

the contemporary literature. It also, helpfully, contains a wealth of extracts from *Culture and Value* and the *Lectures and Conversations* on the topic. Scott is unconvinced that Wittgenstein is properly Wittgensteinian here, overgeneralizing about religious language, its purpose and function, in tension with the method he propounds in, say, the *Investigations*. This reviewer was not convinced: these were not remarks ever intended for publication, and one would have to be very sure that context didn't serve to disambiguate terms like 'religion' here to be convinced that there is a real problem. However, as in his book *Religious Language*, Scott is doing good work to make Wittgenstein an ongoing reference point in conversations about religious language.

There is much else of value in this collection. The early Wittgenstein gets due notice in Chon Tejedor's piece, making the work of an innovative *Tractatus* scholar readily available. Gabriel Citron's paper on what Wittgenstein termed 'the problem of my life' is an excellent piece of scholarship, as well as moving in its subject matter. There is an engaging mini-debate around *grammatical Thomism*, the Wittgenstein-inspired engagement with Aquinas by the likes of Herbert McCabe, brought to prominence by Stephen Mulhall's writing. And there is much more.

This book will be of use to anybody interested in Wittgenstein and religion. It ought to be read by anyone interested in the philosophy of religion, providing as it does a window into a way of philosophizing about religion which is so often left off the undergraduate syllabuses and conference programmes of the English-speaking world. Wittgenstein's manner of thinking about religion is not a threat to rigorous philosophy, nor to the substantivity of debates about God or theology. It is, however, a needed reminder that, whatever else religion might be, it is a practice engaged in by certain language-using animals. Too often philosophy of religion has concerned itself with systems of belief fit only for angels. A good dose of Wittgenstein is just what we need to bring us back down to earth.

SIMON HEWITT 
 University of Leeds
 e-mail: s.hewitt@leeds.ac.uk

Religious Studies 56 (2020) doi:10.1017/S003441251800080X
 © Cambridge University Press 2018

Kate Kirkpatrick *Sartre on Sin: Between Being and Nothingness*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). Pp. xii + 258. £44.68 (Hbk). ISBN 978 0 19 881173 2.

This book examines the lineage of Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of 'nothingness', suggesting that it owes a substantial debt to the Christian doctrine of original

sin. According to Kirkpatrick, this concept (which is most fully discussed in *Being and Nothingness*) bears a striking resemblance to numerous formulations of original sin since Augustine. The author draws on the work of key figures in Christian thought (such as Augustine, Pascal, and Kierkegaard), but she also makes the invaluable link to French literature (including Hugo, Mauriac, and Racine) – a methodological side-step which (given Sartre’s own generic diversity) offers her analysis some real depth. Both sin and nothingness are absences or privations of good, and according to Sartre’s depiction of human consciousness as in-between being and nothingness, Kirkpatrick suggests that we might even read Sartre as a ‘secular theologian of original sin’ (10).

Part I consists of a short introduction to the aims of the volume. Part II (chapters 2 and 3) outlines the Augustinian hamartiological tradition which Kirkpatrick ascribes to Sartre. Chapter 2 traces Sartre’s conceptual heritage back to Augustine, via Bérulle, Descartes, Jansen, Pascal, and Fénelon. Here, Kirkpatrick discusses the concepts of *le néant* and grace in seventeenth-century theology, offering evidence that Sartre was familiar with such accounts of the human person. Chapter 3 is concerned with manifestations of Jansenism in French literature. Looking at examples from Racine, Voltaire, and Hugo, as well as Mauriac, Bernanos, and Claudel, Kirkpatrick delineates the evolution of the concepts of sin and nothingness in the literature to which Sartre was exposed. In this literary context, the author also analyses the hamartiology of Søren Kierkegaard and his prominence in the French intellectual world during Sartre’s formative years, suggesting that ‘Kierkegaard à la française’ (76) played an important role in the development of Sartre’s view of the human condition as fallen – despite the theological tensions between these figures.

