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AN AESTHETIC THEORY
BASED ON THE WORK OF
JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

John L. Young

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Contents

Introduction

Part I Sartre

- A. Being-in-the-world
- B. Sartre's ontology
- C. Consciousness
- D. Imagination

Part II An Aesthetic Theory

- A. The Work of Art
- B. Art and Freedom
- C. Conclusions

Notes

Bibliography

Introduction

There is in the pre-Thales mythological tradition an interest in explanation. In the case of Hesiod there is an attempt to systematize various stories and myths. His aim was to organize these myths into a family of gods and a system of mythology. This development of an orderly presentation seems to have been a primitive form of rationalism. For instance, Chaos, the origin of things, was said to have a boundary. Such a belief is rational for it places a limit on Chaos and provides a logical beginning for a rationalistic construction. Hesiod proceeded upon such a belief as he formulated a systematic theogony which dealt with a world of gods. These gods were the very substance of ancient thought for they represented all that was enduring and vital. The fact that a reservoir of myths were available was sufficient to give them an appearance of credibility; their use and formulation rather than their origin or substantiation concerned the early thinkers.

Thales, however, dropped theogony and developed cosmogony. For him the essential problem was the formulation of a systematic world-view. The emphasis for him was on a rationalistic construction which would account for the phenomena he could observe. His contribution was to select from the available stories and myths those which could provide him with the substantiation for his own original framework. This original framework was nothing else than an ordering principle.

But Thales was not entirely severed from the mythological tradition.

The generation of the world, mythologically speaking, is a biological production. This biological account is not found in Thales but he does call his first principle Life. The fundamental idea here is that the earth is something living; it grows in a biological fashion. Life is given being by water and the universe is a living thing; this living thing is the cosmos.¹

A cosmological account of the world is distinctly different from a theogonical one in that a cosmos represents the world as having a nature of its own while the world of gods remains a world for the gods. The former takes the world to be a thing in itself while the latter considers the world to be a derivation from a more superior world. The significance of the distinction is that a cosmology reflects an apprehension of the world in completely different terms than those of a theology. Thales' principle demonstrates the distinctive mode of apprehension which characterizes a rational construction of the world.

The nature of this principle needs to be understood. It was supposed to effectively order selected elements of mythology; indeed, these selected elements and the principle were correlative. The principle determined the type of myth selected and the type of myth selected evidenced the propriety of the principle. It is possible to conjecture that the principle and the selection of certain myths coincided. If such was the case, then Thales' principle can be found in no place other than his cosmology. That is, the principle which structured his world-view, at the same time constituted such a view. The principle qua principle

can be found only through analysis. The point to be made here is that the principle must not have had a distinct formulation, even for Thales, until he had manifested it in some kind of explanation of the world.

Moreover, it is said that Thales called his first principle the Life which was given being in water. Life, then appears through water. This initial correlation between the principle and its appearance provides at the same time a distinction between the two; that is, the distinction is given immediately. For Thales the world appeared as Life, and he so apprehended the world. The world he perceived was a Living world. While the world for Hesiod was represented in mythology and he perceived the world in terms of his mythological beliefs, Thales perceived the world through a framework which was taken to be in the world itself. Hesiod employed a given framework to structure his world while Thales' world appeared as its own framework.

This difference may be traced to a feeling of wonder which became prominent in the thought of Thales' time. Wonder is not just idle curiosity here; it arises from some compelling question. It is wonder which signifies an awareness of a problem which exceeds available answers. It is wonder which provokes the question Why? when confronting an alien What. And, to question Why? is to possess a distinct awareness of the thing questioned. That is to say, the occurrence of a Why? attitude follows a confrontation with a thing which is here and now but incomprehensible. The Why? is produced only when the thing is not over against the questioner as overwhelming. The function of myths seems to have been

that of dealing with overwhelming events. But to question: Why this event? is to have accepted the event as being definite but unexplained. And, it is this primary acceptance of the event as definite which provides for rational thought. When Thales could look at a phenomenon and call it Life he had progressed beyond Hesiod's theogony. This ability for rational thought follows upon the apprehension of the world as rational. This apprehension can be attributed to wonder, a distinct mental attitude.

The wonder or amazement which produced the ordering principles of early philosophy must surely have been aroused by a confrontation of the world peculiar to the occasion. That is, the wonder must have followed or coincided with a wonder-full view of the world. How did this view come about? A reservoir of myths was available but somehow this reservoir was insufficient. The experience of the world as wonder-full seems to have occurred as a result of the oversupply of myths and not as a result of their effectiveness. Myths became inadequate when they became over-complex and contradictory. They were inadequate because they could be comprehended only by a disavowal of experience. A wonder-full view of the world appeared as the ordering notion which could subsume all the myths by relegating them to another order, the order of fabrication rather than discovery.

So it may be conjectured that the wonder which the early Greeks felt must surely have preceded their asking Why? Indeed, their wonder presented the world to them as wonder-full; that is, the world appeared as this wonder. Such being the case, they were given an immediate apprehension

of the world which confronted them. Wonder differed from the previous fear or awe in that it surrounded the world with a quality rather than a "being". This qualification of the world is the first step of rational apprehension of the world. Only when the world was confronted as a world could it be questioned. The flux of random experiences became located in a world through a definite relationship to the world. Henceforth the world is given as a world and the problem comes to be that of determining the nature of this world, and, later on, the nature of the knowledge of the world.

From this beginning of rational thought philosophy has progressed through various stages to the present time. Along the way certain "branches" of philosophy have been formed to deal with their own particular problems: Metaphysics to seek the origin and reasons for this world; Epistemology to ascertain the way such a world is known; Logic to determine the forms of knowledge; Religion to maintain and develop a spiritual depth and relationship to the world; and, Aesthetics to search out and establish the techniques and values which are employed to create things for the world. These branches remain separate only for the sake of study and unite as occasions arise wherein one finds itself stumped or stagnant. Thus, an aesthetic theory will thrive only in so far as it is engaged in solving problems which are here and now. When it becomes too concerned with its own workings it falls into dogmatism and display. It is often rescued by investigations or data from other branches of philosophy. The particular concern of this paper is to examine the possibilities of invigorating aesthetics with the insights offered by a

modern philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre.

To do this it will be necessary to maintain a strict respect for the other aspects of his philosophy while at the same time building a position of eminence for aesthetics. An aesthetic theory cannot hope to be successful if it disregards the philosophical data available to it; however, there is no reason to think that an aesthetic theory must be dependent on such data. In fact, a theory may incorporate the data from start to finish but may not have arisen from that data. Indeed, this paper hopes to show that such an aesthetic theory can be found in the work of Sartre.

The work of Sartre covers a wide field. He has dealt with a multitude of problems that have been prominent in modern philosophy. His technical works on the emotions and the imagination, his ontological essay, his novels and plays, and his critical writings present an impressive range of ideas. Yet there appears to be no over-arching notion which gives these works a cohesion unless it is: that man is free. However, this old notion is given a new dressing in Sartre's work which makes it seem enigmatic.

The enigma of man's freedom, as Sartre sees it, can be traced to his belief that man does not have freedom, that is, like a character, nor is man given his freedom, say, as an essence. Rather man exists as his freedom. This is to say that man is free to the extent that he lives by his own values and constructions in the world. For Sartre there is no guarantee

for man's freedom, instead man makes his freedom by his acts. But even though man has no guarantee for his freedom he has the responsibility to establish his freedom. In this sense Sartre claims that man is condemned to his freedom; by the fact that man has no grounds for his freedom he is at once burdened with the task of maintaining his freedom, for without such freedom he has no reality. For this reason Sartre holds that man must choose to be free; that is, he must choose to accept his human reality as a free being. By making such a choice man elects himself to a position of eminence in the world; by making such a choice man puts the world at his disposal. Otherwise, man is submerged into the world as a thing, an opaque, unconscious being without distinction.

Hence, Sartre argues that to-be-free means to be-in-the-world in a distinctive manner, a manner unlike the way things are in the world. Man's being-in-the-world is somehow related to the appearance of the world to man. The world which appears to man does so because man is a being to whom a world can appear. That is, man is a being such that in his being he makes there to be a world. As such the world which appears is his world; such a world is shot through with man's being. The world which Thales apprehended was infused with Life, the Life which Thales somehow injected into the world. Thales' freedom as a man was to apprehend the world as Life, as a world which was meaningful, as his world.

But how is an aesthetic theory to be found in such a view? It should be pointed out that Sartre has no formal aesthetic theory even though he has been actively engaged in producing works of art. The nearest thing to an expression of his view on art can be found in his What Is Literature? In this work

thing to a systematic expression of his views on art can be found in his What Is Literature? But this work does not maintain the technical proficiency of his other works in philosophy, nor does it contain a general theory about all art works but concerns itself primarily with literature. Hence, if there is a comprehensive aesthetic viewpoint for Sartre it must lie in the totality of his work. An aesthetic theory, under these conditions, must be constructed upon Sartre's main ideas. This paper hopes to make such a construction by examining Sartre's work and selecting certain of his ideas which may contribute to an aesthetic theory.

This aesthetic theory will attempt to employ the insights which Sartre has provided concerning man's present problems. In doing this it will be argued that the feeling of wonder which characterized Thales' thought is present today and receives one of its finest expressions in the realm of art. This feeling of wonder will be taken as the origin of art since this origin is nothing else than a question, the question, Why art?

To answer this question, if it can be answered, it will be necessary to elucidate Sartre's notion of man's being-in-the-world and how this being is affected by man's making himself into what he is. Therefore, the procedure of this paper will be to present a close examination of Sartre's notion of being-in-the-world, his ontology, his notion of man's consciousness, and how this consciousness acts in the world. After this examination and upon such an examination an aesthetic theory will be offered.

