

was to overthrow the law of the excluded middle. The discussion on more than one paper returned to Nietzsche, to bring out both the relative lameness of Nietzsche's own climax—'power' and 'life' are no less abstract and metaphysical than 'goodness', at bottom—and the danger of moving too hastily from Nietzsche's fourth stage to instant resuscitation of the Defunct. Montagnes's paper can usefully be read in connexion with Granier's.

The rest are good for what they cover—except for Pastor Dumas on Protestant theology, notably weaker and duller than the others—and would merit comment if space permitted.

Increasing dissatisfaction is expressed towards the end of the colloquium with its being one more cosy chat among metaphysicians and theologians: 'we think we are on a modern train because the guard's van is called Heidegger, whereas people in general are on other trains.' In an obvious way, this dissatisfaction is justified, and may usefully warn fugitives from historical theology or analytical philosophy who seek salvation in Merleau-

Ponty or Heidegger, at first or second hand. But it is precisely the scholarly, academic isolation of philosophical presuppositions of theologians, of the kind done in this book, which is the most important single lacuna in the programme of any of the *good* theology faculties, Protestant or Catholic, known to the reviewer. The manner in which the epistemological unfrocking of 'objectivity' is carried out in this book is the allusive, historically-weighted and not infrequently verbose manner common among continental philosophers and encouraged by the phenomenological method. There is no reason why such an approach should not be complemented by an attempt to present conclusions with greater clarity, even at the risk of some distortion. Despite this shortcoming, and provided the reader is willing to put some hard work into reading most of the papers, this book is to be highly recommended, and the kind of work it tries to do ought to be more generally undertaken.

LAWRENCE MOONAN

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE: HIS PHILOSOPHY, by René Lafarge. *Gill and Macmillan*, 1970. 198 pp. £1.80.

The author of this uneven book at one point suggests a very useful criterion for philosophic literary criticism; he says 'words have definite meanings which govern their use' (p. 42). If he had but applied this to his own effort, perhaps the book would be a real contribution to Sartre scholarship. One of the most serious problems with the text stems from the author's (or the translator's in some cases) indiscriminate use of technical terms. Central to Sartre's work are definitional terms: Consciousness, Absurd, Liberty, Contingent, Engagement, Freedom, Sincerity, In-Itself, For-Itself, Nothingness, etc. On their definitions pivots the whole of Sartre's philosophy.

M. Lafarge has taken no pains either to give a coherent rendering of these terms or to place them in any sort of context. Frequently the vocabulary appears in paradoxical phrases, and this is to suffice as a definition ('But if it is the nature of consciousness to constantly draw beyond nothingness, is it not because it is nothingness?'). The maze of terms soon becomes bewildering and an account that sets out to enlighten only manages to confuse. A primary requirement in philosophical criticism, as M. Lafarge has pointed out, is setting the limits of your vocabulary, so that the

nebulous echoes of popular language or former philosophical use do not confuse and contradict your meaning.

If we are to believe the dust-jacket, both inside and out, the text is trying to show Sartre's philosophical stand through (1) his literary output; (2) his basic philosophical works (*Being and Nothingness*, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*). The first claim is weak indeed. *Nausea* is covered well in chapter 1, but in a fashion that would leave a literary critic disappointed. Sartre's dramatic works appear infrequently, and the only real analysis is done on *The Flies*. The brief conclusion from *No Exit* (Hell is others) comes from too simplistic an appraisal of Sartre's conception of freedom and responsibility.

