Sartre and the International Impact of Existentialism

Edited by
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Juliane Werner

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Preface

Forty years have passed since the death of the French philosopher, dramatist, and novelist Jean-Paul Sartre. Yet, there are few thinkers who to this day excite so many emotions. Condemned by those who perceive him as a Marxist and a communist, and hold him responsible for the miseries of failed identity politics, he is, on the other hand, praised for his philosophy of authenticity and his political commitment, earning him the reputation of being the "world's conscience": his tireless fight against war, (neo-)colonialism, and all kinds of oppression, including that of women, Jews, blacks, and homosexuals.

Sartre was a dominating figure in the intellectual discourse in the time between 1945 and 1968, and his work continued to influence writers and thinkers worldwide. Our collection aims at bringing together multidisciplinary research on Sartre's reception outside of France, with many countries still waiting to be explored. The contributions of this volume reflect on existentialism's presence in various areas (e.g. literature, philosophy, and psychology) and, through an analysis of different forms of cultural transfer (e.g. translation, censorship) in multiple mediums (e.g. literary periodicals, plays) and institutions (e.g. universities, libraries), seek to re-examine the impact of the first global intellectual movement of modern time.

The editors thank everyone who supported this project, especially the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Vienna,

Austria, and the Sartre Society in Germany for organizing the conference "The International Reception of Existentialism" in Vienna in September 2018. We extend our gratitude to the North American Sartre Society for their yearly conferences; it was at one of their worthwhile events that the editors met for the first time and where the idea that led to this book was born. Finally, we thank our partners with Palgrave Macmillan for their support and *Yale French Studies* for their permission to reprint two essays.

Chur, Switzerland — Alfred Betschart
Vienna, Austria — Juliane Werner

Contents

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1

An Overview of the International Reception of Existentialism: The Existentialist Tsunami

Alfred Betschart

The frequently mentioned 'existentialist wave' in the years following the end of World War II was not a wave, but rather a tsunami. It was a tsunami that went around the world. It started in December 1944 with the publication of Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Republic of Silence* (*La république du silence*) in the U.S. Thereafter it reached countries like Italy, the U.K., Sweden, and Germany, as well as East Asia and Latin America, particularly Japan and Argentina. In the 1950s even communist countries like the Soviet Union (Betschart 2018a) and the People's Republic of China (Zhang 2008) could not elude the tsunami. In this decade, existentialism became one of the dominant intellectual currents in the Middle East, too. Turkey, Brazil, and South Vietnam were hit by it in the early 1960s. There had been other waves before, such as Marxism and Freudian psychoanalysis; however, none had spread as quickly around the globe as the existentialist tsunami and none was as broadly positioned as the existentialist movement. Existentialism was not only a philosophical, but also a

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literary movement. Particularly in the Third World, it had a significant political impact through its concept of engagement. And the existentialist tsunami reached out to the arts, too, and, with its black turtlenecks, even to fashion. William McBride's declaration that "few if any other modern Western philosophical movements have had as strong an impact on the general culture as has existentialism" (McBride 2012, p. 50) is an understatement.

The existentialist tsunami was caused by Sartre and his friends, Simone de Beauvoir and Albert Camus. Although philosophers such as Gabriel Marcel, Martin Heidegger, and Karl Jaspers partly figure among the existentialists—an error caused by Sartre in his most widely read philosophical essay *Existentialism Is a Humanism* (*L'existentialisme est un humanisme*)[1]—they never took part in the existentialist tsunami. The rehabilitation of the Nazi Heidegger started to gain a real foothold only in the 1950s, and Jaspers was rather a phenomenon of the German-speaking countries. Since the literary opus, via novels and plays, was more important than the philosophical oeuvre in the spread of the existentialist tsunami, Heidegger and Jaspers, who were only philosophers, had a significant disadvantage in comparison to Sartre and his friends. Only Marcel published a literary work, too. However, it never reached as large an audience as his French fellow citizens' works. Marcel, the Catholic, neo-Socratic philosopher, was rather used by critics as an argument against Sartre.