PART I

Sartre

A. Being-in-the-world

Sartre maintains that there are two ways for man to be-in-the-world. The world can appear as the complex of instruments available for use, and the world can appear as a non-instrumental totality.² In the first case, the use of available instruments involves man in an organized complex which is composed of parts having a determinate relationship to each other. This determinate relationship constitutes an instrumental world: every instrument contains within its own purpose the purpose of the complex. The tools and devices on hand for use make up the world for man as situated in a given context. On the other hand, the world which appears as a non-instrumental totality is that world which man can immediately apprehend. This world appears without man reflecting upon a particular appearance. While the instrumental world appears through the reflective apprehension of the situation in which man finds himself, the non-instrumental world appears as the non-reflective apprehension of the situation through the emotions.

The instrumental world is as comprehensive as the reflective awareness of it. The rattle of an infant, when used for attracting attention or amusing himself, designates a certain realm of existence. Likewise, the use of toys, games, sports, machines, social conventions, current concepts, etc., determine the respective worlds of their users. For instance, the use of a concept takes place in a situation in which it is effective. This situation is both presented and constituted in the use of the concept. Moreover, the concept is useful because it occurs in a

world of which it is a determinate part. This is the kind of world in which man "grows up". His horizon expands through play, ritual, education, and work. His understanding of the use of the instruments he encounters constitutes his knowledge of the world. The more he understands the interdependence and inter-relationships of the various instruments the more comprehensive will be his knowledge.

However, this instrumental world is never quite complete; each succeeding experience adds to the available knowledge and changes the preceding order. In fact, to be able to successfully incorporate these succeeding experiences into previous knowledge is the mark of the "rational" man. This ability to "reason" does not seem to be attributable to merely existing in an instrumental world, rather it follows upon an apprehension of the world as instrumental. That is, the successive experiences with various instruments are correlated according to some prior awareness of the world. This prior awareness must be traced to the user himself who seems to apprehend the world as some kind of unity in which parts can be distinguished through reflection. This non-reflective apprehension, it may be argued, occurs in an emotional confrontation of the world. The sudden noise which frightens an infant makes there to be a world for him; it is his fear which is immediately present to him, and this fear presents the world to him. Likewise, a situation in which a concept fails for its user appears to that person as a despairing situation. Any new direction or action he takes to deal with the situation will follow upon his emotional apprehension of it as despair. For him the world appears immediately as his non-reflective awareness of his failure.

Sartre describes the emotional awareness of the world as "magical". It is magical because the person involved attempts to re-create the world with his emotion. The world which suddenly appears as despair does so at the direction of the person. He finds himself in a situation which is alien to his existence, say, because his conceptualization faltered; this alienation of the world coincides with his despair. The failure of his conceptual framework, which normally proceeds upon a course which "handles" the world at a distance through mediation, presents a situation as immediate. This immediate participation in his situation stimulates the person to despair. This despair is the way in which the person handles the situation as immediately given.³ In another case it might have been a great joy which occurred, or fear, or anguish. That despair was the emotion effected may be attributed to the relationship the person had to his situation; i. e., knowledge, experience, capacity to imagine the consequences. Thus, emotion is the magical consciousness of the world; a magical presentation of the world is effected by consciousness due to an immediate participation in the world.

Yet it must be pointed out that emotion is not a position taken by consciousness; emotion is not a state of consciousness, it is consciousness. Sartre's notion of emotion differs from the view that makes emotion out to be an effect of consciousness; rather for him emotion is a way for consciousness to exist. In emotion consciousness appears in one of its characteristic modes. For this reason Sartre maintains that man is responsible for his emotion and is never "overcome" by it. Through emotion man participates in a unique manner in his situation; but man is

never submerged by a situation. A situation exists to the extent that it is organized about a consciousness; the emotional consciousness is just one way a situation exists.

Furthermore, the instrumental world which provides a background for a situation is ^atransformed by an emotion. Consciousness constitutes a situation by giving it a certain meaning; this meaning may be one "borrowed" from given meanings by way of a concept, or meaning may be created by transforming the situation. In every case the meaning is the meaning of the situation and always refers to that situation. However, the intention which directs meaning toward a situation at the same constitutes the situation. This means that a consciousness which organizes a situation is at once the source of the meaning of the situation. The elements of the situation which are "on hand" and "at hand", that is, those things for use and those utensils for use, are given meaning by an intentional consciousness which apprehends on them a value. Thus, it is the particular consciousness of a situation which gives its cohesion and order to it. The emotional consciousness is precisely that consciousness which results when a group of elements are inadequate. Emotion is the way man deals with a situation which is too difficult for "given" means for dealing with it. In emotion man finds a grounds for creation; creation because something must be offered to overcome the inadequacy of the situation, and this something cannot be gotten from the situation itself.

"At present, we can conceive of what emotion is. It is a transformation of the world. When the paths traced out become too difficult, or when we see no path, we can no longer live in so urgent and difficult world. All the ways are barred. However, we must act. So we try to change the world, that is, to live as if the connection

between things and their potentialities were not ruled by deterministic processes, but by magic. Let it be clearly understood that this is not a game; we are driven against a wall, and we throw ourselves into this new attitude with all the strength we can muster. Let it also be understood that this attempt is not conscious of being such, for it would then be the object of a reflection. Before anything else, it is the seizure of new connections and new exigences."⁴

Thus, through emotion a need to create is effected; at once is given the situation which can receive this creation and at the same time consciousness is "prepared" for the creative act.

Sartre recognizes that the situation of man is almost always "given". Moreover, man can usually find standards and criteria which satisfy his wishes. The situation of man effectively determines his projects and his successes. However, an instrumental world is adequate only for production and not for creation. The difference between the two is that the former deals with ends through means, the latter deals with ends alone. Production is a process of fulfilling goals, meeting standards, and performing duties. Creation brings into being these goals, standards, and duties. Indeed, creation occurs precisely where production fails; the very failure of production stimulates creativity. Hence, the instrumental world and the emotional world are complementary. The instrumental world represents the products of creativity while the emotional world stimulates creation itself.

Still, there are several problems to be solved. In what way does the emotional world "stimulate" creativity? In what way does creation come about? In what way does creation affect the instrumental world?

And most important of all, why is the instrumental world ever inadequate?
This last question can be answered only by examining Sartre's notion of man's being. He believes that there is something fundamentally lacking in man which makes him forever dissatisfied with his world. For this reason any given world will be inadequate because it will always point out the basis for the inadequacy of man himself.

B. Sartre's Ontology

Sartre claims that to be-in-the-world is to be conscious of the world. Man is the peculiar being who is both in the world and is conscious of being in the world. But, man is not in the world in the same way things are in the world; the difference between their being in the world is that things are in the world necessarily, while man is in the world contingently. The necessary being-in-the-world of things can be traced to their being the things of the world; that is, they are the world. Man, on the other hand, is in the world contingently because his consciousness of the world, which characterizes his being-in-the-world, is contingent on there being a world for consciousness. Man's consciousness of the world in no way constitutes the world in its being, man does not create the world; the world is.

The primary problem of Sartre's ontology is how consciousness can be conscious of a world that in no way depends on consciousness. He takes it as obvious that consciousness of the world and the world itself are different; however, this "obvious" difference is not an absolute, rather a fundamental mode of being underlies each which relates them in a unique manner. Sartre sets up these two modes of being as: being-for-itself, which is consciousness, and being-in-itself, which is all that is not consciousness. By making this division of being Sartre is not giving a being to consciousness and the world, rather he believes that such a division is indicated in every concrete phenomenon. Can this be the case?

The appearance of a phenomenon is taken as the origin of experience; it offers a "bit of what is" and acts as the fundamental unit of existence. But what is offered in the phenomenon? The phenomenon must offer a view of being. Why is this so? A view of being is offered because the phenomenon is supported neither by itself nor by consciousness. This can be seen by reflection on what the phenomenon presents and how it is presented. First of all, "something" is presented or the phenomenon would be empty and could not appear; hence, it has content. But this content cannot be the mere appearance of the phenomenon, that is, the phenomenon is not spontaneous; instead, "something" appears as a phenomenon. This something is a thing, an object with definite characteristics, a thing in itself. This thing appears as the phenomenon and it is its particular appearance which identifies the phenomenon; the thing is presented, that is, located spatially and temporally, as a phenomenon. Thus, a phenomenon may be described as the way a thing exists as here and now.

But to exist as here and now means that the thing is presented to something which provides time and space since a thing, in itself, is self-sufficient and un-needful of these limitations. Here and now are specifications of something which characterizes existence because existence is defined as the "being-there-ness" of things. Hence, this something provides existence for the thing; in fact, the thing appears as its existence. What sort of being can provide existence for a thing which is self-sufficient already? What can a self-sufficient thing lack? Sartre says that things lack consciousness. Yet things are whether consciousness is in them or not. What then is consciousness?

First and foremost, consciousness is not a thing, it is not an entity; consciousness is act. Consciousness is act because it is always consciousness of an object; consciousness exists to the extent that it always has an object; in fact, the object of consciousness is identified with the consciousness of that object. As such consciousness is intentional: it always intends its object by existing solely for the sake of that object. Consciousness is consciousness through and through; it has no substratum nor content of its own. Since it has no substantiality, consciousness must be pure spontaneity; at every moment it must create itself. But how can such a being relate to a thing which is wholly in itself? Consciousness can relate to a thing in itself only by somehow assuming the being of that thing. How so?

A thing, which Sartre terms a being-in-itself, is wholly inert and massive; such a thing cannot act on consciousness for it cannot be stimulated nor motivated. But consciousness has no content of its own with which to act on the thing so how is a relation established? Sartre avoids the problem of establishing a relationship between a thing and consciousness by declaring that they always appear in a unique relationship. The appearance of the thing coincides with the appearance of consciousness; to discuss them as separate is to have already acknowledged their original relationship. A thing exists in the world to the extent that there is a consciousness of its existence in the world. Therefore, the phenomenon turns out to be nothing else than a concrete occurrence of a thing in and by consciousness. Every phenomenon presents the world in terms of the thing which appears. For this reason, any affect, disturbance, or meaning of the thing must result in the phenomenon.

