

Editorial

This issue of *Sartre Studies International* underscores Sartre's extraordinary versatility, as it contains groundbreaking research and informative writing on his activities in politics, literature, and philosophy.

By focusing on two pivotal events—Sartre's participation in the 1952 World Congress of People for Peace in Vienna, and his canceling the premiere of his play *Les Mains sales* in that city—Juliane Werner sheds new light on Sartre's political evolution, the reception of his ideas in Austria, and his role in the fierce Cold War politics—marked by propaganda and censorship—besetting that country. She suggests in particular that this Viennese episode and Sartre's wider connection to Austria before and after the war can help us better understand the increasing radicalism of Sartre's later political stances worldwide.

Dennis Gilbert offers an account of the origins of Sartre's career as a dramatist, in which we see how his early childhood enthusiasm for the theater can persuasively be linked to the composition of *Bari-ona*, his first important play. Gilbert makes the case that the work of Simone de Beauvoir, especially her autobiographical writings, her letters to Sartre, and her published conversations with him, are indispensable to understanding this aspect of Sartre's career.

Little notice has been taken by Sartre scholars of the many, if often discreet, references in his works to the Trojan princess and ill-fated prophet Cassandra. Hiroaki Seki, in rectifying this omission, uncovers a multiplicity of references in the early “juvenilia” of the 1920s, the phenomenological writings of the 1930s and 1940s, and the later theater and essays preceding Sartre's abandonment of literature. Seki uses the figure of Cassandra to shed new light on both the nature of Sartre's early philosophical ambition and a constant if muted pessimism underlying the much more prevalent optimism associated with most of his ventures. For Seki, Sartre's pessimism fully surfaces in his adaptation of Euripides's *Trojan Women*, whose Cassandra can also be seen as an extreme avatar of Sartre's dashed hopes for committed literature.

The next three articles focus on Sartre's philosophy. Gavin Rae's topic is the relationship between Sartre's thought and that of Jacques

Derrida, the controversial and hugely influential French philosopher of the subsequent generation. Rae shows that a fruitful comparison can be achieved by juxtaposing Sartre's concept of "nothingness" with Derrida's famous *differance*.

Despite Sartre's well-known stance as a fierce critic of bad faith, Sarah Horton defends the surprising, and perhaps paradoxical, conclusion that, even from a Sartrean perspective, bad faith is both unavoidable in practice and, if properly limited, necessary for authenticity.

Finally, Maiya Jordan's closely reasoned article offers an interpretation of the meaning of, and the arguments supporting, Sartre's notoriously challenging claim that consciousness "is what it is not, and is not what it is." She attempts to show that Sartre's reasoning entails an implicit commitment to a distinctive theory of pre-reflective self-consciousness, which she calls "the non-iterative theory."

Four reviews of important recent books round out the issue. Happy reading!

David Detmer
John Ireland