The focus in this book lies—in Sartre's terminology—on the French atheist existentialists, although there are certain references to philosophers and writers who did not strictly adhere to this current. Søren Kierkegaard's reception partly preceded, partly ran parallel to Sartre's and played an important role in preparing the field for French existentialism. At the same time, Kierkegaard was an important Christian alternative to French existentialism for those who opposed the atheism of Sartre and his friends (Boria[2]). Among artists and writers, but also among psychologists, there were important currents that ran parallel to French atheist

[1] All three rejected the designation 'existentialist'. Not to confound them with Sartre and his friends, their philosophy should rather be called the 'philosophy of existence'.

[2] Names in small caps refer to the essays by the respective authors in this book.

existentialism, partly influenced by Sartre's version, partly as developments in their own right. What according to Sartre is valid for Gustave Flaubert (Sartre 2006, p. 25) is valid for the existentialists too: they not only influenced their time in many ways, but they were also an expression of their time. Many important examples of parallel developments can be found in literature. Richard Wright, Allan Ginsberg and other beatniks, Iris Murdoch, Hanoch Levin (Klein), and many Italian and German authors could be mentioned. One of the most intriguing examples is Max Frisch's play *Andorra*, which seems to be a theatrical version of Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew* (*Réflexions sur la question juive*). However, although this play was published only in 1961, its sketch dates from 1945, when Sartre was writing his *Anti-Semite and Jew.* Similar correspondences can be found in the relationship between Sartre's existential psychoanalysis and the psychotherapies of Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Rollo May, Erich Fromm, and Viktor Frankl. When investigating the reception of existentialism in Latin America, many parallel developments can be detected, partly due to the influence of the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno, partly due to local circumstances such as the question of commitment in the fight against the indigenous élite and the dictators, and the question of *mestizaje* and the relationship of the Latinos to the Other.

With regard to time, our focus is on the period between 1944 and 1968. Of course, the first existentialist texts were translated before 1944: Sartre's *The Wall* (*Le mur*) was published in English and German in 1938, in Japanese in 1940, his short story *The Room* (*La chambre*) in Spanish in Argentina in 1939. As a global cultural event, however, the existentialist tsunami started only with the end of World War II approaching, and in the 1960s, the tide was already falling. The support Sartre lent to Israel after the Six-Day War led to the complete breakdown of Arab existentialism and impaired existentialism in other countries of the Third World too. Frantz Fanon's wife no longer allowed Sartre's introduction to be published together in new editions of *The Wretched of the Earth* (*Les damnés de la terre*). In the years before 1968, there was discussion between Sartre and the structuralists (Claude Lévi-Strauss, Michel Foucault)

about the importance of man in history.[3] The events in Paris in May 1968 proved that Sartre was right against the structuralists that (wo-)men can make history; even Michel Foucault became a political activist thereafter and collaborated with Sartre on several occasions. Nevertheless, structuralism and postmodernism quickly supplanted existentialism as the leading non-Marxist philosophies in the 1970s. Already during the 1960s, existentialism had lost ground to Marxism, which became for about ten years the philosophy *à battre*. Even the Sartreans lost interest in Sartre. Sartre's move away from Marxist to anarchist political philosophy in the 1970s went almost unnoticed. *It Is Right to Rebel* (*On a raison de se révolter*), an important work for Sartre's political philosophy in the last ten years of his life, was translated into English forty-three years after its French publication in 1974.

Evidently, 1968 was not the end of existentialism as a philosophy. In some countries like the People's Republic of China and Russia, where existentialism had for a long time been banished to the poison cabinet, existentialism saw a wider reception only in the 1980s and 1990s. Several Americans—Mark Poster, John Lawler, Thomas Flynn—tried to find a synthesis of Marxism and existentialism after 1975. Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (*Le deuxième sexe*), the historically most important work ever published by an existentialist, became the theoretical base of feminism, although Beauvoir's existentialist feminism was soon superseded by an essentialist version (Moi 2008, pp. 200–202). Questions of identity (gender, ethnicity, sexuality), which have been dominating politics more and more since the 1970s, have their theoretical foundations with Sartre and Beauvoir. However, even Judith Butler—she wrote her doctoral thesis about desire with Alexandre Kojève, Jean Hyppolite, and Sartre—prefers to keep her existentialist heritage at a distance.