Thereby, the phenomenon presents the thing in terms of its aspects; the phenomenon is the concrete existence of the thing; the thing as laid out for inspection. It is the thing in itself as "such-and-such", as seen from a certain viewpoint. Yet this presentation in no way changes the thing in itself; nor does the thing cause the phenomenon.

But if the phenomenon does not result from the efforts of being-in-itself how does the phenomenon receive its being as a particular viewpoint of the thing? While it is true that the thing which appears as the phenomenon is nothing but the in-itself, what may be said of the being of the phenomenon? It was said earlier that the phenomenon was the object of the consciousness which intended it, and that the object of consciousness coincided with that consciousness. Such being the case, the phenomenon which appears must be nothing else than the consciousness of that appearance. From this it follows that the being of the phenomenon must be intimately related with that of consciousness. What is this relationship?

Since consciousness is always intentional it must project onto its object something which it lacks; that is, consciousness apprehends on the object some kind of meaning. And yet consciousness has no content upon which to ground any meaning. Meaning for consciousness must be based on its being pure spontaneity; thus, meaning will be continually created by consciousness with respect to its object. This means that the meaning which consciousness projects onto its object will be the meaning of the object itself. Furthermore, consciousness can project

the meaning of the object onto the object only because it can present the object to itself without coloring it with its own being. For an object to be revealed as it is in itself it must be revealed as the source of its own being; that is, it must be presented as what is without transformation. In order that consciousness effect such a revelation it must not render the object in its own terms, that is, make it conscious, rather consciousness must adapt itself to the object. The significance of this is that consciousness receives its being from the object that it presents. Hence, the phenomenon which is the object of consciousness brings with it the being of consciousness. But, it was said earlier that consciousness provides existence for a thing. How can consciousness provide anything for that which gives consciousness its being?

What kind of being must consciousness have in order that it can provide something for a thing which is already full of itself? A thing in itself needs nothing. In fact, this nothing is what consciousness provides. It is precisely nothing which separates one thing from another; it is nothing which makes there to be things rather than a plenum of being. Consciousness distinguishes this thing from that thing by separating them with nothing; the nothingness which consciousness brings to the in-itself makes there to be a world. Consciousness brings non-being into the world of being-in-itself; as such consciousness does not change the in-itself, rather the in-itself is revealed as being that-which-it-is by consciousness' provision of a background of nothingness.

Thus, consciousness, being-for-itself, is a being, which by its being

that which it is, brings non-being to what is; the for-itself is the non-being of the in-itself. As such the for-itself is grounded on the in-itself because non-being is precisely the non-being of being; non-being of nothing is impossible. The for-itself, then, rests on the in-itself but only by not being the in-itself. In this way a unique bond is effected between the two which can be attributed only to the for-itself, since the in-itself does not need non-being.

In terms of the phenomenon, the for-itself arises as the phenomenon of being; this phenomenon is nothing but the in-itself as it is not. The in-itself is not to the extent that it appears in a perspective, that is, as being seen from a particular vantage point which fails to show the in-itself in its characteristic fullness. This appearance of the in-itself in no way changes or damages the in-itself, rather it is merely presented; it is offered for inspection as a thing with certain qualities. This presentation is a mode of being which is not in the in-itself because in itself being has no privileged parts; it is fullness. Rather this presentation is a surface covering which surrounds the in-itself with qualities which are emphasized from a particular point. As such the in-itself appears in view of a certain intention; this intention occasions a phenomenon of being.

Therefore, the being of the phenomenon is supported by being-in-itself yet this being is exactly not the being of the particular thing presented. The being of the phenomenon Sartre calls the transphenomenality of being; by this he means that every phenomenon refers to being which supports it: being-in-itself. But how can a particular phenomenon refer to a being which in no way causes that phenomenon? Sartre answers this

question by stating that for the phenomenon to rest on anything that anything must be indicated by the way the phenomenon rests on it; that is, the way the phenomenon appears indicates the totality of being which underlies it. Each particular phenomenon appears to the extent that it has a background upon which to reveal itself. No phenomenon would be meaningful if it did not point beyond itself to the totality from which it came. Yet this totality does not appear; how is this totality indicated? The totality of being which does not appear is indicated by a non-reflective apprehension of being which underlies the reflective apprehension of a particular phenomenon. Thus, emotional consciousness, which was discussed in the first section, can provide a background upon which a particular phenomenon can appear; a consciousness, such as emotion, immediately apprehends being as a totality. It is only upon an apprehension of this kind that phenomenon can be effected. Hence, the appearance of a phenomenon is not the presentation of a single thing in isolation, rather a thing appears in its relation to the world. The transphenomenality of the phenomenon is its being the non-being of what it is not.

What can be said of the non-being of the phenomenon? Non-being must rest on what is but it can not be what is because to be what is is to have the being of what is. Non-being then must be not what is while at the same time it must depend on what is for its being. Moreover, non-being cannot be derived from what is because being in itself is pure positivity and contains no negation; it absolutely excludes non-being. This exclusion from being, however, is no act of the in-itself,

the in-itself is inert; therefore, exclusion is on the side of non-being and, in fact, constitutes it very life. Non-being is the constant exclusion from what is; non-being makes itself as this exclusion. Hence, non-being is not given, it is made; non-being is nothing but creation out of nothing. But since something can never be made from nothing, non-being is pure act, the pure spontaneity of consciousness which creates itself at every moment. Non-being, then, is born in the upsurge of its contingency with respect to being and in the upsurge of its self-creation.

Being appears as that-which-appears in and through non-being. In this way the appearance of being, the phenomenon, makes there to be that which is; being appears as here and now as the phenomenon of being; the phenomenon is the existence of what is. Thus, each concrete existent is a phenomenon of being; and, each concrete existent appears by way of non-being: being-for-itself. Thus, the division Sartre makes concerning consciousness and the world does not mean that they are separate. Rather there is a relationship between the two which brings both into existence as correlates. The being of consciousness, being-for-itself, is inseparably bound to the being of the world, being-in-itself.

The tie that binds the for-itself to the in-itself may be called lack. The for-itself is a total lack because all-that-is is on the side of the in-itself. The mode of being for the for-itself is to exist as the lack of that being which it is not: the in-itself. This lack is expressed as desire for that which is lacking; for this reason

desire can be seen as the fundamental mode of existence of the for-itself. The desire which characterizes the for-itself is the ontological desire-to-be. The desire-to-be is the desire of the for-itself to give itself the massiveness and fullness of the in-itself while yet remaining consciousness. This ideal union would be a conscious in-itself, or as Sartre calls it: the in-itself-for-itself.

"In other words the for-itself projects being as for-itself, a being which is what it is. It is as being which is what it is not, and which is not what it is, that the for-itself projects being what it is. It is as consciousness that it wishes to have the impermeability and infinite density of the in-itself. It is as the nihilation of the in-itself and a perpetual evasion of its contingency and facticity that it wishes to be its own foundation. This is why the possible is projected in general as what the for-itself lacks in order to become in-itself-for-itself. The fundamental value which presides over this project is exactly the in-itself-for-itself; that is, the ideal of a consciousness which would be the foundation of its own being-in-itself by the pure consciousness which it would have of itself. It is this ideal which can be called God. Thus, the best way to conceive of the fundamental project of human reality is to say that man is the being whose project is to be God...God, value and supreme end of transcendence, represents the permanent limit in terms of which man makes known to himself what he is. To be man means to reach toward being God. Or, if you prefer, man is fundamentally the desire to be God."⁵

This fundamental definition of man is not to be seen as a "nature" or "essence". Sartre describes this fundamental being in order to provide a meaning for man's activities; this being is not a character or substance, it is a project which is pursued in freedom. Moreover, this project is not to be seen as essential, that is, it is not demanded by man's being; instead, this is an existential project which is sustained and not "given". This fundamental project is offered as the truth behind man's particular projects in the world. Thus, the desire to be God never appears as such; particular desires are what man concerns himself with, and Sartre points out,

"...the desire of being in its abstract purity is the truth of the concrete fundamental desire, but it does not exist by virtue of reality. Thus the fundamental project, the person, the free realization of human truth is everywhere in all desires..."⁶

Hence, the occasion of a particular desire stands as the experience in which human truth is expressed. Therefore, the desire to be God is not a nature of man but the truth of his freedom; man's freedom consists in maintaining such a truth.

Sartre is opposed to any kind of "essentialism" which might be drawn from his description of man's freedom. This freedom is not given to or bestowed on man; man is that being, that human reality which exists in and for freedom; freedom can never be an obstacle to man's being. Man is free to the extent that he does not take his being as "given". To be human is to question being human;

"...the abstract, ontological 'desire to be' is unable to represent the fundamental, human structure of the individual; it cannot be an obstacle to his freedom. Freedom in fact...is strictly identified with nihilation. The only being which can be called free is the being which nihilates its being. Moreover, we know that nihilation is a lack of being and cannot be otherwise. Freedom is precisely the being which makes itself a lack of being. But since desire... is identical with lack of being, freedom can arise only as being which makes itself a desire of being; that is, as the project-for-itself of being in-itself-for-itself. Here we have arrived at an abstract structure which can by no means be considered as the nature or essence of freedom. Freedom is existence and in it existence precedes essence. The upsurge of freedom is immediate and concrete and is not to be distinguished from its choice, from the person himself. But the structure under consideration can be called the truth of freedom; that is, it is the human meaning of freedom."⁷

This inspection of Sartre's ontology reveals several things concerning man's being-in-the-world. First, man is always situated: as a for-itself he exists precisely to the extent that he makes there to be a world of

of a being whose essence implies its existence; that is, in which appearance lays claim to being... Consciousness is a being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself. We must understand that this being is no other than the transphenomenal being of the phenomena and not a noumenal being which is hidden behind them. It is...the being of the world which is implied by consciousness. It requires simply that the being of that which appears does not exist only in so far as it appears. The transphenomenal being of what exists for consciousness is itself in itself."¹⁴

Hence, consciousness is the consciousness of being-in-itself and does not ^{have} a substantiality apart from the in-itself. The being of consciousness is in question due to its relation to being-in-itself which is un-questionable. Consciousness is the being which is conscious of its lack of substantiality due to its consciousness of being-in-itself. For consciousness its being is in question in its every mode of existence; the existence which is the nihilation of that which is.

