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*The Last Chance: Roads of Freedom IV* is a publication whose usefulness within Sartre Studies is probably comparable to that of *Les Chemins de la liberté* within Sartre’s own corpus. That is to say that the selection of texts that Craig Vasey brings together in this translated volume are designed to situate the beginnings of a final part of Sartre’s major novelistic project within the framework of the whole, both the series of novels and the larger corpus. And this is what, if anything, *Les Chemins de la liberté* offer Sartre’s readers: the novels trace the development of Sartrean thought as it plays out over time and within its specific historical setting. As Vasey’s edition displays, these novels mark a movement to a point in time and in Sartre’s thinking when the novel can no longer articulate the increasingly politically committed philosophy that Existentialism was becoming. For this, both the angle of attack and the astute choice of essays by Michel Contat that he compiles and translates, Vasey is to be congratulated: this is a solid scholarly achievement.

As the beginnings of a novel, *The Last Chance* remains reasonably true to the esprit of *Les Chemins de la liberté*, which are rather a turgid read (certainly, when compared to his seminal work *La Nausée [Nausea]*) whose own novelistic qualities are rather overlooked in this volume—it is considered to be just a philosophical treatise whereas, we should argue, it is far less bounded by philosophy, and certainly politics, than are *Les Chemins*). In that regard, there is little that the translator can do. Nonetheless, as a translator, Vasey sets out to right some wrongs. As such, his aim is to address the ‘misreadings’ of which his predecessors—the translators of the previously translated earlier volumes of *Les Chemins de la liberté*—are guilty. The problem, for Vasey, hinges around the translation of the troublesome French *de* as either ‘to’ or ‘of’. The problem is that to translate this title as The Roads to Freedom focuses on the aspiration towards freedom, whereas Vasey’s preference, for The Roads of Freedom, grounds the text in a situated, always-already present freedom. The choice, he argues, is simpler than this, however, inasmuch as he considers the choice of ‘of’ to be the correct translation linguistically. This mistaken belief (*de* is both ‘of’ and ‘to’ here) has the unfortunate consequence of tipping the balance away from contingent (absence-of-God-Style) ‘Freedom’ towards that Sartrean value of the freedom that is always to be won by actions carried out in good faith. These two aspects of existential freedom are—like the cogito and visceral perimeters of the human being for-itself—inextricably and paradoxically locked together even as they elude, and contradict, each other. The ambiguities of ‘of versus to’ are, therefore, a reflection of the way in which *Les Chemins ‘de’ la liberté* embody a profoundly existentialist texticity (the text as it reveals itself to the reader, its Other) and textuality (the intentionality of a text that continuously tends beyond its own parameters).

As a translator, Vasey has to put himself between the text and the reader as non-invasively as possible, and his aim to be true to the author is clearly not at odds with the freedom that must be offered to the reader when it comes to reading, or mis-reading, the meanings of the works. (A translation is, after all, a snapshot of an actualizing process begun by one reader and to be completed by another.1) There are suggestions, however, that he is at times trying a bit too hard. For example, we should consider that, in an attempt (quite justifiably) to put right what he considers to be timid previous translations of such important

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existentialist terms as salaud (‘bastard’), Vasey’s choice to put the ‘fuck’ back into the French foutre, does less to restore the verb’s ‘true sense’ than to distort it (it can have this force but does not always, as French operates very differently to English in this regard). Whether or not Vasey ultimately overcompensates in his task, it is clear that his mission is internally consistent. His reading is a bold one, one that asks questions and stirs debate. In this respect, be they roads to or of freedom, this volume allows contemporary Anglophone readers to continue to engage with Sartre’s writing critically and, as far as possible, freely.