

p.25: "PARTLY COLLAPSES & PARTLY COMES TOGETHER"

Handwritten: "Masked that age made"

WHAT IS LITERATURE by J-PS

I. What is Writing?

p.2: "But the dim little meaning which dwells within it, alight joy, a timid sadness, remains immanent or trembles about it like a heat..."

p.7: "The crisis of language which broke out at the beginning of this century is a poetic crisis. Whatever the social & historical factors, it manifested itself by attacks of depersonalization of the writer in the face of words."

p.22: "the writer should engage himself completely in his works...as a choice, as this total enterprise of living that each one of us is..."

II. Why Write?

p.23: "Each of our perceptions is accompanied by the consciousness that human reality is a 'revealer'..."

p.25: "This dialectic is nowhere more apparent than in the art of writing: the literary object is a peculiar top which exists only in movement. The writer neither foresees nor conjectures; he projects."

p.31: "Freedom is alienated in the state of passion; it is abruptly engaged in partial enterprises; it loses sight of its task which is to produce an absolute end."

III. For Whom Does One Write?

p.43: Freedom "is nothing else but the movement by which one perpetually upsets and liberates himself. There is no given freedom."

p.69: "In the 17th c., by choosing to write a man embraced a definite profession with the tricks of the trade, its rules & customs, its rank in the hierarchy of the professions. In the 18th c., the molds were broken..."

p.89: "...after 1918 one wrote in order to consume lit: one squandered literary traditions hushed together words, threw them against each other to make them shatter. Lit. as Negation became Anti-lit. 'never had it been more literary: the circle was completed.' (festival)

p.99: "When I come to say later on that it found its belated fulfillment site and in Trotskyising surrealism, one will better understand the function it assumes in a too closed society: it was a safety valve. After all, it's not so far from the perpetual holiday to the permanent revA

"However, the 19th c. was the time of the writer's transgression & fall. Had he accepted unclassing from below, had he given his art a content, he would have carried on with other means & on another plane the undertaking of his predecessors...."

IV. SITUATION OF THE WRITER IN 1947

p.110: "In England, the intellectuals are less integrated into the collectivity than we...because remote predecessors whom we hardly deserve prepared the Revolution, the class in power, after a c. & a half still us the honor of fearing us a little (very little)..... iters make a virtue of necessity and...attempt

Handwritten notes:
"The mold was broken in 1928"
"of large ideas"

to CLAIM AS A FREE CHOICE THE ISOLATION WHICH HAD BEEN IMPOSED UPON THEM BY THE STRUCTURE OF THEIR SOCIETY."

Q Breton in 1925 on p.121: "The immediate reality of the surrealist rev. is not so much to change anything whatever in the physical and apparent order of things as to criticize a movement in the mind."

P.141: "an age when we were crushed by the pressure of his...."

P.144 "A work is never beautiful unless it in some way escapes its author."

P.145: "...the gap has been revealed not bet. the author & his public which, after all, would be in the great literary tradition--but bet. the literary myth & the his. reality."

P.146: "We started feeling this gap about 1930... The striking thing about lives of the past is that they always UNFOLD on the eve of great events which exceed forecasts, disappoint expectations, upset plans & bring new lights to bear on the yrs. that have gone by."

P.147: "Besides, what did surrealist destruction which leaves everything in its place, matter to us, when a destruction by sword & fire threatened everything, surrealism included."

P.148: "The destiny of our works themselves were bound to that of a France in danger.... Brutally reintegrated into his, we had no choice but to produce a lit. of historicity."

"But what makes our position original, I believe, is that the war & the occupation, precipitating us into a world in a state of fusion, perforce made us REDISCOVER THE ABSOLUTE AT THE HEART OF RELATIVITY ITSELF."

P.153: "...insofar as it has made us touch our limits I shall say that we are METAPHYSICAL writers. I think that many among us would deny this designation... but this is the result of a misunderstanding. For METAPHYSICS IS NOT A STERILE DISCUSSION OF ABSTRACT NOTIONS WHICH HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH EXPERIENCE. IT IS A LIVING EFFORT TO EMERGE FROM WITHIN THE HUMAN CONDITIONS IN ITS TOTALITY."

P.154: "(It is not the 1st time that an age, for want of talents, has lacked its art & its phil.) It is to create a lit. which unites & reconciles the metaphysical ABSOLUTE & the relative of the his. fact...."

P.173 (ftn. 19): "I admit without difficulty the Marxist description of 'existentialist' anguish as a his. & class phenomenon. Exis-ism, in its contemporary form, appears with the DECOMPOSITION of the bourgeoisie & its origin is bourgeois. But that this decomposition can disclose certain aspects of the human condition & make possible certain metaphysical intuitions does not mean that these intuitions & these disclose are illusions of the bourgeois consciousness or mythical representations of the situation."

P.177: "Bet. 1939 & 1940 we were the witnesses & victims of the decay of war; today we are present at the decaying of a rev. situation."

P.203: "The point is that all is lost if we want to choose bet. the powers which are preparing for war... Does one really make his. by choosing bet. given wholes simply because they are given....?"

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