

is commendable is to overlook the complications inherent in the suffix "able." To say that something is commendable may be only to say that it is worthy of commendation without actually commending it. But if "good" is puzzling, then so is "worthy of commendation." The basic question about "good" is how it can be determined whether something is good, how judgments to the effect that something is good can be supported or refuted; the present analysis does nothing to answer such questions. And the following is a good example of the conundrums to which it leads:

It does seem that so far as the speaker is concerned the statement "I approve of X" commits him to saying that X is good. In other words he cannot consistently assert the statement while withholding the value judgment. . . . The fact that I approve of X involves my approval of X, the value is inescapably derivable from the fact [p. 164].

But that X is good does not follow from the statement, "I approve of X," or from the fact that I approve of it; all that follows is that I believe that X is good, which is what is meant by saying, "I approve of X." The conundrum results from supposing that all is meant by "X is good" is contained in the discovery that it simply expresses the speaker's approval. This is not even a significant part of what is meant.

The upshot of the whole discussion is that, since values are not facts, values are not "the case irrespective of what anybody may think or feel about" them (pp. 200, 78). This conclusion is a consequence of the previous analysis. But it is not thereby established, for it fails to recognize that something may be good even though no one commends it, says it is good, or approves of it.

I would not leave the impression that there is nothing good in the book. On the contrary, a number of illuminating things are said along the way (such as the discussion on pp. 82-84 of how a value judgment may be confirmed or refuted). The author says that his purpose "will have been doubly fulfilled if anyone is stimulated into thinking a dispute worthwhile" (p. 197). From this point of view the book is a success. Yet it is pretty clear that in this book the wrong questions have been asked, and in this it is not unique.

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THE LITERATURE OF POSSIBILITY: A STUDY IN HUMANISTIC EXISTENTIALISM. By Hazel E. Barnes. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1959. Pp. x+402. \$5.75.

So far, the only major philosophic work of existentialism to have appeared in English is Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. Now Hazel Barnes, to whom we are indebted for that translation, has gone on to give us one of the most competent and helpful books in any language about existentialism. She concentrates entirely on three French writers—Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus—and discusses almost everything these three have written, though their literary works are emphasized much more than their philosophic studies. These deliberate limitations make possible an unusually extensive and intensive treatment of the three main figures of "humanistic existentialism"; and their constant juxtaposition proves very fruitful. Unlike Jaspers and Heidegger, these three have been writing novels as well as theoretical studies, and Sartre and Camus have also written plays. Moreover, most of their works have come out of an intense mutual awareness.

Most of the book is taken up by "Part Two: Self-Encounter" (pp. 39-271) and "Part Three: A Psychology of Freedom" (pp. 273-362). Each of these is subdivided into three main sections: the former into "The Definition," "Bad Faith and the Serious World," and "Recognition and Engagement," the latter into "Existential Psychoanalysis," "Humanistic Existentialism and Contemporary Psychology," and "Existentialist Biography." The book is clearly meant to be read straight through and, being always informed and competent, deserves such reading; but those particularly interested in the discussion of some particular play or novel can use the excellent index. Usually, the plot is summarized briefly, and Hazel Barnes emphasizes what strikes her as characteristic of "humanistic existentialism." The close relationships between the philosophical and literary works of these three authors have never before received such detailed attention, and the extended comparison of Sartre's "existential psychoanalysis" with Freud, Fromm, Horney, and the phenomenological and existential analysts is equally noteworthy.

The solid qualities of this book far outweigh any defects; it may be strongly recommended to all who seek a better under-

standing of French existentialism. The chief aim and use of the book is to facilitate comprehension; hence Hazel Barnes's generally very sympathetic attitude is well taken. She calls Sartre's *Saint Genêt, Martyr-Comedian*, with its nearly six hundred pages, "at least to me, the least satisfactory of Sartre's works from a literary point of view" and complains of "the unnecessary repetitions and the hundreds of pages of abstract and unclear philosophizing"; but after this very uncharacteristic censure she proceeds to give us an extremely sympathetic and perceptive summary of about twenty pages, showing how closely related this book is to Sartre's other works.

While this attitude strikes me as entirely plausible when we are confronted with a little known book not available in English—and a book which would be likely to provoke imperceptive hostility even if it were known—I wish that Hazel Barnes might have been a little more critical of Sartre's famous lecture *Existentialism Is a Humanism* and of Camus's *Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*. Here, above all, I find the soft spots of French existentialism: these writers who are so profoundly concerned with man's relation to man are quite unsatisfactory in their cursory remarks on ethics. At least, this point merits detailed discussion. But Sartre's abortive attempt to construct an ethic in his lecture is not criticized by Barnes, and her summaries of Camus's philosophic efforts are at times as muddled as Camus himself. Like too many others who sympathize with his sensitive conscience and succumb to his personal charm, Hazel Barnes claims that "Camus has gradually worked out a political philosophy" (p. 252) and that "Camus's doctrine of revolt is, as a theory, complete and definite" (p. 257). Such statements strike me as being generous to the point of falsehood.

In a work of such length and scope some lapses and disagreements are almost inevitable. Kant's categorical imperative is misstated and unfairly criticized:

Treat the Other always as an end [also!] and never as a means [only!]. But the existentialist seems to be more acutely aware than Kant that most situations demand that someone be treated as a means or else there would be no ends for anyone [p. 112].

Kafka, too, seems to me to be seriously misrepresented (pp. 156 and 179). Some of the

comparisons with contemporary British and American writers—particularly, with the so-called Beats and Angry Young Men—strike me as curiously lacking in any sense of proportion and to that extent unfair to Sartre. When Hazel Barnes compares him with Colin Wilson, albeit favorably, I am left to wonder whether I don't have an ever so much higher opinion of Sartre's stature than the translator of his major work. She is too concerned with showing how Sartre resembles some people who happened to be fashionable while she was writing; and one wishes that instead she might have offered a few comparisons with men of greater stature, like Spinoza or Goethe (not mentioned at all), or Nietzsche (included in an enumeration in one footnote). But these are the defects of modesty; Hazel Barnes refuses to rank her three subjects and, in general, prefers the descriptive mode. She offers a few scattered criticisms, especially in the last part of the book; but on the whole she refrains from any critical rethinking of existentialism. Since her three subjects are so provocative, the book is not dull in spite of the many plot summaries; it is remarkably free from jargon and never glib.

Nothing in these three writers is more attractive than their passionate concern with honesty and their skilful portrayal in fiction of characters trying almost desperately not to deceive themselves. In her discussion of "Bad Faith" Barnes brings this out beautifully, and her own prose, lacking the occasional flamboyance of her subjects, is invariably thoughtful and honest. But she might have treated Sartre, Camus, and de Beauvoir just a little more like their own characters, recapturing the excitement of their struggles against self-deception and the pathos of their frequent failures. The book might be a little more electric. But as it stands it shows a thorough mastery of the relevant materials and constitutes an extremely helpful guide to French existentialism.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART HISTORY. By Arnold Hauser. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959. Pp. x+411. \$7.50.

The present volume is a companion to the author's earlier work, *The Social History of*