Part III is dedicated to an in-depth exposition and analysis of *Being and Nothingness* – a worthy task in itself. Chapter 4 looks at Sartre’s conception of human consciousness, as discussed in Part I of *Being and Nothingness*. Here she suggests that Sartre’s formulation of nothingness is tied to self-knowledge – just as it is for many of the figures discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 5 goes deeper into Sartrean consciousness (being-for-itself), looking now to the psychological effects of nothingness. Here Kirkpatrick clarifies Sartre’s discussions of facticity and transcendence, contingency, lack, internal relations, and possibility, as well as his belief that the external and existent are not simply theoretical concepts, but necessarily also lived experiences. Chapter 6 looks at Sartre’s account of ‘being-with-others’, shame, and embodiment. Sartre’s account of these concepts (according to Kirkpatrick) demonstrates his Jansenist and Hegelian affinities, owing to his understanding of ‘being-with-others’ as conflict. Chapter 7 considers Sartre’s conception of freedom, bringing his use of this concept into dialogue with that of Descartes and Leibniz. Kirkpatrick suggests that Sartre’s own position is ‘anti-theodicy’ (196), which, according to the author, is ‘pessimistic’ (196) in that it refuses the possibility of grace.


Part IV is where the meat of Kirkpatrick’s argument lies. Here she defends the relevance of Sartre’s conception of nothingness to contemporary theology, owing

to its hamartiological inheritance. Chapter 8 examines Sartre's account of love, demonstrating further evidence of his debt to Jansen. Here the author argues that the theological categories of 'love' and 'sin' cannot be understood on a merely theoretical basis, and must be known experientially. According to Kirkpatrick, Sartre's account fails to acknowledge the 'original optimism' of the Christian doctrine of sin, of which love is a significant part. Chapter 9 offers, as the author puts it, 'two provocations' (228) with regard to Sartre's account of the human condition. The first takes into account Marilyn McCord Adams's 'God because of Evil' and her argument that optimism is not compatible with a robust realist approach to evil without God, suggesting that from this perspective we might read Sartre as a 'phenomenologist of fallenness' (233). Kirkpatrick's second 'provocation' suggests that we might look to Sartre for a kind of bad example – to the extent that we see ourselves in his account of domineering, anxious, and self-deceiving love, we might recognize our own shortcomings and therefore be presented with an opportunity for spiritual growth.

One of the considerable strengths of this monograph is the important line it draws between Sartre and his predecessors. Sartre is widely known for his atheism, so his philosophical heritage in Christian thought is too often overlooked. This book therefore represents a valuable contribution to Sartre scholarship and the history of philosophy more generally. Kirkpatrick's recognition of the value of looking to *certain* secular thinkers as a means of examining spiritual belief is also commendable, as this promotes a valuable dialogue between religious and non-religious thought. Another key strength of the volume is the way in which the author incorporates reference to literary texts as well as philosophical and theological ones. Owing to her belief that certain concepts must be understood experientially as well as theoretically, the turn towards literature she makes in examining both Sartre's own oeuvre and the works of his predecessors demonstrates the value of this approach performatively: her literary examples supplement and give tangible depth to her theoretical points.

Kirkpatrick's exposition and analysis of *Being and Nothingness* sheds a great deal of light of Sartre's complex and often convoluted philosophy – so much so that the book would certainly go a long way in bringing less-acquainted readers up to speed. However, considering how much space and detail is sacrificed to this task, this reviewer cannot help being a little underwhelmed by the brevity with which the author introduces and enumerates many of her own points in the final part of the book. Certain elements could have been treated with more rigour, for example, her suggestion that Sartre only serves us as an example of *how not* to approach the world and others in it, and the implication that Sartre's conception of nothingness is naught but a pessimistic secularization of the concept of sin. While (thanks to the considerable evidence that Kirkpatrick offers) the reader must acknowledge Sartre's debt to Christian thought, her concluding judgement of Sartre's philosophy doesn't quite give credit to the intricacy of his world-view – a world-view which she has spent the vast majority of the book delineating.

On the whole, though, this book makes a considerable contribution to Sartre scholarship and history of philosophy, as well as contemporary theology. Not only does it illuminate a central strand of Sartre's thought that is often neglected, it also demonstrates the value of his work as a tool for bringing about spiritual reflection. This book will certainly be a valuable resource for anyone seeking a clear understanding of complex threads of Sartre's existential philosophy, but it will also provide great insights into his response to Christian thought and his significance to contemporary theology.

GRACE WHISTLER 

University of York

e-mail: grace.whistler@york.ac.uk