Our focus on this quarter of a century between 1944 and 1968 has its implications with regard to the subjects treated in this book. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Sartre's close political collaborator between 1945 and 1950, was virtually nonexistent on the international scene during the time of the existentialist tsunami. His reception as a philosopher—he did

[3] See Sartre's interview *Replies to Structuralism* (*Jean-Paul Sartre répond*) with Bernard Pingaud in the journal *L'Arc* in 1966.

not write any literary works—began only slowly with the first translations in the 1960s.[4] The reception of Beauvoir and Camus, too, was significantly behind Sartre. Beauvoir suffered for a long time, until the 1970s, from the neglect *The Second Sex* experienced. Betty Friedan, with her *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), always kept herself at a distance from Beauvoir, although acknowledging that it was *The Second Sex* that introduced her to what later was called feminism (Friedan 1985, p. 304). Only after Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* and Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* (both 1970) did Beauvoir stand more in the limelight. In the time before, Beauvoir was rather perceived as '*la Grande Sartreuse*', whose major works were of a biographical character.

Not very different was the situation with Camus. As a proclaimed author of the Résistance, he received a lot of attention in the years immediately after the war. Thereafter, the interest in his work lowered significantly. *The Rebel* (*L'homme révolté*) was translated into English only five years after its publication in French, *The Just Assassins* (*Les justes*) seeing a delay of nine years. His less pronounced political attitudes and less overt atheism in comparison to Sartre made him the preferred existentialist author with the Christian middle-of-the-road readership; however, this segment was not very large, with the exception particularly of the U.S. When seven years ahead of Sartre, Camus was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957, this was a compromise between the need to reward existentialist literature and not giving the prize to Sartre. Camus experienced a revival only after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989/1991, mainly in his role as a representative of an ethics of conviction in opposition to Sartre as an ambassador of an ethics of responsibility. The fact that this book about the international reception of existentialism mainly focuses on Sartre very much reflects the situation at the time of the existentialist tsunami: it was mostly Sartre who was the driving force.

[4] One of the rare exceptions was Mexico, where Merleau-Ponty, together with Sartre, was introduced into philosophical discussions by Emilio Uranga, a member of the Grupo Hiperión, at a series of lectures at the French Institute of Latin America in 1948 (Alberto Sánchez 2016, pp. 20–26). The interest of Latin America in Merleau-Ponty is confirmed by the fact that his *Phenomenology of Perception* (*Phénoménologie de la perception*) was translated into Spanish in 1957, five years ahead of the English translation (Domingo Toledo 2011, p. 215).

A Question of Methodology—Communication Theory

The reception of existentialism in France is very well explored. Anna Boschetti did groundbreaking work with her book *Sartre et "Les Temps Modernes"*, which was based on Pierre Bourdieu's sociology (Boschetti 1985). There was the late German professor Ingrid Galster, who followed a more classical way of analysis focusing on Sartre's life and oeuvre. Further important contributions came from Randall Collins with his network approach (Collins 1998), and from Patrick Baert, who published his book *The Existentialist Moment* based on his new approach of positioning in 2015.

When it comes to the reception of existentialism outside France, the situation looks quite different. So far, a good number of books and articles about the reception in various countries outside France has been published. However, it is a jigsaw puzzle with many missing pieces. To achieve a better understanding of existentialism, with regard to both its achievements and its failures, these lacunae have to be closed. In this essay, I shall give an overview of what we already know about the international reception of existentialism. The model used is adopted from communication theory, which is better suited to reflect the complexity of the reception process than other models focusing on the author, his social situation, and his oeuvre. In this model based on communication theory, *senders* are transferring *messages* to *receivers*. Transferring messages on different *channels* allows to enlarge the number of receivers considerably. On the way from the sender to the receiver, the messages are forwarded by *repeaters* and partly jammed by *noise*. In comparison to the national reception, repeaters and noise play a much more decisive role on the international level. In accordance with Hans Robert Jauss and his reception esthetics, based on Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, the fate of a work is finally decided by the readers. This thesis is in line with Sartre's own conception of literature where the reader is a second creator in literature on a par with the writer. However, in contrast to Jauss, the focus in this overview is not on the existentialists' works, but on their messages. It is important to differentiate between work and message,

since a work can contain several messages and the same message can appear in different works. Not all the messages sent are received and some are only received in a distorted form, since sending and receiving of messages is a process of encoding and decoding. In accordance with Sartre's epistemological perspectivism, there can be significant differences in content between the messages encoded by the senders and the messages decoded by the receivers.