As a being whose being is in question it might be said of consciousness that it attempts to flee itself in an trying to ground its being in and for itself. This flight precipitates and coincides with the desire-to-be which characterizes the for-itself. The for-itself yearns for the massive being of the in-itself but wants this being for itself. At the same time the for-itself fears its submergence back into the in-itself, that it will become an in-itself. This metamorphosis would be the death of consciousness; it would become a thing, unconsciousness, opaque, and brute being-in-itself. As such the for-itself strives to take being-in-itself for itself so that it will be its own grounds. Nihilation is an attempt to achieve such a foundation; in nihilation the freedom of the for-itself is expressed.

Freedom is expressed in the particular nihilating acts of the

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beings-in-itself. That is, man exists as the consciousness of the world, as the world in its order, its relationships, and its determinations. Man exists as the meaning of the world; meaning comes to the world through the situations constituted by consciousness. Second, man is free to the extent that he nihilates the in-itself; this nihilation is the imaginative delineation of the world as meaning-full. To nihilate being-in-itself is to present it as here and now; to nihilate is to exist what is. Third, man's situation and his freedom are correlative; this correlation can never be reduced to one of its members: to be free is to exist in a human situation. That being is free who nihilates its being; this nihilation is brought about in the creation of situations which bring meaning into the world. Fourth, man is described as a lack; this lack is limited by the in-itself-for-itself. This is why the instrumental world discussed in the first section will always be inadequate for man. The instrumental world is a means, a device for expressing the desire-to-be; it is a world of doing which compensates for a world of being.

Here then is found Sartre's answer to the question, Why is the instrumental world inadequate? The answer: because such a world exists as here and now; it is inadequate as given for use because its value lies in it being re-created in terms of what it can be. The given world of things "on hand" and "at hand" exists in and through the nihilation of the in-itself by the for-itself. What this world can be, however, stimulates nihilation; the for-itself values the world in terms of being in-itself-for-itself and this being is the possibility of the for itself which

brings about the nihilating act:

"Ontologically speaking then it amounts to the same thing to say that value and possibility exist as the internal limits of a lack of being which can exist only as a lack of being -- or that the upsurge of freedom determines its possibility and thereby circumscribes its value."⁸

Possibility belongs to the for-itself as that which it lacks while value is the totality of being-in-itself which is lacking. The upsurge of freedom brings with it the conditions for its existence: possibility as that which is nihilated in free existence, and value as that which is outside existence and is the source of meaning. Possibility is the being of the in-itself which the for-itself desires while value is the ideal realization of this being in terms of the for-itself; as such value is the in-itself-for-itself.

Therefore, it is seen that the instrumental world, because it is merely "on hand", will contain values-of-the-world which are based on utility and efficiency; to give the world human values, these values on hand must be questioned. Human values arise in this questioning; but, they must be created for there is no Supreme Being to come to man's assistance. The values to be created will be indicated by man's failures in the world; ~~these~~ failures will be manifested in emotional consciousness, that consciousness which in no way relieves man of the responsibility of his existence, instead, it most effectively points out this responsibility. In such experiences man will see himself as a free being who must create his successes, they will not be given to him; man is just exactly what he makes himself to be.

Ontology, then, establishes the truth of man's activities by turning them back in upon themselves; each act takes on an importance which begins with the act itself. This means that every concrete human act occurs in freedom; thereby, the act carries its meaning with it for it is nothing else but meaning. Human reality provides meaning for the world through creative action; this action is the very life of man's being-in-the-world; this is the life of consciousness.

Since creation is the life of consciousness, an examination of the way consciousness acts in the world, as ^aS~~x~~tre sees it, will be offered next. By doing so it will be possible to determine what creation means for Sartre, and how this creation comes about.

C. Consciousness

Consciousness does not act on the world, but in the world. For Sartre consciousness is not a substance or human essence which acts as an agent-thing upon the things of the world. On the contrary, consciousness is correlative to the thing of which it is consciousness. As stated earlier, the object of consciousness is nothing else than the consciousness of that object. This means that the thing appears as a consciousness and not by a consciousness. A thing appears as consciousness through nihilation, that act wherein the world is posited as a totality upon which the thing rests. Hence, nihilation is a double determination of being wherein all that is is presented by way of one of its members: a thing. But, as pointed out above, nihilation is the presentation of that-which-is in terms of its non-being. What can be said about the origin of this non-being with which consciousness is wholly involved?

Since consciousness is the being by which non-being comes into the world, it must have an absolute quality as such a being. This is so because non-being cannot be traced to being-in-itself which excludes it. Consciousness must effect this non-being from the position of a certain lack of being, a nothingness. It would not be possible for consciousness to effect non-being from the substantial being of the in-itself; hence, consciousness must have its own mode of being which is defined by its role of introducing non-being into the world. To define consciousness as that which produces nothingness is to make consciousness out to be that which has no being, for being is not non-being. For this reason

consciousness does not begin with being, rather it makes its being; as such consciousness is pure spontaneity. At every moment consciousness creates itself out of nothing, the nothingness which is its being. But,

"...this self-determination of consciousness must not be conceived as a genesis, as a becoming, for that would force us to suppose that consciousness is prior to its own existence. Neither is it necessary to conceive of this self-creation as an act, for in that case consciousness would be conscious (of) itself as an act, which it is not. Consciousness is a plenum of existence, and this determination of itself by itself is an essential characteristic."⁹

Furthermore,

"consciousness has nothing substantial, it is pure 'appearance' in the sense that it exists only to the degree to which it appears. But it is precisely because consciousness is pure appearance, because it is total emptiness (since the entire world is outside it) -- it is because of this identity of appearance and existence within it that it can be considered as the absolute...; there is full contingency of the being of consciousness. We wish only to show (1) That nothing is the cause of consciousness, (2) That consciousness is the cause of its own way of being."¹⁰

Hence, being-in-itself is not the cause of the nothing which causes consciousness; rather this nothing arises in the upsurge of consciousness. And, nihilation is the process by which this nothing causes consciousness.

For instance, I am conscious of this table because I am not it and it is not me. The table is here, it is a thing, because I apprehend it as here and not as somewhere else. Its being here for me is attributable only to my consciousness of it as here. I nihilate the being-in-itself of the table in order that it may be distinguished from the totality of the in-itself. But, since nihilation is only the double determination of the in-itself whereby the in-itself is "totalized" in terms of the thing which appears, this table appears on the background

of the world which it is not. The table appears to me because I have in some way surrounded the world with a cloak of nothingness, the world as non-being, and, the table indicates this nihilated world by being precisely this table before me. In this way I perceive the table on the background of a "non-perceptual" totality which is indicated by this table; this "non-perceptual" totality is created by consciousness in order that a thing can appear; without this background the thing is submerged in the undifferentiated mass of being-itself.

Nihilation is the process whereby I posit this thing as an object of consciousness: this table. The location of this thing, its character as a thing-upon-which-to-write, thirty inches high, etc., are the qualities which I designate as belonging to this table. Yet it must be pointed out that these qualities are qualities of the table and not fictions which I have drawn from my subjectivity. The thing is what provides for these qualities and my consciousness always remains intentional toward this particular thing. Qualities are merely the successive consciousnesses which I have of the thing, the way the thing appears to me. In fact, these qualities are nothing else than the existence of my consciousness; my consciousness exists the table by surrounding it with non-being: the successive profiles of the thing. The thing in itself is without parts, without succession; in itself it is fullness and inert. The object "table" is the synthetic union of the profiles of the thing. The thing has an infinite number of profiles which can never be exhausted by consciousness. My consciousness of the thing as a table is the way I nihilate this infinite number of profiles through the use of a concept "table". But this concept can be traced

only to the "totality" upon which the thing appears; that is, the concept represents the thing in relation to its position within the totality of what is. The concept is the way the thing is given a "center", a locus of qualities; the concept always gets at this center by making there to be such a being-thing. The concept is what organizes the successive profiles of the thing into those of a "table", a thing-upon-which-to-write, thirty inches high, etc.

So the object-consciousness, or appearance, of a thing is the thing as it is not: the non-being of the thing. Consciousness exists the thing by positing it as an object, by surrounding it with non-being.

"Thus the being of the object is pure non-being. It is defined as a lack. It is that which escapes, that which by definition will never be given, that which offers itself only in fleeting and successive profiles."¹¹

Consciousness, therefore, is totally involved with the appearance of things. This being the case, consciousness has no existence except in its role as the revelation of what is. Yet consciousness is, so it must have a structure which supports it as pure appearance; and, since all that is is on the side of being-in-itself, this structure must be related to that being.

"Consciousness is consciousness of something. This means that transcendence is the constitutive structure of consciousness; that is, that consciousness is born supported by a being which is not itself. This is what we call the ontological proof."¹²

Consciousness rests on the foundation of that being which it is not, being-in-itself, thereby it is ontologically grounded.

Consciousness of a thing follows the fact that a thing is; conscious-

ness does not constitute the thing, consciousness coincides with the appearance of the thing. The thing exists through consciousness because consciousness transcends the particular appearance toward the thing in itself. This is so because the appearance is an appearance; its particularity being designated by the consciousness which transcends it toward the fullness of the thing. The appearance, then, appears as a transcendent object. This can occur only because consciousness posits the infinite possible appearances of the thing which this particular appearance is not.