Being and Nothingness is covered in sections. The effort is really too scattered to be helpful. In a work as complicated and difficult as this, it is more important to isolate key concepts than give detailed ground-work. In trying to connect the concepts of *Being and Nothingness* with the rest of Sartre's literature, the author gives no real sense of the evolving theory in Sartre. In the important area of 'value', the author does not trace the line of thinking that Sartre has taken, beginning with *Nausea*, coming through

What is Literature (not mentioned in this study) to *Existentialism is a Humanism*. In this latter work Sartre dramatically poses his final theory of the 'non-existence' of value prior to action, suggesting the direction of consciousness toward freedom without prior determined models of human nature. Behind the assumptions of human action and human value emerges an awareness about the human condition and necessarily, for Sartre, political preferences and judgments. The argument of *Existentialism is a Humanism* involves political assumptions that stem from Sartre's definitions of freedom and value. At no point in the present study is there an attempt to link freedom with proper states of mankind (a natural, political state for Sartre). As this is a central concern of the philosopher, one wonders why this lack.

The author raises objections to Sartre's philosophy in his last chapter. But again we fall into the problem of terms. M. Lafarge turns to J. Maritain and to Neo-Thomistic terms in general for his answers, and these unfortunately come out in quite non-Sartrean ways. We are now in the world of 'appetite', 'will', 'essence', 'beatific vision', etc. Even when these terms are to the point (and at times they are not), they are simply not in the universe of discourse of Sartre (to say nothing of the reader). Freedom is defined as the right choice of the good (we are free when we choose what is good). This is a limited sense of freedom, even for the layman. For Sartre it is precisely the availability of choice that constitutes freedom, without object. This last chapter seems to indicate that the author has not faced up to one of the real problems for a Christian philosopher: Sartre's philosophy is Man-centred, Christianity is God-centred. When the former does not admit there exists a form of the latter, terms are of paramount importance.

One of the longest chapters is the best. In chapter 9 Lafarge sets out to investigate the problem of Man's place (ontologically speaking) in history. He takes the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* and submits it to a careful analysis. He fails to treat the problem of the dialectic in history, but if one comes to the study with that information, the reading can be very interesting. In this chapter the author deals with Sartre's Marxist thinking. The analysis of scarcity integrates well with the study of the rise of historical capitalism. Alienation and revolution are also discussed in the context of Man facing a choice, creating values as he searches for freedom. In indicating the inert (passive) and the proper (active) groups of men, Sartre attempts to vindicate his premise that the reign of freedom can only begin when our present historical situation is eliminated.

There are a few problems with the translation. The key words in Sartre (*être en soi*, *être pour soi*, *être pour autrui*, etc.) should perhaps have been given some outstanding feature (italics, underlining, etc.). There are a few mistakes in the English: a fragment sentence on page 60, 'suspended to' (p. 77), and a few awkward word uses ('facticity', 'alterity').

One feels that a reference dictionary of terms at the end of the book would have been an enormous help. There the words could have been presented in their original French with exact English meanings.

In dealing with an author of such enormous dimensions (and such evolving interests) as J-P. Sartre, M. Lafarge would have done better to have limited himself to a few pivotal concepts or a select number of works, but certainly not both (and more). The resulting work is too uneven to be helpful to the novice and too incomplete to be of any real help to the expert.

MICHAEL WEST OSBORNE

MODERN MISSION DIALOGUE: THEORY AND PRACTICE, edited by Jan Kerkhofs, S.J. Preface by Franz Hengsbach, Bishop of Essen. Introduction by Frank de Graeve, S.J. Commissioned by Pro Mundi Vita, Brussels. *Ecclesia Press*, Shannon, Ireland, 1969. 263 pp. £2.

Books of essays by various authors are of their nature uneven, except where there has been strong editorial leadership, or some shared experience. In any such book on the missions (a residual category, after all, since it covers all that is not Christendom) one expects (and gets) a hodge-podge; and this is particularly so in a book with this topic of missionary dialogue as its main theme, since in any authentic dialogue between men of differing cultures and beliefs the etiquette and style of

the meeting of minds have to be shaped in the very conversation itself.

Thus, the editor's duty was to provide some sort of theological framework and then cast his net fairly widely in giving particular cases of dialogue attempted, achieved and maintained. This has been Fr Kerkhofs' aim; but it must be said that the major weakness of this book lies in the lack of a more determined editorial policy than that which Fr Kerkhofs has followed.