Nausea and the Early Sartre: A Case Study in Freedom

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Abstract

Sartre's *Nausea* is recognised as a classic modern 'novel of ideas', but has traditionally been viewed as an illustration of ideas fully explored only in Sartre's strictly philosophical works, such as *Being and Nothingness*. The relationship between *Nausea* and Sartre's other early works, however, has not been thoroughly examined, despite the importance of these texts for Sartre's intellectual development and the conceptualisation of his early phenomenological and existential theories.

This thesis is a case study in the relationship between philosophy and literature that examines the intimate relationships between *Nausea* (1938) and four of Sartre's early works: *The Transcendence of the Ego* (1936), *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory* (1939), *The Imagination* (1936) and *The Imaginary* (1940). Each chapter juxtaposes the novel alongside the theories and concepts presented in one of these texts, analysing the intricate relationship between it and *Nausea* in terms of the content of both novel and theoretical text, showing how Sartre's literary work is related to concepts from his earlier philosophical texts.

The thesis considers the significance of *Nausea* and novelistic fiction in general for the Sartrean notion of freedom, which is integral to understanding *Nausea* both as philosophical text and work of art. It is demonstrated that even in Sartre's earliest work, the use of novelistic form and style are crucial to the expression of essential phenomenological and existential concepts. It concludes that in order to fully comprehend the phenomenological and existential theories of the early Sartre, we need a deeper understanding of the relationship between Sartre's explicitly theoretical works and his fiction than has usually been assumed.

Statement of Authorship

I hereby certify that the following thesis is my own original work, and has not been submitted in full or in part for a higher degree to any other university or educational institution. All sources of information used in this thesis have been indicated, and full acknowledgement has been given to the work of others.

Signed,

Alison Beale

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In a higher degree research project undertaken over several years, there are many people whose assistance and contribution make the final work possible. I shall try to give those people their due here: I hope I do not miss out anyone who has been essential to me over the past few years.

My appreciation must first go to my high school English teacher, Karen Thrift, for introducing me (and the rest of her 'angsty' teenage class) to the word 'existentialism' and the essential ideas of that school of thought, and for putting a copy of 'Waiting for Godot' in my hands. The work presented here is, I believe, a direct consequence of that English lesson ten or eleven years ago.

After leaving high school I arrived at Macquarie University. The members of the Philosophy Department at Macquarie University have been tremendously supportive since my arrival at the University in 2004, and I wish to thank them all for their continual support. I must particularly acknowledge the support of my associate supervisor, Dr Jean-Philippe Deranty, for his supervision of this project and my Honours project in 2010, as well as for his undergraduate lectures on phenomenology and existentialism which I attended in 2009, if memory serves. Those lectures remain some of the most entertaining and informative I have ever attended, and spurred me to study phenomenology and existentialism at a postgraduate level. I thank him for sharing the breadth and depth of his knowledge with me over several years, and for his understanding and humour in doing so.

I must also acknowledge my work colleagues at Macquarie University, who are numerous and spread across many different departments, for their understanding and willingness to allow me the time and space I needed in order to complete this project. I look forward to continuing my professional relationship with them.

Whilst undertaking this project, I have made so many friends in the Macquarie University higher degree student cohort to whom I must also extend my appreciation: I do not have the space to name them individually but I thank them all for the conversation, the chocolate, the organisation of our shared study space, the sharing of information and resources and the good humour amongst them which made it a joy to come in to our office each day, and I hope our friendship lasts.

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have made it through. Dr Baker's keen intelligence and insight make her an asset to the discipline of philosophy; her consideration and compassion for her students make her an excellent teacher; and I could not ask for a better friend.

My most grateful appreciation must go to my principal supervisor, Dr Robert Sinnerbrink. If I am honest, there were times during this project at which I was not convinced I would be able to see it through. But the best educators, through a combination of enthusiasm and love for their occupation, a broad knowledge of their discipline and an eagerness to share that knowledge, and compassion and empathy for their students, can engender in their students a personal loyalty that can sustain the student in the difficult times that often accompany the learning process, especially during a project that lasts for several years. When lack of motivation, loss of confidence, anxiety, adverse external circumstances or a combination of all of these things arises during a project like this, often the desire not to break that pact of loyalty can see a student through until those circumstances pass, as they do.

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And I cannot sign off without offering inadequate but earnest thanks to my mother, for all she has done to see me through this project. We all want to make our parents proud: that wish is all the stronger when we know that, whatever we do, they will be so.