"It is an impossibility on principle for the terms of an infinite series to exist all at the same time before consciousness, along along with the real absence of all these terms except for the one which is the foundation of objectivity. If present these impressions -- even infinite in number -- would dissolve in the subjective; it is their absence which gives them objective being. Thus the being of the object is pure non-being... But how can non-being be the foundation of being? ... It is true that things give themselves in profile; that is, simply by appearances. And it is true that each appearance refers to other appearances. But each of them is already in itself alone a transcendent being, not a subjective material of impressions -- a plenitude of being, not a lack -- a presence, not an absence."¹³

Thus the consciousness of a thing derives its being from the thing itself. The particularity of the appearance derives its being by being a particular appearance of a thing which is ^rtranscendent of the appearance. Consciousness of the thing is consciousness as the appearance of the thing; the thing by being for consciousness is the being of consciousness. Thereby, the being of the nihilation of the thing, which is pure appearance, rests on the being of the thing.

"To say that consciousness is consciousness of something is to say that it must produce itself as a revealed-revelation of a being which it is not and which gives itself as already existing when consciousness reveals it. Thus we have left pure appearance and have arrived at full being. Consciousness is a being whose existence posits its essence, and inversely, it is consciousness

for-itself; that is, as consciousness of the thing nihilated. Every particular consciousness of a thing must pass toward the meaning of the thing and not its being. This is so because consciousness is fundamentally freedom and thereby expresses this freedom outside being-in-itself. Hence, the meaning of a thing is revealed in and by the activity of consciousness since it is already present to the thing itself. More precisely, it is the characteristic freedom of consciousness which is expressed in the revelation of the thing as meaning and not as being.

But the nihilation of the thing by consciousness is not a subjective process which brings forth meaning for the thing; rather nihilation produces the meaning of the thing. The nihilation which produces meaning is founded on being-in-itself so this meaning is the meaning of the thing and not an external attachment applied by consciousness. Consciousness is empty and cannot produce anything for being-in-itself; consciousness can only reveal what is already there. But if consciousness is empty and meaning is meaning of being-in-itself, then consciousness must exist as this meaning. Otherwise this meaning would remain in the impenetrable mass of the in-itself.

Furthermore, since meaning is realized in the totality of being, and since this totality is a construction of consciousness, and since consciousness is a nihilating function by which the non-being of what is appears, then meaning must result from the construction of a world of non-being. This world of non-being is nothing else than the world of being as meaningful; non-being is the existence of meaning. Therefore, it is quite right to equate meaning with nihilation, freedom, and

consciousness. So there is a coincidence of being-for-itself, freedom, and meaning at the basis of man's activities which grounds them on the in-itself but not as the being of the in-itself, rather as the in-itself is not. The significance of this is that the "products" of man's activities will always be those which are constituted as not being that which is. Man may live in the world but he cannot change it as it is, he can only change it as it is not. His constructions within the world will be in the order of non-being, never in the order of being-in-itself. Thus, man must "choose" his position in the world and work to effect a transformation of the meaning of his position. This can be done only by comprehending the totality of his world through the particularity of its appearance. This is possible because of the transcendental character of the particular; and, man can comprehend this transcendental character of the particular because he is transcendently free.

This transcendental freedom may be expressed in and by the imagination, Sartre claims, for it is the imagination which apprehends the transcendental nature of an object. As Sartre says,

"Indeed, what is this free consciousness whose nature is to be the consciousness of something, but which, for this very reason, constructs itself before the real and which surpasses it at each moment because it can exist only by 'being-in-the-world', that is by living its relation to the real as a situation, what is it, indeed, if not simply consciousness such as it reveals itself to itself in the cogito? Is not doubt the very primary condition of the cogito, that is, at once the constitution of the real as a world and its negation from this same point of view and does not does not reflective grasp of the doubt as doubt coincide with the apodictic intuition of freedom? We may therefore conclude that imagination is not an empirical and superadded power of consciousness, it is the whole of consciousness as it realizes its freedom; every concrete and real situation of consciousness in the world is big with imagination in as much as it always presents itself as withdrawing from the real. It does not follow that all perception

of the real must reverse itself in imagination, but as consciousness is always 'in a situation' because it is always free, it always and at each moment has the concrete possibility of producing the unreal... The unreal is produced outside of the world by a consciousness which stays in the world and it is because he is transcendently free that man can imagine. But in its turn, the imagination... is the necessary condition for the freedom of empirical man in the midst of the world. For, if the negating function belonging to consciousness... is what makes the act of imagination possible, it must be added that this function can manifest itself only in the imaginative act. The gliding of the world into the bosom of nothingness and the emergence of human reality in this very nothingness can happen only through the position of something which is nothingness in relation to the world and in relation to which the world is nothing. By this we evidently define the structure of the imagination... The imaginary is in every case the 'something' concrete toward which the existent is surpassed."¹⁵

Thus the imagination supplies the "something" which was called meaning earlier; that is, meaning is that which is surpassed beyond the existent. At the same time the imaginative consciousness is the condition for the perception of the world as meaningful. In the imagination is found the concrete nihilating act of consciousness as it expresses its fundamental freedom.

This examination of consciousness has revealed it to be that which creates meaning; consciousness exists as this meaning of the world. The creation of the meaning of the world is the world as it can be. The creation of meaning is the life of consciousness, its very freedom; yet, consciousness is free to create in the order of non-being only; being-in-itself lacks nothing, it is fullness itself. As such consciousness exists as the non-being of what is; this existence is based ^{on the} mode of consciousness which provides non-being: the imaginative consciousness. It is the imaginative consciousness which provides the "non-perceptual totality" as a background for the appearances of the world. For this reason, Sartre argues, it is the imaginative consciousness which is wholly

the condition for there being consciousness of the world.

Therefore, the next task of this paper will be to offer a view of the imagination as it is presented by Sartre in order to learn how man's freedom is concretely expressed "in situation". After this view of the imagination it will be possible to gather the preceding ideas and form a basis for an aesthetic theory; it is the imagination which offers the key to such a theory based on man's free being-in-the-world.

D. Imagination

Sartre states that a thing can exist for consciousness in two ways: it can exist in fact and it can exist as image.¹⁶ In the first case the thing appears as perception; it is perceived in a series of profiles which are not constituted by consciousness. The thing must be present for these profiles to appear, the perception of a thing designates it as a fact. On the other hand, the thing can appear in the imagination. In this case the thing is constituted within consciousness precisely as the consciousness which constitutes it. The thing as present excludes the formation of its image because consciousness is present to a thing only through perception. It may be argued, as Sartre does, that the image of a thing is the absence of the thing as being present in consciousness.

Yet a distinction must be made between the way a perception presents the thing and the way an image presents it. First, the perception presents the thing as it is at a particular instant. The perception does not abort the thing on purpose; as a perception the appearance of the thing is a profile, a certain view of the thing which is always presented as one of an infinite number of possible profiles. The image, on the other hand, may present the thing as a single isolated view without relation to other images of the thing. The image presents the thing in a definite situation; in fact, the thing appears as credible due to its situation in the image. The perception appears as being subject to an infinite series of perceptions the truth of which is given only in the total series. However, as mentioned earlier, an infinite number of appearances

cannot be present to consciousness at the same time; instead, each appearance must contain within itself its referential character -- that character which relates it to the rest of the series. The image, however, does not contain such a character. It is self-contained. Moreover, it may be argued that the image presents the thing in such a way that an imaginary background is provided upon which an effective perception can occur. That is, the image presents the infinite series of the possible perceptions as absent, and it is this absence which constitutes the particular perception as being this perception.

But there is a problem here. If a perception can occur only because an image presents the absent members of the series, does that mean that the image and the perception happen at the same time? This problem is solved by pointing out that the image functions through the perception but never at the same time. The perception of the thing is a real contact with the thing as present; the real world is made up of just such realities. But the thing, the synthetic union of the infinite series of profiles which appear as an object of consciousness, can only be effected by way of the image. The image serves as the "glue" which binds the succeeding perceptions together; it makes out of these perceptions an object of perception. How so?

Consciousness is always consciousness of something. This something is the object of consciousness. A thing can be an object of consciousness only in one of its finite modes, the rest of the series must be absent. But the thing in itself is complete; it has no parts, no profiles in itself. It is in consciousness that the thing has profiles. These profiles,

nonetheless, are profiles of the thing, but only because the thing appears as not being its successive profiles. The profiles appear to the extent that the thing is presented as being infinitely more than each of its profiles. It is the image which makes such a presentation. It does so by presenting the thing as situated; that is, the thing is located in space and time. This situation makes the thing credible, and, thereby, a source of knowledge. Therefore, the perception of the thing is the effective use of an image which underlies it as the "transcendental condition of consciousness"¹⁷. There is, then, no conflict between the image and the perception within their respective consciousnesses.

There remains, however, the difficulty in distinguishing between a perception and an image. Sartre declares that this distinction is immediately given upon the formation of one or the other.

"When I evoke the image of my friend Peter, I do not make a false judgment about a state of my body. Rather, my friend Peter appears to me; not, to be sure, as some thing, as actually present, as there. But he appears to me in image. Doubtless I must shift to reflection to formulate the judgment, 'I have an image of Peter', directing my attention not to the object of the image but to the image itself as a psychic reality. But this shift to reflection in no way alters the positional quality of the image. I do not wake up, I do not right myself, I do not suddenly discover that I formed an image...I knew all along that it was an image."¹⁸

Thus the image carries with it the consciousness that it is an image. The image, therefore, is a "psychic reality" which can be reflected on; it has certain characteristics which can be established through such reflection.

The first characteristic determined about the image is that it is a consciousness. The image is not a picture in consciousness, it is a

consciousness; that is, to have an image is to be conscious of the imagined object. The image might better be described as an imagined consciousness. The distinction between perception and imagination may be useful here:

"...whether I see or imagine that chair, the object of my perception and that of my image are identical: it is that chair of straw on which I am seated. Only consciousness is related in two different ways to the same chair."¹⁹

The object of perception is the same as the object of the image; the difference lies in their distinctly different ways of presenting the object. Perception "encounters" the object, the real object is perceived. On the other hand, imagination creates a synthetic organization which "situates" the object; the object is presented in an unreal context. This unreal situation is nothing but the imaginative consciousness of the object.

