et Histoire," *Les Temps Modernes* 60(632-634), 2005, 323.

68. Quoted in Bowman and Stone, "The end as present in the means in Sartre's morality and history: birth and reinventions of an existential moral standard", 2.

69. Sartre, *Hope Now*, 91; becoming human means to have all needs fulfilled: for food, air, culture, communication, knowledge, love and a meaningful life. It has been suggested that *Hope Now* is not worth discussing as Sartre is expressing his interviewer's ideas, not his own. Ronald Aronson discusses this issue thoughtfully in the introduction, and makes a convincing case that Sartre's remarks should be taken seriously and compared to his other works.

70. Another difficulty with Sartre's comments on Munich is that he mistakenly believes that 'everyone ... was killed by police bullets.'

71. Anderson, Thomas *Sartre's Two Ethics*. Chicago: Open Court, 1993, 128.

72. Sartre, 'The Wretched of the Earth', 7.

73. Anderson *et al*, *Conversations*, 105.

74. See Wike, Richard, and Samaranayake, Nilanthi. 'Where terrorism finds support in the Muslim world.' <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/26/where-terrorism-finds-support-in-the-Muslim-world> for a survey on these questions. Gender is the most significant variable in this study, with fewer women supporting terrorism or approving of Bin Laden.

75. Rockmore, Tom, Margolis, Joseph, and Marsoobian, Armen T., eds. 2005. *The Philosophical Challenge of September 11*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, 59. In 'Unholy Politics.' In Social Science Research Council essays 'After September 11', at [www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays](http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays). (2001), Benhabib makes the point that al-Qa'ida are not concerned with winning the hearts and minds of the West either.

76. See Laquer, Walter, *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Continuum, 2003, for a discussion of the history of Islamic terrorism. Robert Young argues that supporters' claims that the 9/11 attacks were a response to injustices should be investigated. See Coady, Tony, and O'Keefe, Michael. *Terrorism and Justice: Moral Argument in a Threatened World*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002, 29-30.

77. The other side of these responses is the attack on the freedoms that are being defended. Derrida refers to the undermining of civil liberties which have also occurred in response to recent terrorist attacks 'autoimmunity'. See Borradori, Giovanna. *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.

78. See Cowell, Alan, and Shane, Scott. 2007. '2 Doctors held in British Bomb Plots had Looked to U.S.' *New York Times*, July 7.

79. Richardson makes this latter point in her book *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat*. New York: Random House, 2006.

80. Frey, R.G. and Morris, Christopher W., eds. 1991. *Violence, Terrorism, and Justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 31.

81. Flynn, 'Philosophy of Existence 2: Sartre', 81.