Notes on Translations and Terminology

In chapters three and four of this thesis, the word ‘irreal’ is used to denote the manner of existence of imaginary objects and mental images. The use of that word is taken from Jonathan Webber’s 2004 translation of *L’Imaginaire* and I follow his translation and his rationale for the use of the term. In the introduction to that translation, Webber states that Sartre's use of 'irréel' seems to follow one instance of Husserlian terminology which is usually Anglicised as 'irreal', and the translation of 'irréel' to 'irreal' keeps that link; also, the term ‘unreal’, to which ‘irréel’ is usually translated, can denote an object that could possibly exist but does not: irreal objects, as objects imaged by consciousness, may be real, but unreal objects that are not imaged are not irreal. To avoid this confusion I follow Webber’s translation.

In the third and fourth chapters I also refer to a phenomenon called an *analogon*: this is an untranslated French word, normally translated into English as ‘analogue’, but I choose to keep the original French to avoid confusion or an imprecise notion of the concept, as the word ‘analogue’ has several English meanings, and to preserve the concept of the analogon as unique to Sartre’s theory of the imagination.

Introduction

In 1984, Arthur C. Danto wondered why it was that the importance of viewing philosophy *as* literature has not drawn very much attention from philosophers, which he views as 'surprising and somewhat alarming' given the nature of philosophy as an intersection of science and art.[1] After all, Danto notes, the notion of philosophical truth is related to the mode of philosophical expression to such a degree as should make us consider that in looking at modes of expression other than the philosophical essay which has conventionally been the norm in the discipline we might discover other ideas of what constitutes philosophical truth. But even as far back as 1899 George Trumbull Ladd wrote that 'philosophy not only can communicate, but it always actually has communicated ideas which have moved appreciative minds to give them artistic literary expression; and philosophy can also enable literature to come to a better understanding of itself.'[2] Literature can enable and enhance comprehension of philosophy and specific philosophical ideas, and *vice versa*.

Both phenomenology, the school of thought devoted to studying the workings and structures of human consciousness, and the related movement of existentialism, with its focus upon human existence and placement of it at the centre of philosophical inquiry, have a history of ties to the literary arts, and the concepts inherent to both arguably require a dialogue between the modes of philosophical and literary expression to elucidate them fully. In 1948 Stuart M. Brown, Jr., stated that 'even in the most technical of existentialist discussions, literature and its techniques supply a fulcrum for philosophical leverage…The student of existentialism meets literature on all levels of existentialist writing.'[3] Martha Nussbaum notes one way in which literature and philosophy share an important relationship that, even though

[1] Danto 1984: 5.
[2] Ladd 1899: 1.
[3] Brown 1948: 159-160.

this is not Nussbaum's focus here, we note has particular importance and interest for the domain of existentialism. Through its capacity to elicit imaginative and potential scenarios, literature can reveal to us and help us comprehend what it might be like to live in a certain way, as the detail this requires in terms of the capacity to help us imagine and understand possibilities for living cannot be adequately shown in a more academic or scholarly argument. Literature has the potential to be, and often is, philosophical in the sense that it has this distinct role to play in the human quest for truth, and a way to live.[4] It is, as Nussbaum eloquently and simply states, 'a source of a human sort of truth.'[5] We can take a cue from this: the essential role of literature in our search for truth and meaning in human existence is of particular importance to existentialism with its positioning of human existence at the heart of philosophical investigation.

This thesis will demonstrate in detail the intricate and inseparable relationship between literature and philosophy in the domain of phenomenology and existentialism with a specific focus on some important early works of existentialism's most prolific proponent, Jean-Paul Sartre, and argue that if a complete and well-rounded understanding of Sartre's early work in existentialist philosophy is to be gained, his literary endeavours must be viewed as not just tools or complements, but as philosophically worthy in their own right, and necessary for the theory under discussion. They are and must be seen as one of the ways in which Sartre does philosophy, and their relationship to the rigorously philosophical works must be seen as a relationship between two different forms of philosophical inquiry that bear equal overall philosophical weight, like two carthorses pulling a draught, if we are to fully comprehend Sartre's philosophy.

Using Sartre's first novel and four of his earliest strictly philosophical works, the thesis will show how existentialist works of literature have the capacity to reflect, elucidate and expand upon the ideas and arguments of the domain's philosophical, or scholarly, texts,

[4] Nussbaum 1990: 227-228.
[5] Nussbaum 1990: 229.

in a way that is particularly well-suited to the often ambiguous concepts of existentialism, due to the texts' capability to express and interpret those concepts in ways that echo the ambiguous and sometimes opaque nature of the concepts themselves. This relationship goes both ways such that the philosophical texts solidify, consolidate and present theoretical arguments and justifications for the concepts canvassed in the literary texts, which they analyse in a rigorous scholarly fashion. It will be shown that this relationship is dynamic and inextricable, such that to confine examination of philosophical significance to one area rather than the other or even to devalue one as less critical to philosophical analysis does not give a holistic picture of the philosophy contained within either, and that as both literary and strictly philosophical works are doing different work to the same end, both 'sides of the equation' are thus needed to gain such a picture.