To establish the second characteristic of the image Sartre describes the way imagination differs from perception and conception in their separate apprehensions of the object. The perceptual consciousness observes objects in their concrete existence. It views them in profile: each view is representative of the object but not exhaustive of it. The conception of an object, however, grasps the object at its very center: the object is presented in its essential form, in its essential whatness. The concept is the source of that knowledge which is conscious of itself; it is immediate knowledge of the object. The image is similar to the concept in that immediate knowledge of the object is given with the formation of the image. This immediate knowledge differs from the knowledge gained from the perception of an object which must be accumulated through successive profiles. But the image differs from both the perception and the concept in that it suffers from an "essential poverty".

All the knowledge of the image is immediately given, no reflection upon the image produces further knowledge of the object. With this in mind Sartre says that the image can be "quasi-observed", that is it can be seen only by taking in everything at once which is contained in it. It cannot be turned around, nor extended through reflection; all the knowledge that it contains is presented at a glance. This is the second characteristic of the image. It is this characteristic which makes the image a source of knowledge; namely, the fact that it can be seen at a glance, there is knowledge immediately given with nothing hidden, the image can function as true knowledge; it can become data for conceptualization. This leads to the consequence that the intention of consciousness to imagine an object simultaneously produces the imaginative consciousness of that object. Within and by the intentional act to imagine, the image appears; thus, the imaginative consciousness is sui generis because

"...consciousness never precedes the object, the intention reveals itself to itself at the same time that it realizes itself, in and by realization."²⁰

In the imaginative act the object may appear in four ways: as non-existent, as absent, as existing elsewhere, or the object may be replaced with the imaginative consciousness itself in a "neutralized" form, that is, the object may be left un-posit²¹. The object in every case has a positional character which excludes real presence. This is necessarily the case since the real presence of the object is the occasion for perception. Therefore, the third characteristic of the image is that it posits its object as a non-being, a nothingness, an unreality.

Because the imaginative consciousness posits its object as a non-being

it must assume the responsibility for its existence. Non-being is excluded from the thing which is objectised, therefore the existence of the object is bound up with the consciousness which effects the object. The object as non-being makes consciousness out to be a pure spontaneity which must create itself at every moment; this is the fourth characteristic of the image. It is pure spontaneity because the existence of non-being can never be grounded in itself, it must constantly be intentional toward the being-in-itself of which it is the non-being; hence, it must be made a consciousness at every moment. This is the task of the imaginative consciousness; this is the task wherein man expresses his fundamental freedom.

For instance, my imagination apprehends this thing before^{me} as that-upon-which-I-write, here and now, with this color, shape, etc. This particular object is an image of the table: the table as it exists in the situation of my writing on it, at this time, in this world. The image is credible because it occurs as an apprehension of this thing in a certain situation. My existence as writing-on-this-table can be equated with the table-on-which-I-write because my act of writing and the table are bound together in a common situation, each element of which refers directly to every other element. It is this interrelationship of elements and their inter-dependency which determines them as in-a-situation. But this situation is nothing but the imaginative consciousness of any one of the elements, the consciousness which presents the ensemble at a glance. In such a consciousness every element has equal validity and importance because of their common participation in a situation. Thus,

I-who-write and the table-upon-which-I-write are existentially equal in the image. This equality is what gives the image its credibility and its meaning; the meaning being just the organization of the elements of the image. This meaning bestows particularity upon this table; it is this table because I write on it and is meaningful for the same reason. My image of the table presents it as the table of this meaningful situation.

The imaginative consciousness has a unique relationship to the thing: it is the thing as it is not. Imagination surrounds the thing with a cloak of nothingness which must be seen as a real quality of the thing. While the real object is a series of profiles which unfold in time, the absence of the thing, the non-existence of the thing, or the thing as existing elsewhere are real qualities of the thing which exist as consciousness. The consciousness by which these latter qualities exist is as much a real consciousness as the consciousness by which real perceptions exist. The difference between the two presentations of the thing, its reality and its non-being, lies in the way it is presented by consciousness. In the case of the image the thing is presented as existing but as existing as an unreality. Perception presents it as existing as a reality. Both consciousnesses are equally real, and both refer to the ~~same~~ thing; but their relationship to the thing differs. The thing as a being-in-itself is beyond both reality and unreality; it merely is. It is the image which "totalizes" what is in order that this thing may appear; it is upon this "totalization" that a perception occurs. Without this prior image of the situation a perception would be meaningless. This is not to deny that perception may occur without imagination, the senses may in fact continue to offer sense data at all times. However, the meaning of this data must be

is independent of the imagination, rather the meaning of perception comes only by way of the imagination; perception can present this thing, this real object only upon the background of the imagined situation.

"To posit an image is to construct an object on the fringe of the whole of reality, which means therefore to hold the real at a distance, to free oneself from it, in a word, to deny it. Or, in other words, to deny that an object belongs to the real is to deny the real in positing the object; the two negations are complementary, the former being the condition of the latter. We know, besides, that the totality of the real, so long as it is grasped by consciousness as a synthetic situation for that consciousness, is the world. There is then a two-fold requisite of consciousness to imagine: it must be able to posit the world in its synthetic totality, and, it must be able to posit the imagined object as being beyond the reach of this synthetic totality, that is, posit the world as a nothingness in relation to the image."²²

In order for an image to appear rather than a perception there must be an "on hand" situation which suddenly becomes too difficult. For, instance, take the example discussed in Section A where a conceptual manipulation failed and the individual became "emotional". This emotional presentation of the world could be the basis for an imaginative re-creation of the situation wherein the world was reorganized about an image which was not disturbing, that is, not emotional. The despair experienced in the "on hand" situation laid the world bare before the individual; this immediate confrontation of the all, which is being-in-itself without differentiation, is awe-full or wonder-full, depending on the type of situation. As such the world presses in on the individual and he feels himself being submerged in this plenum of being, he becomes "emotional". To recover his being-for-itself, to re-establish his human being-in-the-world, he must re-create the way being-in-itself appears. He performs this re-creation through the imagination.

Thus the imagination furnishes a field for human enterprise; the

human contribution to being-in-itself is nothing, but this nothing is everything that is human. Human consciousness is the existence of the nothingness of all-that-is.

"Now we are at the point of understanding the meaning and the value of the imaginary. The imaginary appears 'on the foundation of the world', but reciprocally all apprehension of the real as world implies a hidden surpassing towards the imaginary. All imaginative consciousness uses the world as the negated foundation of the imaginary and reciprocally all consciousness of the world calls and motivates an imaginative consciousness of the world as grasped from the particular meaning of the situation. The apprehension of nothingness could not occur by an immediate unveiling, it develops in and by the free succession of acts of consciousness, the nothingness is the material of the surpassing of the world towards the imaginary. It is such that it is lived, without ever being posited for itself. There could be no developing consciousness without an imaginative consciousness, and vice versa. So imagination, far from appearing as an actual characteristic of consciousness turns out to be an essential and transcendental condition of consciousness."²³

Imagination, then, is the key mode of consciousness by which man expresses his freedom. Man is not free to change being-in-itself, at that level freedom is meaningless. Freedom begins on the human side of all that is, on the side of meaning, on the side of nihilation. Brute being, massive, inert, without organization or distinction is without lack; it merely is. Freedom begins in the upsurge of lack, in the upsurge of being-for-itself; freedom begins in the upsurge of nothingness. Freedom is that which is limited by nothing; for this reason the world can never be a limitation for man's freedom, man just happens to be in a world. But this world is his condition for being free, nonetheless. In this world he must live and move; but, his freedom consists in re-making the world for himself: this is his humanity. To re-make what is, to create a world for himself is the task of human reality.

So it turns out that man's being-in-the-world is indeed nothing else than his consciousness of the world. As such man is a distinctive being: a being who is in the world by being conscious of the world. His consciousness of the world presents the world in two forms: the "instrumental" world, and the "emotional" world. Both of these worlds, however, have the same quality of existence; they are both real. But it is the emotional world which presents the world in its immediacy; as such the world is stripped bare of its values and meanings and man can get a glimpse of his uselessness. This glimpse may be hidden behind a fabrication of instrumentation, which accounts for the instrumental world, or this glimpse can offer man a chance to redeem himself in terms of himself. A lucid view of all that is reveals to man his absolute contingency and absolute responsibility at one stroke. Such a view reveals the possibility of freedom; the free being of man as Man, the for-itself as the in-itself-for-itself. But the view of being-in-itself in no way reveals to man why he is what he is; Why? begins this side of being-in-itself. To ask Why? is to have assumed the freedom of man; to ask Why freedom? is to have posited the freedom of consciousness to ask such a question; consciousness is nothing else than the question of its being. But in its very being it posits that being which it would be as unquestionable-questioning: being-in-itself-for-itself. To posit such a being is the origin of freedom, the origin of human reality.

If the human condition is such as Sartre makes it out to be, an aesthetic theory which aspires to adequately incorporate this viewpoint must rest on the recognition that there are no absolutes in the world. The only absolute for man is man himself, be what he may. And, if man

is the being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself, an aesthetic theory for such a man must begin by questioning that which it aspires to do. But this questioning cannot be an excuse for not constructing such a theory, rather the questioning must be the basis of the theory. Hence, the theory will take the question, Why art? as its basis and motivation. The second part of this paper will present such a theory.

PART II

An Aesthetic Theory

A. The Work of Art

Sartre has claimed that human reality^{is} fundamentally the desire-to-be; this desire is the truth of man's activities. This desire depends, however, on the for-itself not being what it desires to be; that is, the for-itself must lack the being which it desires. But how does this lack appear to a concrete for-itself, that is, to a consciousness in the world? The ontological truth is not a real existent, so how is man's lack revealed to him in his real projects? This lack is revealed, first of all, through man's failures, but these failures would only be neutral experiences if man had no aim which these failures indicate. Each failure man experiences indicates a value which provides the context for that failure. But how are these values maintained when man is not failing? Emotion is a negative appearance of a value, that is, emotion results in the failure of a value. In what way does man contribute values to the world in a positive sense? The answer to these questions will be based on the fact that a value stands as the being which man would be; every concrete value for the world exists as a lack in human reality. Hence, that existence which contributes value into the world, that reveals to man his lack, that evidences his desire-to-be, must in its very existence point to the in-itself-for-itself as its ideal. Sartre holds that one such existence is the work of art. What does he take the work of art to be?