The Senders—Sartre, Beauvoir, Camus, Merleau-Ponty

As to the senders, of the four authors generally considered French atheist existentialists, Sartre, Beauvoir, Camus, and Merleau-Ponty, we can ignore Merleau-Ponty. The international reception of his work was very low. As to Sartre, Beauvoir, and Camus, although their major focus was on France, they were very much interested in the international reception of their work, as their journeys abroad prove. However, Camus, who was afraid of flying, traveled significantly less than Sartre and Beauvoir. His major trips were those to the U.S. in 1946, to Latin America in 1949, and to Sweden in 1957, which resulted in a significant increase in translations, in the U.S., Argentina, and, after he had received the Nobel Prize in Sweden, all over the world.

Camus's traveling schedule is in stark contrast to the many journeys Sartre and Beauvoir made. In the years between 1945 and 1951, Sartre and Beauvoir traveled to the U.S. six times. On his second trip in 1945/1946, Sartre gave lectures at the universities of Yale, Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia, as well as at Carnegie Hall. The first trip in Europe outside France led him to Brussels in October 1945, where Iris Murdoch, the British writer and philosopher, happened to hear him. Further important trips were those to the USSR in 1954 and to China in 1955, which led to the publication of *The Respectful Prostitute* (*La putain respectueuse*) in both countries. In contrast to his many trips to communist Eastern Europe—nine trips to the USSR between 1954 and 1955

and between 1962 and 1966, six visits to Yugoslavia from 1953 to 1969,[5] additional journeys to the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Poland, and Czechoslovakia—Sartre's visits to Brazil in 1960 and to Japan in 1966 had significant impacts. With his lectures in Japan, Sartre caused another wave of discussion about the role of the intellectual (Müller 2016, pp. 194–195; Suzuki and Sawada 2011), and his visit to Brazil left a long-lasting imprint with Caetano Veloso's and Gilberto Gil's *tropicalismo* (Ibiapina Ferreira n.d.). Sartre and Beauvoir made many more journeys to other countries. Some, like the trips to Germany in 1948 and to Egypt in 1967 could have had a great impact but failed due to political events shortly after the visit (Cold War, Six-Day War). How prominent Sartre and Beauvoir were at that time is best shown by the number of prominent political leaders they met: Palmiro Togliatti (Italy), Mao Zedong and Chen Yi (China), Fidel Castro and Che Guevara (Cuba), Josip Broz Tito (Yugoslavia), Juscelino Kubitschek (Brazil), Nikita Khrushchev (USSR), Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt), and Levi Eshkol (Israel). No other philosopher has ever matched this record.

The country with which Sartre and Beauvoir had the closest connection was Italy. As Rossana Rossanda described it, this was not only a political/intellectual relationship, but a love affair (Rossanda 1987, p. 262). In 1946—after a trip to Switzerland including its German-speaking part which was their first trip to a non–French speaking area in Europe—they met important intellectuals of the Italian left such as Elio Vittorini, Carlo Levi, Ignazio Silone, and Alberto Moravia. From 1952 to 1979, Sartre and Beauvoir normally spent a part of their summer holidays in Italy, where they had frequent discussions with their Italian friends. Time and again, Sartre gave lectures and interviews and wrote articles that were

