Sartre’s *Critique of Dialectical Reason* can be seen as the first step towards the realization of one of his earliest philosophical projects: that of authoring a theory of politics. That Sartre was fully aware of the importance, for ethics and politics, of a conception of the person can be gleaned from his claims concerning the main task of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, namely that of developing a conception of the person that could incorporate the historical and social aspects of the human agent. This is also evident from the way in which he dismisses, at 75 (1980), his earlier writings on ethics:

> the new third attempt would have to be based on a new ontology of consciousness as interpenetrating with other consciousnesses, an ontology which would leave “nothing of *Being and Nothingness* and even of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* standing, leading to an ethics of ‘we’ in contrast to the earlier ethics of the ‘I’.”

In the *Critique*, Sartre further develops his view of the person as articulated in *Being and Nothingness*. This view is not changed but is complemented by an account of those aspects of a person’s life which, in *Being and Nothingness*, were mainly considered from the perspective of ontological freedom as potential obstacles to the spontaneity of the individual. Thus, social, economic, cultural and political institutions, as well as the objects in the world which were clear manifestations of the in-itself, were primarily examined in order to establish whether they can limit the individual’s ontological freedom and to a lesser extent whether they can potentially advance or hinder the realization of a person’s projects.

The conception of freedom in the *Critique* shifts its emphasis from ontological to practical freedom. Without downgrading the crucial role of ontological freedom, and without making freedom dependent on the realization of the goals that a person projects, Sartre attempts to account for the relation between practical freedom, on the one hand, and, on the other, the types of institution that organize a society. For, while the realization...
of a person's purposes is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of a person's practical freedom, it may be a symptom of the degree of practical freedom a person has.

The question is no longer whether a person can freely create her projects and what the good values are which structure those projects, but what type of good projects can be realized in society and how the institutions of the society should be designed in order that citizens be practically free. Hence, the person's action is no longer seen as simply related to the project, but also as linked to those factors which condition the realization of the project. The term used by Sartre now in order to refer to a person's activity is "praxis".5

Having presented my reading of Kant's account of the authority of the moral law and of his view of enlightenment, in this chapter I will consider two objections Sartre formulates to Kant. Let me begin, however, with an overview of this chapter.

§77. Practical freedom and history

Although the focus here is on what is usually called Sartre's 'later' work, in this chapter, I will begin with an objection Sartre formulates in the Notebooks. There, he portrays Kant's moral theory as authoritarian, because the Categorical Imperative, as an unconditional law, must have practical validity for all rational persons, in all morally relevant situations. Moreover, given the priority of practical reason (which is structured by the Categorical Imperative) over theoretical reason, the entire Kantian philosophy seems to be determined by this Imperative.

Yet, this seems incompatible with a common feature of Kant's and Sartre's practical philosophies, a feature that I identified in Chapter 4, namely their critique of an account of negative (transcendental or ontological) freedom that sets any limits to the spontaneity of the negatively free agent. In this respect, the Categorical Imperative seems to have much more authority than an appropriate account of negative freedom allows and, hence, given the priority of practical reason over theoretical reason in Kant, his philosophy displays an authoritarianism clearly in conflict with existentialism.

One issue which I left open for further exploration in Chapter 4 concerned Sartre's objection to Kant's account of normativity, in particular his view of the essential role of interpersonal relations for moral normativity and the lack of an appropriate account of interpersonal relations in Kant. At the basis of Sartre's claim to the significance of interpersonal relations, I have identified a distinction between imperatives and values, which seems to set actual choice as a sufficient condition for the moral validity of values. I have argued that this distinction is clearly problematic and even goes against some of Sartre's own claims concerning the moral goodness of values. Nevertheless, I have concluded that, from the perspective of this distinction,