Sartre formulates a law for the work of art: it is an unreality.²⁴ To support this formulation he calls upon his description of the imaginative consciousness as that consciousness which creates unrealities;

one such unreality is the work of art. For instance, he feels that a painting, as a work of art, is not the real paints and canvas which can be perceived, rather the work of art is the unreal existence of these elements. He refers to a painting of Charles VIII:

"We understood at the very outset that this Charles VIII was an object. But this, obviously, is not the same object as is the painting, the canvas, which are the real objects of the painting. As long as we observe the canvas and the frame themselves the aesthetic object 'Charles VIII' will not appear. It is not that it is hidden by the picture, but because it cannot present itself to a realizing consciousness. It will appear at the moment when consciousness, undergoing a radical change in which the world is negated, will itself become imaginative."²⁵

The frame, the canvas, the various paints are the real objects which are perceived, but the aesthetic object which constitutes the work of art is imagined: it is unreal. The perceived objects serve only as an "analogue" for the aesthetic object. By analogue Sartre means the real counterpart of the unreal object. As discussed earlier, a thing has both real qualities and unreal qualities, neither of which is privileged, they have equal existence with respect to the thing itself. Whether a thing appears as real or unreal depends on the way its situation is imaginatively constituted. An art object will appear when a thing is presented through an affection. This means that the physical analogue of the art object will function as an affective presentation of the world which stimulates the imagination to bring about the art object. How does this occur?

The perception of the paint on a canvas can never cause the aesthetic object to appear. In order that the aesthetic object may be apprehended it must be constituted by the imagination. This imaginative consciousness can in no way grasp the real objects; only perception can present the objects which are real. But what are the unreal objects of imagination?

"That which is real, we must not fail to note, are the results of the brush strokes, the stickiness of the canvas, its grain, the polish spread over the colors. But all this does not constitute the object of aesthetic appreciation. What is 'beautiful' is something which cannot be experienced as perception and which, by its very nature, is out of the world... The fact of the matter is that the painter did not realize his mental image at all: he has constructed a material analogue of such a kind that everyone can grasp the image provided he looks at the analogue."²⁶

As a result the art object does not exist in the real painting, rather, as art object the painting is unreal. This unreal object exists nowhere but in consciousness, be it the consciousness of the artist or the spectator. But this is not to make the art object merely an "idealistic" construction^o of the mind which exists independently of its object, the thing. The material analogue of the art object is the evidence that there is an art object in existence. This evidence is the foundation of the art object because it is the correlate of the image of the thing, both of which indicate being-in-itself. The image is the non-being of a certain being-in-itself, it is strictly intentional toward its object. Without this object, which is posited by the imagination as an unreality, there can be no art object. The imaginative consciousness can never be an object to itself as imaginative; it can become an object for consciousness only through reflection. But in reflection the imaginative consciousness, or the image, is posited as an object by consciousness which is still intentional. But the image which appears to the reflective consciousness is not the art object, the image which appears is consciousness itself. In this movement the art object disappears. It will reappear only upon the advent of the imaginative consciousness toward the physical analogue.

What Sartre means when he says that the esthetic object will appear

to anyone who looks at the analogue, is that "looking" is the ordinary way of approaching a physical object, and, for that reason it is the way to stimulate aesthetic appreciation. But this looking does not cause this appreciation. By looking at the physical object certain perceptual objects will appear but these objects will become aesthetic only in the imagination. This transformation can be explained by saying that the perceptual objects are affected by consciousness because it apprehends them in a new way. For instance, the reds and blues of a painting are seen to have certain tones and shades, but these colors become aesthetic when they are imaginatively created as being the colors with certain relations, the colors with certain harmonies, the colors with certain qualities. All these created characteristics of the colors occur due to an intention of consciousness to apprehend them as such. To merely see the colors is to sustain them in the real world; seeing them is to keep them real. They become unreal when consciousness lapses into its imaginative mode. The cause for this lapse can be attributed only to the thing itself, and not the real object. The lapse merely indicates that the real object revealed a certain lack to consciousness which could be fulfilled only in the imagination. But this lack refers to the thing itself which is beyond the real.

By excluding the art work from the real world Sartre has placed it in the realm of non-being. As such its characteristics will be in the order of this realm. These characteristics need to be delineated. First, the work of art is an

"... unreal collection of new things, of objects I have never seen or will ever see, but which are not less unreal because of it,

objects which do not exist in the painting, nor anywhere in the world, but which manifest themselves by means of the canvas, and which have gotten hold of it by some sort of possession."²⁷

These "new things" are the relationships, the order, the interplay and formal characteristics of the objects of the painting. These things are unreal precisely because they do not exist in the real world; they cannot be seen, touched, fondled, or heard; they are strictly imaginative.

Second, the work of art is credible. It appears as the consciousness of itself; it is transparent and known through and through. As pointed out earlier, the image is known immediately for what it is due to its presentation of elements that are inter-dependent. The inter-dependence of the elements is immediately grasped as certain. A red in a work of art appears as a certain red which is related to a certain shape and texture; its location in the situation presented by the image establishes its credibility. The totality of the elements of the art work makes each of them a necessary part. This credibility of the art work sets it up as a source of knowledge.

Third, the art work is a meaning. The totality which is given in the art work assigns specific roles to every element. In these roles the elements have a definite location and function; as such they become meaningful. Their relationships to each other, their common situation make them inter-dependent and meaningful to each other. The totality of these inner relationships constitutes the meaning of the art work. It is a meaning because it presents a possibility: the possibility of being a being-in-itself which exists as a for-itself. This possibility

is valuable because it indicates a chance for man to attain his ideal: the in-itself-for-itself. But this chance only takes the form of a symbol of the ideal; the ideal appears as unreal, hence without the fullness of being-in-itself.

Fourth, and most important of all, the art work stands as the expression of man's freedom. In it man effects his characteristic being: the nihilation of being-in-itself. Every art work is a concrete establishment of value in terms of what man can be, what he desires to be: the in-itself-for-itself. This desire-to-be appears concretely as an act of appropriation which Sartre calls the aim of art.

"Art is an activity of appropriation, either wholly or in part, and what it wants to appropriate beyond the concrete object of its quest is being itself, the absolute being of the in-itself."²⁸

This appropriation takes place through creation; the creation of a work of art puts the artist at the origin of a concrete existence. The art object exists through the artist, the object is his. On the other hand, the art object exists apart from the artist in so far as it can appear to anyone. Once the creation is completed the art object becomes a part of the world, available to any other imagination. But this very "otherness" is what makes the object his. If the object had no separate existence it would be the artist himself. That which is his is that which is not the artist while it depends on him for its existence. It is his to the extent that he is responsible for its existence, but this responsibility is possible only because the object may exist in some other consciousness; that is, the artist takes it for himself, this "taking" constitutes possession. Possession is nothing else than the

double relationship between the possessor and the possessed: they are separate but bound by a unique relationship. But what is this relationship?

First it should be pointed out that the art object must rely on being-in-itself for its being; it is the non-being of a specific in-itself. It is not submerged in the subjectivity of the artist; the artist does not constitute the art object out of a private realm of being. He imagines ^{an} art object as the nihilation of a particular thing by revealing the unreal qualities of the thing. This is what creation does: being is revealed as that which it is not. This places the artist at the origin of a new being, but this new being is in the order of non-being, never in the order of being-in-itself. But this new being is definitely new; it is a new consciousness of that which is. As such the artist is responsible for a new existence, it is this new existence which he wants to possess, for in this existence he approximates being-in-itself. By possessing this existence he approximates his ideal, the in-itself-for-itself. He effects a unique relationship of being:

"...the possessor and possessed constitute ideally a unique reality... Thus the desire of a particular object is not the simple desire of this object; it is the desire to be united with the object in an internal relation, in the mode of constituting with it the unity 'possessor-possessed'. The desire to have is at bottom reducible to the desire to be related to a certain object in a certain relation of being."²⁹

The artist desires the being which would come about in his relation to his creation: the art object functions as a brute in-itself which the artist takes for himself. This symbolic movement indicates the in-itself-for-itself.

The art object, then, is a consciousness of the world of being as revealed in a certain fashion. This revelation is not in being-in-itself; it is in the world of non-being; it is being-in-itself as it is not. The artist nihilates the realm of being-in-itself in order to make there to be a world for him. An art object is a microcosm which presents the artist's apprehension of what is as a world. Yet the world of being-in-itself is un-changed and un-created. Creation consists only in the introduction of non-being into the world; this non-being never penetrates being-in-itself, rather it rests on this being. The world is "seen" in and by these "spectacles" of non-being; whether this view will be rose-tinted, pessimistic, or anguishing will depend on the artist.

The art object exists, therefore, but not in the same way a stone exists. The stone is whether there is a consciousness of it or not; the art object, however, exists only in and by consciousness, indeed, it exists as consciousness. Art is the concrete activity wherein man demonstrates his desire-to-be; it is one way in which he can pursue his "project of being" -- the project to be God-- the way he attempts to totally realize his freedom and be his own foundation. But this attempt can never be achieved. Why is this so?

B. Art and Freedom

Sartre's notion of the art object as an unreality, as a source of value, as a concrete meaning in the world, as a consciousness of its object, places the artist in a precarious position. He is in a position of dependence upon the world of being since the art object is the unreal existence of a thing in itself. The artist who exists as the consciousness of this thing in its unreality no longer has an existence of his own. He is wholly consciousness of the thing and this particular consciousness exists as an unreality. As such the artist is unreal with respect to the thing itself, but he is wholly real with respect to the situation presented in the art object. As such the artist transforms his existence by existing as unreal in a real world and as real in an unreal world. In this way he has an option to select the reality he desires. This choice is not available to the man who has never created a world for himself. Such a man would not be existing as free in Sartrean terms. To exist as freedom is to live the moment of choosing between the world-at-hand and the world-to-be. This does not mean that the free man is an idle dreamer; rather it means that he is not limited by his concern for the world-at-hand. He creates a world-to-be in order to free himself from the petty demands of the world-at-hand. But this is no fantasy; from such worlds come the things which will be at-hand tomorrow.

