

THE TRAGIC FINALE by Wilfrid Desan (1960 paperback ed.; 1954 1st ed.)

The Foreword to the Torchbook ed. (8/1/60) reports a conversation with J-P S, 6, 56, where S spoke of his moving away from E/N: "I still believe that individual freedom is total, ontologically speaking, but, on the other hand, I am more & more convinced that this freedom is conditioned & limited by circumstances."

And again re atheism: "I'm not concerned with God, I am concerned with man. I am neither materialist, nor spiritualist. I part with diamat, in this sense, that, according to my view (1) man has goals which matter does not have. (2) man has a choice of possibilities which matter does not have."

"As for my own book on Ethics it will take me 2 more yrs. to finish it."

On p. 50 Desan tries to outline E/N as follows:

L'être:	Le Neant	
the In-Itself:	the For-Itself	= human consciousness - freedom - free choice
:	is "nothingness...."	
:	" revelation of	
:	his desire of	
:	" choice of	
:	" is internal negation of	

transformation
phenomenon

phenomenon

reference to...
...

Some criticism does appear, e.g., ftn. on p. 66: "Observe how again & again Sartre does not prove. He describes what happens & what appears & this phenomenological description of a look, or of shame, is supposed to replace all rational argumentation."

However, Desan's criticism, because he knows so little of Marxism, completely misunderstands JPS as apologist for Stalinism as when he writes in ftn. 72: "After a long flirtation with

leftist movements S became anti-Marxist (sic! WD gives, of all things Mat-Rev. as ex.) It is indeed hard to understand how a philosopher whose aim is to restore man to absolute freedom, can at the same time agree with those whose purpose is to trap man in "his necessity." Sartre's present political position appears, however, once more ambiguous (sic). (i.e. complete whitewashing of "peace" movement, '52.)

p. 140 Wh. 7, "The Contradictions of the For-Itself" is, however, quite good & original: "Sartre, a very subtle dialectician, has his aim in view at all times. He has, so to speak prepared his play & carefully distributed the parts." "The danger of Sartre's argumentation, therefore, is double: 1st, he relies 'non-being' claiming that it is, & 2nd he identifies it with 'human consciousness' itself. Neither of these assertions can be proved....

S's impersonal consciousness. p. 159: "Nor... can one agree that the analysis of negative judgment, interrogation & destruction exhibits the much desired 'nothingness' of the For-itself. This 'nothingness' is a myth. It is original in invention, & it fits marvellously into the ensemble of S's dialectic but it does not correspond to reality/" (& in ftn: "it seems that 'egel had not yet spoken his last word."

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B.N. p. 559 "No necessary being can explain existence... It is complete gratuity... When one realizes it, then it turns one's heart, all begins to float... that's Nausea."

p. 183 "Sartre has made his choice. It is the refusal of God, the refusal of the Other, the absurdity of his own existence, & the omnipresence of a heavy, massive & inexplicable Being-in-itself. There are no more issues. Sartre is brought to a standstill."

"One can now understand the so-called nausea. The Sartrean nausea may be defined as the fundamental reaction of the For-itself against the absurdity of its own existence & the existence of the world. Horror & disgust for the Being-in-itself manifest themselves in nausea."

p. 163 "Sartre's heroes choose for the pleasure of choosing & do not use their freedom in view of a higher value: love, for ex., or action. It is a liberty, not a liberation."
"Freedom with negation of all the rest: that is the choice of Sartre. The result is tragic isolation."

p. 187 "these descriptions which claim to be objective are very often not objective at all. They aim in many cases to confirm an idea of existence which the author has made up for himself at the start. In such cases the description proves nothing at all... The most striking argument against Sartre is the fact that other others using the same method came to different results. For Heidegger, for instance, basein (human reality) implies Hitsein."

p. 194 "one more of those quickly extinguished intellectual revolutions which makes the gods smile & the his. bks. unnecessarily long." "There is no phil. of one man. There is a Phil. of Mankind."

THE MXISM OF J*PS by Wilfrid Desan (1965) is much, much poorer a book than is Desan's Tragic Finale, both because he knows no Mxism & therefore thinks S's version is Mxism; & because he has a thesis all made up before ever he approaches it all, & that is that S is the last of the Cartesians, and since this is only critical ch. in book & "original", we'll begin with that last ch. (X)

p. 279 "as the power of Descartes is the power of Sartre, so also is it his weakness."

p. 281 "On 2nd thought, Sartre's revolt of mind against matter should not be too surprising, since mind, too, is an underdog. He has carried on a lifelong struggle to protect what the Fr. so aptly call "la lucidite", which is of course Descartes' old Cogito, the privilege that mind alone has of not being earth, or any kind of matter... Mind alone is supreme & free... This Sartre has inherited, but he has eliminated God from his inheritance & replaced him by man, who now has absolute freedom."

p. 282 "This form of absolutes in immobility (i.e. rationalist view of truth as universal, rd) Sartre could not accept since bet. Descartes & himself Hegel had appeared & placed motion in the mind itself... (Q Professor Herbert Spitzberg in '54 saying "prime weakness 'of S's social phil) appears to be the lack of a theoretical foundation.")

S's mistake in the making of a phil. of the group lies in his use of logical (?) class only, that class or category which we have inherited from Aristotle's logic. Containing objects A, B, C. etc., on the basis of certain similarities... possibility of identical thinking...

p. 18 Merleau-Ponty concludes that S has no real dialectic, since the break bet. the Pour-soi & the en-soi is too radical to allow for an authentic circularity, nor has he a real phil. of intersubjectivity since the social dimension is merely built up from the viewpoint of the Self. Bet. the Pour-soi & the en-soi THERE IS INDEED NOTHINGNESS... There is no creation ex nihilo; there is only creation with the material at our disposal.

p. 562 "To comprehend therefore is in most cases nothing but a return (regressive method) into the genesis of an act or an opus: in the depth of his act man has

build up his future & then executed the act that was to bring about that future. The drive
toward his future is his project & as I follow its movement in the progressive act
I can read as in a sign the author himself & the complex world in which he has lived.

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