



Sartre and Adorno: The Dialectics of Subjectivity (SUNY series in Contemporary Continental Philosophy)

David Sherman

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Systematic comparison of Sartre and Adorno that focuses on their theories of the subject.

Focusing on the notion of the subject in Sartre's and Adorno's philosophies, David Sherman argues that they offer complementary accounts of the subject that circumvent the excesses of its classical formation, yet are sturdy enough to support a concept of political agency, which is lacking in both poststructuralism and second-generation critical theory. Sherman uses Sartre's first-person, phenomenological standpoint and Adorno's third-person, critical theoretical standpoint, each of which implicitly incorporates and then builds toward the other, to represent the necessary poles of any emancipatory social analysis.

"...Sherman does an excellent job using the Frankfurt School as a foil to develop a skilled defence of Sartre's early philosophy. This analysis would be useful not just for researchers interested in the comparisons of German and French philosophy but also for anyone interested in the debates surrounding Sartre's work from the 1930s and '40s." — Symposium

"David Sherman has not only written an excellent book linking Sartre and Adorno, two much misunderstood and unfairly marginalized thinkers in recent continental philosophy, but he has also shown their surprising complementarity on an issue that itself has been all but dismissed, the inescapable significance of the subject. His book, accordingly, has two vital themes, the largely unappreciated relationship between two seminal philosophers and the misguided obstinacy that would deny any role to subjectivity in philosophy. This is a terrific book that provides an opening for a new and much-needed reexamination of some worn and by now dogmatic themes in both poststructuralism and second-generation critical theory." — Robert C. Solomon, author of *Dark Feelings, Grim Thoughts: Experience and Reflection in Camus and Sartre*

"David Sherman's *Sartre and Adorno* develops an exciting encounter between the ideas of two of the most important thinkers in the contemporary moment. The Frankfurt School critique of Sartre, and, more generally, existentialism and phenomenology, is succinctly presented, as are the positive contributions to developing theoretical perspectives on subjectivity by both Adorno and Sartre. Sherman thus provides a very well-balanced dialectical critique that provides new insights into both Sartre and Adorno, while staging a significant confrontation between existential phenomenology and the Frankfurt School." — Douglas Kellner, author of *Media Spectacle and the Crisis of Democracy*

"Sherman renders comprehensible some of the most abstract and riddling philosophical issues within continental philosophy. In so doing, the book will bring together readers of critical theory and existentialism in ways that are really very rare." — Max Pensky, editor of *The Actuality of Adorno: Critical Essays on Adorno and the Postmodern*

"This is the first systematic, book-length comparison of Sartre and Adorno, a study that has been needed for some time now and on multiple levels. Sherman has done a superb job with this comparison, and it is important that the pivot around which it occurs is the question of subjectivity, which is also closely connected to the problem of political agency. He brings into communication two of the most important

Marxist thinkers of the twentieth century; therefore, it also is part of an account of the broad Marxist intellectual milieu of the past century.” — Bill Martin, author of *Ethical Marxism: The Categorical Imperative of Liberation*

David Sherman is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Montana at Missoula and is the coauthor (with Leo Rauch) of *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Self-Consciousness: Text and Commentary*, also published by SUNY Press.

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