The artist who is primarily engaged in creating worlds-to-be always has the option to select the world-at-hand. But he has an option only

because there are worlds-to-be for him. Without such worlds he has no chance to exist his freedom. No one will deny that the ontological truth of his freedom is just as "real" as that of the man who exists his freedom, but the ontological freedom is only a truth not an existence. That man is free who exists his freedom, that man who does not take it as "given for always". From such a view of freedom it can be seen that art is never realized; it is an action, never an entity. Art is the way freedom exists. For this reason the physical analogue of the art object can never be a substitute for the art object. It stands only as the evidence that a concrete freedom has been effected. To another man this analogue can be constituted as his freedom; there is no restriction on the number of consciousnesses who can possess an art object. Every man who can imagine can make it his; by way of the physical analogue the art object can be redeemed by every consciousness which takes upon itself the responsibility to sustain the existence of this ideal in-itself-for-itself.

As such, the artist's existence is precarious because he exists to the extent that he creates, and, to create is to exist as unreal in a real world. To exist is to sacrifice personal reality for the sake of personal unreality; the artist takes a chance with himself by bringing forth a new existence. His chances become meaning for the world. The value of art objects consist in their powerful way of demonstrating that man can take chances with himself. To contemplate an art object is to take a chance, the chance that a life will be transformed with a new meaning. The artist asks, What will happen to me if I change this thing before me? The spectator asks, What will happen to me if I look at this

thing? The art object appears in and through such questions. The art object is an answer to both of them; it exists as the question of man's existence; the art object answers: man is a being who would be free.

Sartre's description of the art object as an unreality, as the imaginative consciousness of a thing in itself provokes the question: How does the art object differ from any other image? Can the image of a tree be an art object, can the beautiful be found in nature? Sartre does not restrict the art object to a class of things; that is, he does not say that nature cannot provide analogues for art objects. He does declare that meaning begins with freedom and freedom is a human project. Such a declaration would seem to say that a tree could be imagined as an art object only if it surpassed its being toward its meaning. That is, should consciousness constitute it as meaningful for some purpose, this constitution might raise it to the level of an art object. But its beauty would consist in its human presentation and not in its existing as a brute reality. Such a notion emphasizes the human over the natural and makes a sharp distinction between their importance. This would be consistent with Sartre's notion that man must make himself and the world is the means by which he does so.

Still the problem remains about how an art object is distinguished from just any image. Does a feeling accompany the formation of the art object? It would seem that this is the case. There seems to be an affective condition required for the appearance of an aesthetic object rather than a perceptual object. Normal perception, it was pointed out,

occurs on a background of an imagined "totality"; and some kind of affection is needed to transform this background into a foreground. Hence, the art object is an image affected with itself. Does this mean anything more than the fact that the art object is valuable? If not then there is no way to explain the appearance of the art object, for value arises as the art object and not as its cause. Sartre would probably agree that there is no way to prove that there is such a concrete existence as the art object. In fact, to hold it in question might be taken as its mode of existence. To accept it as fact would make it into a real object. To question the relevance of this non-being, to plumb the depths of its implications, is to exist the art object. Affectivity, then, arises with the art object. To question Why this image?, cannot result from facts. Affectivity is the living of man's question of being; the image is the appearance of this life as a possibility, as the possibility to attain an answer to Why man? The image, as art object, has no special being over any other image save that given it by consciousness. If the image passes into the background of consciousness, there is no art object. There is no grounds for the art object other than consciousness of being-in-itself. This imaginative consciousness appears only when a being-in-itself appears; the art object has no privileged existence. For this reason the question, Is this art object meaningful, does it imply a new existence for me if I assume responsibility for my existence? sustains the art object.

Hence, artists are not born, they are made: they make themselves by creating new existences. In every art work the artist seeks to found

his own being. In these terms every man is an artist in so far as he strives for the unity of his being. A man who yearns for the fullness of a being who would be to itself its own grounds for being and at the same time be consciousness of its being so; a man who yearns for this so much that he perpetually questions his being in terms of this being, such a man is free. The artist is just such a man.

C. Conclusions

When Sartre states that art is a concrete occurrence of man's freedom, the question might be asked, Why freedom? If man is fundamentally the desire-to-be, and the project of being is to satisfy this desire, and if man's freedom consists in realizing this project, then is he free? Does man have an alternative to this existence which Sartre has described? And, if not, is freedom meaningful?

Sartre would answer that if there is any meaning in the world it is based on just such questions as these. Meaning begins with freedom. To ask even meaningless questions is to have assumed the attitude of a free being. There is no way for man to prove that he has a right to live, there is no way he can even assert his right to be-in-the-world, for there is nothing to which the assertion can be made other than man himself. To question freedom is to question man, but the question of freedom cannot be reduced to Man. To say that man is a being who brings himself into question is not sufficient to reveal the total lack of content which characterizes him. This total lack can only be revealed by positing, that is, by creating out of nothing, that which man would be. Such a man is "the being who in its being makes itself a question of being in so far as it implies a being other than itself." But man has no guarantee that there is such a being which is implied in his questioning of himself; the questions, Why freedom? Why man? would seem to point to an insufficiency in man himself, but this insufficiency may be his very being. This is the possibility which Sartre suggests.

However, Sartre does not discount the chance that the grounds of man's being may suddenly appear to him. A sudden insight, a crack in being-in-itself may deliver man from his dependency on this being. But until such a redemption occurs, man must pursue his being in his own way. So, to question, Why art? is precisely to assume the attitude so that there can be art. To take art for granted, as given, as always a part of man because of its historical evidence is to subvert the meaning of art. Art does not have meaning, it provides meaning. Art is not an institution, an entity, a thing; it is an activity wherein meaning appears, wherein man appears, wherein the world appears.

The original contribution which Sartre gives to the enterprise of art is to make the question, Why art? reappear and take on a new urgency. It is now charged with the responsibility with existing as the question of itself. To answer such a question it will be necessary for art to range over the wide scope of human activities and seek to found itself. By founding itself it will have indicated a foundation for man himself. Hence, art will be nothing but the attempt of man to found himself; as such it will be necessary for him to probe its depths, to know it, to enjoy it, and to do it.

Sartre is an artist. Why has he not written an aesthetic theory? If art is so important why has he not offered a direction for it to take? His one attempt to do so in What Is Literature? skims over the fine arts and talks primarily of engagement: the activity of dealing with real concrete situations with literature, to try to change man's condition. But he does not specify a criteria for art in general. Why not?

Sartre's argument is that a theory for doing art depends on what the art is trying to do. For him the aim of literature should be to bring about a change in human situations. He will not proscribe such a role for all art. He maintains that there is no parallel of the arts; they do not seek the same goals.³⁰ The aim of an art sets the criteria for its success; it will achieve no higher goals than it sets for itself. But, of course, its failures will be no greater than these goals allow either. So if an art is not concerned enough to set the highest goals for itself then that art will exist in bad faith. Every art is charged with the responsibility of maintaining its existence. When such an existence is no longer questioned then the art will have been replaced by technology; art will have become production, not creation.

Hence, a theory of art based on Sartre's ideas must recognize that it can never be a substitute for art, nor a grounds for it, nor a reason for it. The most it can do is to make the question, Why art? an integral part of the artistic enterprise. Such a theory can never proscribe rules, or standards, or values for art. The beautiful is man's freedom; but this freedom has no substantiality, it exists to the extent that it is lived. The existence of freedom cannot be solidified into codes of conduct or modes of action; only God could do such a thing, if He existed. To theorize about art, then, is to do art; a theory of art makes no sense unless it is a paradigm case of itself. Therefore, this paper will close with this possibility as its value.

Notes

1. Taken from three works: Before Philosophy, Franfort, H., and others, Pelican Books, Baltimore, Md., 1954, pp. 238-262; The Greek Philosophers, Guthrie, W.K.C., Harper Torchbooks, N.Y., N.Y., 1960, pp. 22-42; The Pre-socratic Philosophers, Kirk and Raven, Cambridge Press, London, 1960, pp. 74-98.
2. The Emotions, Sartre, J. P., Frechtman, B., trans., Philosophical Library, N.Y., N.Y., 1948, pp. 89-90.
3. Ibid., pp. 75-76.
4. Ibid., pp. 58-59.
5. Being and Nothingness, Sartre, J. P., Barnes, H. trans., Meuthen Press, London, 1960, p. 566.
6. Ibid., p. 567.
7. Ibid., p. 567-8.
8. Ibid., p. 565.
9. Ibid., p. lv.
10. Ibid., p. lvi, note.
11. Ibid., p. lxi.
12. Ibid., p. lxi.
13. Ibid., p. lxi.
14. Ibid., p. lxii.
15. Psychology of Imagination, Sartre, J.-P., The Citadel Press, N.Y., N.Y., pp. 270-272.
16. Imagination, Sartre, J.-P., Williams, F. trans., University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1962, p. 3.
17. Op. cit., Psychology of Imagination, p. 273.
18. Op. cit., Imagination, p. 125.
19. Op. cit., Psychology of Imagination, p. 7.
20. Ibid., p. 14.
21. Ibid., p. 16.
22. Ibid., p. 266.
23. Ibid., p. 273.
24. Ibid., p. 274.
25. Ibid., p. 274.
26. Ibid., p. 275.
27. Ibid., p. 277.
28. Op. cit., Being and Nothingness, p. 585.
29. Ibid., p. 588-9.
30. What Is Literature?, Sartre, J.-P., Philosophical Library, 1950, p. 7.

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