

Review

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tions are sufficient to produce the so-called "subjective" colors in certain of the stationary patterns (*ibid.*).

If physical colors are to be understood as the concurrent external physical causes of color perceptions, they will have to form an unreasonably broad and heterogeneous class, or else there will be a list of excluded cases which may prove quite vexing to specify satisfactorily. Once again, the price of maintaining our truistic connection between physical colors and perceived colors seems to be too high.

Although I have chosen color as an illustration, my argument is more generally directed against the supposition that truisms of the form 'X things appear X to normal observers in standard conditions' can be pressed into service when precise specifications are in question. It seems to me that 'X' could represent any perceptible quality, e.g., cold, circular, or loud. The human perceptual system was, after all, never engineered to be a scientific instrument, and so it should not be expected to mirror the natural kinds of physics. Phenomenal qualities typically have a one-many relationship to physical magnitudes and are notoriously evocable in the absence of their usual causes. There is a precise but complicated story to be told about the relationships between our perceptual systems and their physical environment. Truisms may help us to begin it, but we should not expect to find them at its conclusion.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Sartre. PETER CAWS. (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979). xiii, 210 p. \$22.50.

Peter Caws has written a useful book whose limitations, and they are severe, are the obverse of its virtues. Faithful to the title of the series in which it appears, he has restricted himself first to identifying, analyzing and evaluating the particular arguments that appear in Sartre's texts and secondly to tracing the development of particular lines of thought from one argument to another. This latter task enables him to characterize both large continuities and striking discontinuities in Sartre's preoccupations. Nonetheless this book is a chronicle rather than a history. Caws's attitude to Sartre is thor-

oughly sympathetic. He always tries to give the most charitable interpretation of Sartre's assertions and inferences. But, given the analytic mode of his appraisal, any conception of what it might be to evaluate Sartre's philosophy *as a whole* has to be absent from this book. Sartre's philosophy just *is*, on the view taken here, the sum total of his particular arguments.

A second omission derives from the almost exclusive focus upon Sartre's own writings. When Sartre debates with others, what Caws presents is a debate with the-other-as-seen-by-Sartre. The Lukacs who appears here is not Lukacs, but Sartre's Lukacs, the Freud is Sartre's Freud, the Hegel Sartre's Hegel. Indeed the appearances of these characters, who come on stage generally only to be reproved by Sartre for their shortcomings, is usually so brief that it could scarcely be otherwise.

A third and related limitation is the almost complete abstraction of Sartre's arguments from their context in modern French thought. Brunschvicg and Merleau-Ponty receive only brief mention, Camus none at all. Francis Jeanson's *Sartre dans sa vie* is cited, but not his *Le Problème Moral et la pensée de Sartre*. That Sartre was French would appear from this book to have been one of the less important facts about him.

What this asceticism—and it is clear from the little that Caws does say in these areas of omission that he could have written excellently on these omitted topics, had he chosen to do so—wins for Caws is the opportunity to dwell in a patient, detailed, narrowly focused way on the actual text of Sartre's key arguments, book by book, chapter by chapter, paragraph by paragraph, line by line. Every work by Sartre from "The Legend of Truth" published by Paul Nizan in the journal *Bifur* in 1931 up to the third volume of *L'Idiot de la Famille: Gustave Flaubert de 1821 à 1857* which appeared in 1972 receives its due share of attention. Sartre's fiction and his political writings are freely drawn upon when they can be used to illuminate the structure of arguments in his more strictly philosophical works. So are Simone de Beauvoir's writings. The result is invariably a valuable commentary upon the text, one which is strictly ancillary to a reading of the text. Thus this book is not an introduction to Sartre and it is in no way a substitute for reading Sartre. Although Caws has a splendidly plain style which makes his own thoughts and Sartre's as available as they can be, a good deal here will not be fully intelligible apart from a close reading of Sartre himself.

A fine example of Caws's exegesis at its best is his statement at the end of Chapter VI, "Bad Faith and the Existence of the For-It-

self," of the problem of how Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* is in danger of being unable to avoid idealist conclusions ("it is through human reality that there is a world," *BN* 307), followed by his teasing out of the various strands of argument in Sartre's strenuous avoidance of such conclusions in Chapter VII on "The Existence of Others—Sartre's *Prise de Conscience*". Caws's exegetical achievement in such passages is so impressive that his insistent limitation of his task to exegesis and to a level of criticism that remains as close to exegesis as possible becomes disappointing. There are two points in the book at which this kind of disappointment in the reader becomes particularly intense.