[5] In his introduction to Louis Dalmas's book *Le communisme yougoslave depuis la rupture avec Moscou* (*Yugoslavian Communism Since the Break with Moscow*) in 1950, Sartre supported Yugoslavia's independence from the USSR. Thereafter, several of his works were translated and he became a topic of philosophical discussion—the prominent Marxist Boris Ziherl was involved in one of them in 1953; in 1965, Danilo Pejović penned a sympathetic portrait of Sartre in the journal *Praxis* (Pejović 1965). Sartre influenced writers such as Radomir Konstantinović in Serbia and Edvard Kocbek in Slovenia. He met Mihailo Marković, a major proponent of the Praxis School, as a co-speaker at a conference in Rome in 1964. And he was befriended by Vladimir Dedijer, with whom he had worked at the Russell Tribunal. In 1983, Sartre was honored with a Serbo-Croatian translation of selected works in twelve volumes.

printed in Italian publications. Among them were the lectures at the Gramsci Institute in Rome in 1961 and 1964 on subjectivity and ethics (Caddeo; Kirchmayr).

The Repeaters—Translators, Publishers, Emigrants, Journalists

Repeaters play a very significant role in international reception. Of utmost importance are translators and publishing houses. Without Hazel Barnes, the American translator of *Being and Nothingness* (*L'être et le néant*), the reception of existentialist philosophy would have been much less pronounced in the U.S.; a similarly important role was assumed by Traugott König for German-speaking countries. Partly the translations were accompanied by cuts and errors. There were frequent inaccuracies which served to adjust the text to local customs and to render it less offensive with regard to local moral standards, particularly in the field of sexual behavior (Bachleitner). However, there were also significant errors and cuts. The case of Howard M. Parshley's first English translation of Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* in 1952 is well known. Not only were technical terms translated incorrectly, but more important were the cuts he made. According to Margaret A. Simons, Parshley deleted half of one chapter, cut a quarter of another, and eliminated the names of seventy-eight women (Simons 1999, p. 62). Not surprisingly, Parshley had a bigger problem with Beauvoir's chapter 'The Lesbian'. Sartre's preface to the first American translation of *The Wretched of the Earth* also showed a significant distortion which made the English version appear more aggressive than it was originally conceived.[6] Without the publishing houses Alfred A. Knopf in the U.S. and Rowohlt in Germany (both published many works by Sartre, Camus, and Beauvoir), their reception in these countries would have been significantly weaker. Rowohlt was the

[6] Sartre's original text calls the colonialist an oppressor and an oppressed one at the same time, a point which was very important to Sartre. This idea of double oppression was however lost in the first translation into English and was corrected only in the second translation by Richard Philcox, published in 2004 (Sartre 2004, p. lv).

publishing house that fostered the French existentialists' work on a par with, if even not better than, Gallimard in France. The lack of success of existentialist philosophy in Germany, a country steeped in academic philosophy, is certainly not due to Rowohlt, but rather due to the strong local competition by Heidegger and Jaspers.

A second important category of repeaters is constituted by professors who had emigrated from continental Europe and students who had returned to their countries from France where they had come into contact with existentialism. In the U.S., for example, where philosophical academia was in the hands of analytical philosophy, immigrants such as Jean Wahl, Herbert Marcuse, Hannah Arendt, and Hans Jonas, and other today less well-known persons like Henry Peyre (Elsky) and Walter Kaufmann played a significant role in the American reception of existentialism. Kaufmann's book *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* became one of the most widely read philosophy books among American college students (Fulton 1999, p. 85). For Kaufmann, Wahl, and others, it was a chance to excel in a field of philosophy they knew much better than the indigenous philosophers: continental philosophy. In Asia, former students in France were of similar importance, for example, Suhayl Idris and Ali Shariati in Lebanon and Iran, Suzuki Michihiko (Kobayashi/Seki) and Sawada Nao in Japan, Luo Dagang in China, and Nguyen Van Trung in South Vietnam. They had experienced existentialism in Paris not only as a philosophy, but also as a lifestyle and a political force, and in contrast to the emigrant philosophers, they kept this understanding of existentialism alive in their respective countries.

