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Nausea (New Directions Paperbook)



Synopsis

Winner of the 1964 Nobel Prize in Literature. Jean-Paul Sartre, philosopher, critic, novelist and dramatist, hold a position of singular eminence in the world of French letters. Among readers and critics familiar with the whole of Sartre's work, it is generally recognized that his earliest novel, *Le Nausée* (first published in 1938), is his finest and most significant. It is unquestionably a key novel of the Twentieth Century and a landmark in Existentialist fiction. *Nausea* is the story of Antoine Roquentin, a French writer who is horrified at his own existence. In impressionistic, diary form he ruthlessly catalogues his every feeling and sensation about the world and people around him. His thoughts culminate in a pervasive, overpowering feeling of nausea which "spread at the bottom of the viscous puddle, at the bottom of our time; the time of purple suspenders and broken chair seats; it is made of wide, soft instants, spreading at the edge, like an oil stain." Roquentin's efforts to come to terms with his life, his philosophical and psychological struggles, give Sartre the opportunity to dramatize the tenets of his Existentialist creed. The introduction for this edition of *Nausea* by Hayden Carruth gives background on Sartre's life and major works, a summary of the principal themes of Existentialist philosophy, and a critical analysis of the novel itself.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It is the most enjoyable book Sartre has ever written. -- A.J. Liebling, *The New Yorker*

The best-written and most interesting of Sartre's novels. -- *Atlantic Monthly*

With *Nausea* Sartre has

succeeded magnificently—and horribly—in extending the realm of the novel to the outermost reaches of naked self-examination. --Harvey Swados, New York Post

Text: English, French (translation) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Excellent, simply excellent read. Written in Journal/Diary entry form, it draws you in. I definitely recommend this book.

That being said, I think a lot of people have a tendency to either overthink or not get this novel at all. My opinion is that it serves as a critique of the Cartesian cogito to prove existence. Like Sartre later concludes in Being and Nothingness, things do not exist against themselves in noumenal realities, and continually doubting the existence of a thing does not leave one with a genuine conclusion that they exist (because you inherently doubt your own conclusion). I think this is pretty well illustrated in the climax (which is to me, anyway), the scene at the park. The book is of course multifaceted, but I always felt like that was the major thing the book was trying to accomplish.

Much of the writing is just one long, unending meditation (or should I say self-absorbed) interpretation of existence. However, the ending chapter involving the jazz song is beautiful. If you're interested in existentialism, check out Camus or Kierkegaard, and if you're curious about Sartre, check out No Exit (great play).

Really astounding. I understand that not everyone will be able to enjoy this book to its full capacity, but everyone should give it a chance. I happened to think it was absolutely brilliant.

A great piece of work and writing I would call it a good foot in the door to Sartre's philosophy...

I am not going to give a philosophical review or summarize the plot line, or Sartre's viewpoints. Others have done that quite well. You just have to get the book- because you haven't read Sartre if you haven't. His first book, and I am a sucker for 'first books,' is difficult to get through because it takes place in the relentless mundane, and inside the mundane lies a lot of thoughts, anger, moments, depression, false elation and fear. It's a beautiful book. You just have to have the stomach to get something out of it.

I dunno, I mean if we're being honest here, it's kind of boring. What's the point, you know? Like, what's the point of anything? Why even read it?

Fantastic existential novel. Great character development. It's fun to laugh along at the "self taught man."

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