The first concerns the relationship of the self to consciousness, as Sartre discussed it in *The Transcendence of the Ego* which was originally published in 1936. Husserl in the *Cartesian Meditations* had argued in favor of a transcendental Ego, presupposed by the individuation and unity of consciousness. Against this Sartre contended that consciousness as such requires no Ego, and he offered a phenomenological account of what the experience of reading a book is, as he recalls it to memory: "while I was reading, there was consciousness of the book, of the heroes of the novel, but the *I* was not inhabiting this consciousness. It was only consciousness of the object and non-positional consciousness of itself . . . there was no *I* in the unreflected consciousness" (TE 46-7, quoted by Caws 54). This conclusion echoes Hume, but Sartre's primary concern was not with personal identity. What he wanted to show was that the notion of consciousness is prior to and independent of any notion of self: "transcendental consciousness"—that of consciousness which the phenomenological reduction makes available to us—"is an impersonal spontaneity" (TE 98, quoted 59). Caws defends Husserl against Sartre; or rather he defends the view that we cannot envisage consciousness without an Ego. "According to Sartre's view, there could, strictly speaking, not be said to be any philosopher left to philosophize after the *epoché*—nobody to carry on the inquiry. And yet the inquiry proceeds, not in the confused and bewildered way that ought presumably to be characteristic of a newborn consciousness without presuppositions, but making full use of the arsenal of logic and language. It is disingenuous, then, to pretend as Sartre does that the *cogito* can mean only that *there is consciousness*, not that *I have it* . . . and it may be Husserl's good sense . . . to insist on the integrity of the transcendental Ego" (56).

So Caws and Husserl range themselves against Sartre and seem to score a very palpable hit. But do they? It seems to be an unquestioned assumption of Caws's argument that either Husserl is in the

right or Sartre, an assumption of course that Sartre shared. But perhaps in a sense both are right; perhaps what systematic phenomenological analysis reveals is that the concept of consciousness suffers from internal self-contradiction—that we can show with equal rigor that it must and that it cannot involve reference to a transcendental Ego. This is a possibility that Caws never considers. He sees not “a genuine problem,” but “a weakness of the pure phenomenological method.” And I suspect that this may be because he takes his duty as a commentator so seriously, refusing to criticize Sartre except as it were from close quarters. Yet if I am right, the Sartre of the earlier writings on the philosophy of psychology is perhaps an even more interesting philosopher than Caws suggests. For he may have moved almost, if not quite, to the point of discovering defects in the everyday—and the phenomenological—concept of consciousness akin to those which he explicitly discovered in the Freudian concept of the unconscious.

A second case where Caws's restriction on the range of discussion that he allows himself abbreviates his investigation unfortunately is in the discussion of the relationship of the self to others. Caws summarizes the outcome of Sartre's investigation into this relationship in *Being and Nothingness* accurately and lucidly: “we are left with conflict, with the permanent elusiveness of the other, with the small comfort of objective association under the eye of the Third, accompanied by the realization that this association is illusory on the subjective level, that each of us is living a private life in parallel with the others but without genuine community” (111). What this means concretely was pictured with great imaginative power by Simone de Beauvoir in her novel, *L'Invitée*.

In the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, however, genuine forms of group life and projects of community emerge, and these of a kind whose impossibility seemed to have been demonstrated by the arguments of *Being and Nothingness*. It must therefore be the case that, if the arguments of the *Critique* are to have any chance of succeeding, we can be given good reasons for rejecting at least some of the premises from which Sartre argued in *Being and Nothingness*. But in his step-by-step discussion of the arguments of the *Critique* Caws never returns to the task of reexamining those premises. The failure to do so is all the more important because of its crucial relevance to any evaluation of Sartre's claims about the relationship of his philosophy to Marxism. For the conclusions of the *Critique* are clearly compatible with at least some of Marx's historical and sociological theses, while the conclusions of *Being and Nothingness* equally clearly, if true, entail the falsity of claims central to

Marxism. Thus the history of Sartre's changing relationship to Marxism can scarcely be intelligibly related in the absence of some hypothesis about which parts of *Being and Nothingness* Sartre must have come to reject as early as the nineteen fifties. Perhaps in fact the key transition was the one that Lukacs noted, from the Heideggerian themes of *Being and Nothingness* to the Kantian ethics of *Existentialism Is a Humanism*; but Sartre himself denied that he had by this stage changed his positions at all. Caws's failure to throw further light on this question seems once again to spring from his insistence on restricting his focus.

Yet the merits of Caws's procedure are very great and they make his book an indispensable work of reference. It does not replace, but supplements such books as Klaus Hartmann's, Marjorie Grene's, and Arthur Danto's. It deserves to be widely read.

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Nature and Natural Science: The Philosophy of Frederick J. E. Woodbridge. WILLIAM FRANK JONES. Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1983. 197 p. \$19.95.

It is good to have a new book on the philosophy of F. J. E. Woodbridge, founding co-editor of this JOURNAL and a major influence on philosophic naturalism in this country. Woodbridge's thought has had a continuing interest in the four decades since his death, as evidenced in part by a number of doctoral theses and by Hae Soo Pyun's *Nature, Intelligibility and Metaphysics: Studies in the Philosophy of F. J. E. Woodbridge*,¹ a revision of Pyun's 1966 Columbia University Ph.D. dissertation. One can join Herbert W. Schneider in welcoming this new book, of which he writes, in his Foreword to the volume, "Professor Jones' book is an excellent exposition of Woodbridge's philosophy, as well as an accurate portrait of the mind and the man."

Woodbridge's importance lies not only in his own thought but in the tradition of realism in American naturalism which he furthered. Jones quotes Sterling P. Lamprecht's statement in *Nature and History*:² "The Woodbridge tradition does not consist in the continued repetition of an orthodoxy of profession and belief. The Woodbridge tradition is rather . . . a realism which finds in na-

¹ Amsterdam: B. R. Grüner, 1972.

² New York: Anchor Books, 1966.