Other important categories of repeaters were foreign journalists in France and generally French critics publishing abroad. American journalists like John Lackey Brown for the *New York Times* and Janet Flanner for the *New Yorker* and the *Partisan Review* took on roles as important in the years after the end of World War II as did Lutfi al-Khuli for Egypt and Simha Flapan for Israel in the 1960s. French critics of existentialism like Emmanuel Mounier and Jacques Maritain and the communist Roger Garaudy and the Belgian Jesuit Roger Troisfontaines were of equal importance in a negative way. A very special and very influential case was that of György Lukács, a Hungarian communist philosopher, with whom Sartre led an indirect debate in *Combat* in 1949. With his books

Existentialism or Marxism and *The Destruction of Reason*, Lukács's criticism of existentialism as an irrationalist philosophy in the tradition of Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Heidegger, and therefore as being close to fascism, became highly influential throughout the whole communist world.

Another special role was assumed by the various military governments in occupied Germany and Austria, particularly the French administration. They acted simultaneously as repeaters and as noise. The performance of Sartre's *The Flies* (*Les mouches*) was prohibited in Germany until the spring of 1947 because it was considered too subversive (Rahner 1993, p. 133). Although existentialism was the major export item during these years, the attitude of the French military administration in Germany was ambiguous, and it even suppressed it in Austria (Werner; for the French military administration in Germany see Högerle 2013).

Noise—Censorship, Social Taboos

While repeaters reinforce a message, noise jams it. Talking about noise, we first think of censorship. The communist régimes in the Soviet Union and China[7] allowed at first only the translation of *The Respectful Prostitute*, and even this only in a version with an optimistic end (van den Hoven; Betschart 2018b). They principally maintained their ban on existentialist works until the 1960s and 1980s respectively. In line with the policy of Andrei Zhdanov, the Stalinist secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in charge of propaganda and agitation, Alexander Fadeyev, the general secretary of the Union of Soviet Writers, condemned Sartre together with other writers such as Eugene O'Neill, John Dos Passos, Henry Miller, and André Malraux as reactionary writers praising the abnormal and the immoral at the World Congress of Intellectuals in Defense of Peace in Wrocław, Poland, in 1948.

A sad case of censorship was that of Trân Duc Thao in North Vietnam. Trân tried to combine phenomenology and Marxism and met Sartre for

[7] One of Sartre's texts, *The Room*, had been translated into Chinese in 1943 before the Communist revolution.

discussions in 1950, when Trân lived in Paris. Upon his return to North Vietnam in 1951/1952, he was forbidden to continue his work. As to the GDR, its situation was quite peculiar. On the one hand, communist ideologists heavily criticized the existentialists, first as nihilistic and then as decadent petit bourgeois. In 1948, the philosophy of existence was even criticized by the East German Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl. The philosopher Ernst Bloch, not generally a communist propagandist, condemned Sartre in a Stalinist style in 1956 even after Khrushchev had dismantled Stalinism at the 20th Party Congress. On the other hand, until the construction of the Berlin Wall, the border to the Federal German Republic was open, which would have made it a futile exercise not to publish at least the less 'dangerous' literary works (von Wroblewsky).

It was not only the communists that jammed the existentialist messages. Sartre and Beauvoir were observed by both the KGB and the CIA/FBI. A second important player in the field of jamming was the Catholic Church. Sartre's complete work was put on the *Index librorum prohibitorum* in 1948. The same happened to Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and *The Mandarins* in 1956. In 1950, the pope had condemned existentialism *in toto* in his encyclical *Humani generis*. These condemnations significantly impaired the reception of existentialism in Catholic countries, and generally in Catholic schools everywhere in the world, for example, in Austria, Bavaria, and most of Catholic Italy. The Catholic Church's ban was one of the major reasons why the center of reception of existentialism in the Hispanic world was not in Spain but in Argentina (Savignano), although the régime under Juan Perón was only slightly milder than Francisco Franco's in Spain.[8] The vehement opposition to existentialism by the two most powerful ideological centers in the world, communism and the Roman Catholic Church, may surprise the reader. It is hard to find another philosophical and literary movement that experienced a similar rejection, but it is understandable when considering that at that time

[8] At the philosophy congress in Mendoza/Argentina in 1949, Perón called Sartre's *Nausea* (*La nausée*) "trash", while Camus's play *The Misunderstanding* (*Le malentendu*) was even banned.

