

an Investigation of Jean-Paul Sartre's Posthumously Published Notebooks for an Ethics



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It is frustrating that Sartre, a highly systematic philosopher whose enormous concern for ethical matters is evident throughout his many writings, never published a book on ethics. Though he had promised at the conclusion of *Being and Nothingness* to write such a work, and worked tirelessly on the project in the late 1940s, he was unable to complete it to his satisfaction, and eventually abandoned it, unfinished. Some of the fruits of his labors were eventually published posthumously, however, in 1983 as *Cahiers pour une morale* (and in 1992 as *Notebooks for an Ethics* in David Pellauer's English translation). These Notebooks are thus immensely significant, since they represent Sartre's single most extensive discussion of ethics. But their scattered, fragmentary, and unorganized character presents many challenges to the reader. Gail Linsenbard's clear discussion and analysis (the only book length study of the Notebooks, to my knowledge) is therefore most welcome.

The Notebooks are also noteworthy because they complement and clarify Sartre's published writings of the period, especially *Being and Nothingness*. For example,

Linsenbard reads the Notebooks, correctly in my view, as offering answers to the series of questions that Sartre had posed at the conclusion of Being and Nothingness:

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