

CW-99-3

Each one has his reasons: for one art is a flight; for another, a means of conquering. But one can flee into a hermitage, into madness, into death. One can conquer by arms. Why does it have to be writing, why does one have to manage his escapes and conquests by writing? Because behind the various aims of authors, there is a deeper and more immediate choice which is common to all of us. We shall try to elucidate this choice, and we shall see whether it is not in the name of this very choice of writing that the engagement of writers must be required.

Each of our perceptions is accompanied by the consciousness that human reality is a 'revealer', that is, it is through human reality that 'there is' being, or, to put it differently, that man is the means by which things are manifested. It is our presence in the world which multiplies relations. It is we who set up a relationship between this tree and that bit of sky. Thanks to us, that star which has been dead for millennia, that quarter moon, and that dark river are disclosed in the unity of a landscape. It is the speed of our auto and our airplane which organizes the great masses of the earth. With each of our acts, the world reveals to us a new face. But, if we know that we are directors of being, we also know that we are not its producers. If we turn away from this landscape, it will sink back into its dark permanence. At least, it will sink back; there is no one mad enough to think that it is going to be annihilated. It is we who shall be annihilated, and the earth will remain in its lethargy until another consciousness comes along to awaken it. Thus, to our inner certainty of being 'revealers' is added that of being inessential in relation to the thing revealed.

One of the chief motives of artistic creation is certainly the need of feeling that we are essential in relationship to the world. If I fix on canvas or in writing a certain aspect of the fields or the sea or a look on someone's face which I have disclosed, I am conscious of having produced them by condensing relationships, by introducing order where there was none, by imposing the unity of mind on the diversity of things. That is, I think myself essential in relation to my creation. But this time it is the created object which escapes me; I can not reveal and produce at the same time. The creation becomes inessential in relation to the creative activity. First of all, even if it appears to others as definitive, the created object always seems to us in a state of suspension; we can always change this line that shade, that word. Thus, it never forces itself. A novice painter asked his teacher, 'When should I consider my painting finished?' And the teacher answered, 'When you can look at it in amazement and say to yourself "I'm the one who did that!" Which amounts to saying "never". For it is virtually considering one's work with someone else's eyes and revealing what has been created. But it is self-evident that we are proportionally less conscious of the thing produced and more conscious of our productive activity. When it is a matter of poetry or carpentry, we work

according to traditional norms, with tools whose usage is codified; it is Heidegger's famous 'they' who are working with our hands. In this case, the result can seem to us sufficiently strange to preserve its objectivity in our eyes. But if we ourselves produce the rules of production, the measures, the criteria, and if our creative drive comes from the very depths of our heart, then we never find anything but ourselves in our work. It is we who have invented the laws by which we judge it. It is our history, our love, our gaiety that we recognize in it. Even if we should regard it without touching it any further, we never receive from it that gaiety or love. We put them into it. The results which we have obtained on canvas or paper never seem to us objective. We are too familiar with the processes of which they are the effects. These processes remain a subjective discovery; they are ourselves, our inspiration, our ruse, and when we seek to perceive our work, we create it again, we repeat mentally the operations which produced it; each of its aspects appears as a result. Thus, in the perception, the object is given as the essential thing and the subject as the inessential. The latter seeks essentiality in the creation and obtains it, but then it is the object which becomes the inessential.

The dialectic is nowhere more apparent than in the art of writing, for the literary object is a peculiar top which exists only in movement. To make it come into view a concrete act called reading is necessary, and it lasts only as long as this act can last. Beyond that, there are only black marks on paper. Now, the writer cannot read what he writes, whereas the shoemaker can put on the shoes he has just made if they are to his size, and the architect can live in the house he has built. In reading, one foresees; one waits. He foresees the end of the sentence, the following sentence, the next page. He waits for them to confirm or disappoint his foresights. The reading is composed of a host of hypotheses, followed by awakenings, of hopes and deceptions. Readers are always ahead of the sentence they are reading in a merely probable future which partly collapses and partly comes together in proportion as they progress, which withdraws from one page to the next and forms the moving horizon of the literary object. Without waiting, without a future, without ignorance, there is no objectivity.

A. The author holds that:

1. There is an objective reality and a subjective reality.
2. Nature is the sum total of disparate elements.
3. It is human action that reveals the various facets of nature.
4. Apparently disconnected elements in nature are unified in a fundamental sense.

B. It is the author's contention that:

1. Artistic creations are results of human consciousness.
2. The very act of artistic creation leads to the escape of the created object.

3. Man can produce and reveal at the same time.
4. An act of creation forces itself on our consciousness leaving us full of amazement.

C. The passage makes a distinction between perception and creation in terms of

1. Objectivity and subjectivity.
2. Revelation and action.
3. Objective reality and perceived reality.
4. Essentiality and non-essentiality of objects and subjects.

D. The art of writing manifests the dialectic of perception and creation because

1. Reading reveals the writing till the act of reading lasts.
2. Writing to be meaningful needs the concrete act of reading.
3. This art is anticipated and progresses on a series of hypotheses.
4. This literary object has a moving horizon brought about by the very act of creation.

E. A writer, as an artist,

1. Reveals the essentiality of revelation.
2. Makes us feel essential in relationship to the world.
3. Creates reality.
4. Reveals nature in its permanence.

Ans key

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