Franco's Spain prohibited the sale of Camus's work for political reasons until 1955/1958. The Catholic Church had not put him on the index.

there existed only three important ideological camps: Karl Marx, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Jesus Christ[9] (Rahner 1993, p. 209).

Another important kind of noise was social taboos. Sartre's and Beauvoir's criticism of the bourgeois patriarchal morality with regard to sexuality and particularly the position of women in our society was severely subjected to social taboos. Nothing proves this better than the virtually nonexistent reception of Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* in Europe, until Beauvoir's theses were reimported to Europe from the U.S. in the early 1970s (Galster 2015, pp. 211–212). For a large part of the general public, and in particular the academia, Sartre's and Beauvoir's work showed a pornographic character to be rejected *in toto*.

Channels—Visits, Books, Theater, Articles, Film

Regardless of the many acts of jamming, the existentialist tsunami quickly spread around the world between 1945 and 1950. This had a lot to do with the fact that the messages of Sartre, Beauvoir, and Camus were sent through most of the channels available at the time: personal visits, books, theater performances, articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers, even films. Existentialism was a media event, too. The personal visits by Sartre, Beauvoir, and Camus have already been mentioned. Analysis of their books shows that their reception spread mainly via literature and not philosophy (see also Kaufmann 1975, p. 40). Their literary works were remarkably quickly translated into the three major languages English, Italian, and German. After 1945, translation of Sartre's major literary works into English took on average 1.3 years, with Beauvoir 3.6 years, with Camus 5.3 years. Into Italian, the translation of Sartre's literary works took on average about 3.2 years and into German only 2.3 years, although the book market there only revived in 1948. These figures also show us the relative relevance of the markets and authors. The first

[9] In the years after World War II, the Christian Democrats were the leading parties in the major countries on the European continent (MRP/France, CDU/Germany, DC/Italy). They became the godparents of the European Community. On the intellectual level, Sartre's Christian opponents were philosophers like Gabriel Marcel and the representatives of the *Renouveau Catholique*, authors such as Georges Bernanos, Paul Claudel, and François Mauriac (Werner).

and major market in terms of the reception of existentialism was the Anglo-Saxon, and in particular the American market, followed by the German and Italian markets. The figures also confirm the clear dominance of Sartre over Beauvoir and particularly Camus when it comes to the reception of their work outside France.

As to the major philosophical works, they were translated slowly. It is obvious that the reception of Sartre's philosophy took place rather through his plays and secondary philosophical writings such as *Existentialism Is a Humanism* and *What Is Literature?* (*Qu'est-ce que la littérature?*). *Being and Nothingness* was first translated into German in 1952, followed by English in 1956 and Italian in 1964. The slower translation into Italian can be explained, however, by the good knowledge of French in Italian philosophical circles. Of particular note is the fact that in the early Sixties the first translations of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (*Critique de la raison dialectique*) and the preface to *The Wretched of the Earth* into one of the three major languages appeared in Italian in 1963 and 1962 respectively. This proves the interest in Italy in a Marxian version of existentialism that was largely lacking in the U.S. and Germany.[10] The only country that could compete with Italy in this regard was Japan, where the *Critique* was translated in 1962.

There were also translations into many other languages. Among the forerunners with regard to translations was Sweden where many texts were published between 1946 and 1949; *Existentialism Is a Humanism* was translated into Swedish in 1946, the same year that the French edition appeared and before the German and the English translations. Another hotspot for translations was Argentina. There, the reception of the Spanish thinkers José Ortega y Gasset and Unamuno and the Germans Max Scheler and Heidegger had prepared the field for the first translation ever of *Being and Nothingness* into a foreign language in 1949. And finally, in the Sixties, there was a boom of translations of Sartre's work into Turkish (Cengiz; Koş 2004, pp. 37–38) and Arabic, but with a clear focus on literary and political texts, while the philosophical texts, apart from *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, were mostly neglected.

[10] However, even in Italy, the interest in Sartre's philosophy waned quickly in the 1960s. Already in 1967, Antonio Santucci called the *Critique* outdated (Invitto 1987, p. 182).

With the translation of the plays, performances in theaters started. This significantly broadened the audience exposed to existentialist messages. This was of particular importance in Germany and Italy, where, after years of deprivation by the fascist régimes the élite eagerly visited the theaters. Several of Sartre's plays were staged by the most prominent theater directors in Europe. Luchino Visconti directed *No Exit* (*Huis clos*) in the Teatro Eliseo in Rome in 1945. Giorgio Strehler followed with *In the Mesh* (*L'engrenage*) at the Piccolo Teatro in Milano in 1953 (Tessari 1987, pp. 158, 164). The performances of *The Flies* by Gustav Gründgens in Düsseldorf and by Jürgen Fehling in Berlin in 1947/1948 were major cultural events and a highlight of the debate about the Germans' collective guilt that had started in 1945.[11] Peter Brook staged *No Exit* (at a theater club in London), *The Victors* (*Men Without Shadows*; *Morts sans sépulture*) and *The Respectful Prostitute* in the U.K. in 1946/1947.

And to the theater performances we have to add the films. What today has been widely forgotten, even by Sartreans, is the fact that there was an astonishing number of films based on plays or scripts by Sartre—works like *The Chips Are Down* (*Les jeux sont faits*), *Typhus* (as a film, *The Proud and the Beautiful*), *False Noses* (*Les faux nez*), *Kean*, and *The Trojan Women* (*Les Troyennes*). The most interesting film from the perspective of the international reception of existentialism was *The Witches of Salem* (*Les sorcières de Salem*), a film Arthur Miller later prohibited to be shown. This film adaptation of Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* was a French-GDR cooperation.

Last but not least we have to take into consideration the role of articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers. These were journals like *Partisan Review* and *Politics* in the U.S., *Politecnico* in Italy, *al-Adab* in the Arab world, and *Sur* in Argentina, partly built after the model of Sartre's and Beauvoir's *Les Temps modernes*. The situation in Germany, where the Allied Forces maintained a strict control over the media, was exceptional.

[11] In this debate in which Jaspers also participated, Sartre took the 'scandalous' position that the Germans should not fall into self-denial, as the past cannot be undone; they should rather honestly commit themselves to a future in freedom.

In a survey in Germany in 1948, Sartre's *The Flies* and Carl Zuckmayer's *The Devil's General* were mentioned as two most important cultural events in the time after the end of World War II (Rahner 1993, p. 305).

As a kind of compensation, many small journals came into existence and some of them, such as *Der Ruf*,[12] *Die Quelle*, *Dokumente*, *Umschau*, and *Frankfurter Hefte*, became platforms for the discussion of existentialist thoughts (Rahner 1993; Koberstein 1996).

Another special case was the importance of articles in newspapers and popular journals such as *Life*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* in the U.S. Sartre and Beauvoir even wrote essays for the fashion magazines *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. This allowed them to reach out to a public they could have never met by using the more traditional channels—however, at the price that their personal lifestyle gained in importance in comparison to their philosophy (Cotkin 2003, p. 92). As Alfred Andersch remarked in 1951, the fact that the existentialists published novels and plays, too, very much hampered the reception of existentialism as a serious philosophical and literary movement (Andersch 2004, p. 281). Even more detrimental were the publications in newspapers and popular journals. The criticism by Brown, the *New York Times* correspondent in Paris, that the Sartreans led a lifestyle of drinking, partying, and sexual adventures (Fulton 1999, p. 32) determined the long-term perception of existentialism in the U.S. more than the articles in *Partisan Review*.

First Message—An Absurd, Contingent World Worth Rebelling Against

There are four different existentialist messages that have proved to be highly influential. The first and most basic existentialist message is based on the thesis that the world is absurd (Camus) and contingent (Sartre) with *The Myth of Sisyphus* (*Le mythe de Sisyphe*) and *Nausea* as the most important texts. Man is conceived as an individual subject who is confronted with an adverse environment. Human existence is always

[12] *Der Ruf* with Andersch, a Sartrean, as editor was the mouthpiece of the young generation of writers of *Group 47*. The journal was influenced by American writers such as Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner and advocated a socialist humanism similar to Sartre's ideas.