This thesis will for the most part restrict itself to analysing five of the earliest and most predominantly existentialist works of Sartre: *La Transcendance de l'ego: Esquisse d'une description phénoménologique* (*The Transcendence of the Ego*) (1937), *Esquisse d'une Théorie des Emotions* (*The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*) (1939), *L'Imagination* (*The Imagination* (1936), *L'Imaginaire: Psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination* (*The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination* (1940), and the earliest and most famous of Sartre's novels, *La Nausée* (*Nausea*) (1938).[6]

The significance of this thesis and the rationale for the interest in these specific early works of Sartre lie in chronology: as does the first important key to their relationship. *Nausea* is the only novel that we shall focus on in this thesis: this is due to the chronological fact that *Nausea* was written before or during composition of all the other works that are under discussion. Sartre's three other novels that make up the trilogy *Les chemins de la liberté* (*The*

[6] All dates given here for Sartre's works are their publication dates taken from Contat & Rybalka's exhaustive bibliographical chronology of Sartre's work. See Contat & Rybalka 1970.

Roads to Freedom) are excised for the reason that their publication dates (1945 through 1949) put them just outside the period of time that is of interest to us, even with the timeframes given for their development and fine-tuning.[7] The same is true for the theatrical works (beginning with *Les mouches* (*The Flies*) (1943)).[8] The reason for confining our study to this particular timeframe is that Sartre composes the philosophical texts in which the majority of his existentialist thought, his interpretations, viewpoints and concepts (and most of those that appear in *L'Être et le Néant* (*Being and Nothingness*) (1943)[9]), find their first full theoretical expression at the same time as he is developing those concepts in novel form in *Nausea*. *Nausea* took seven years to write[10] and was completed by early 1936,[11] though two more years of revision took place: from inception to publication it spans the other four works and their relationship is thus entwined from their earliest inception, hence the restriction to the five aforementioned works.[12]

This is important to Sartrean existentialism as much analysis of *Nausea* in relation to the strictly philosophical works has been devoted to juxtaposing it alongside *Being and Nothingness* and describing how that work takes up concepts that have their beginnings in the novel.[13] Whilst the significance and complexity of the relationship between *Nausea* and *Being and Nothingness* cannot be neglected, the relationship between *Nausea* and the earlier philosophical texts we discuss here is at least as important, given the great degree of connectedness between the theoretical works and their literary contemporaries, and there is thus a need for a more comprehensive analysis of the relationship between them that takes

[7] Contat & Rybalka 1970: 92, 112, 206.
[8] Contat & Rybalka 1970: 88.
[9] Contat & Rybalka 1970: 85.
[10] Quinney: 71.
[11] Contat & Rybalka 1970: 62.
[12] This restriction is also for the sake of coherence: Sartre's thought becomes much more politically motivated and less explicitly existential from the later 1940s on, and for this thesis to attempt to bring that dimension to bear would be rather a stretch, especially when considering issues of brevity. However within that dimension there is yet another literary dimension at play with the publication of *Qu'est-ce que la littérature ?*(*What Is Literature?*) (1947) which would undoubtedly be interesting to research with reference to the argument made here.
[13] E.g. Warnock 1965: 90-97, Goldthorpe 1997[a]: 38-57, Goldthorpe 1997[b]: 58-72, Quinney 2008: 78.

more fully into account their intertwined conceptions and the intricacies of the relationship between them that this entails, and that is what this thesis aims to deliver.

Another reason why the analysis of Sartre's early existentialist philosophical texts and the early existentialist novel is that in the work of some scholars, from the Anglophone world's first forays into existentialism until quite recently, the literary efforts of the existentialists have *not* been seen as pulling their philosophical weight or as equal to their theoretical counterparts in terms of philosophical worth. In 1947, H.B. Acton makes particular mention of existentialism as the major French philosophical movement that 'the public want to know about.'[14] Acton's analysis of some of the main ideas of existentialism is informative, yet he does not afford the literary works of the existentialists any real philosophical worth. He does make a cursory mention of Sartre's literary works but only to say that 'Some of his plays and one of his novels have already been translated into English.'[15] Marjorie Grene's 1948 paper begins with a dedication of sorts to those who are interested in 'the philosophic basis of existentialism as distinct from its literary and journalistic expressions,'[16] effectively carving the two in twain and cutting away the literature altogether, which Grene appears to consider as a mere diversion. Admittedly this opinion became less popular as the existentialist movement continued to cross the Channel during the post-war period and up until the 1960s.[17]

Others have regarded the literary works as useful illustrative tools and complements by which Sartre demonstrates the ideas prevalent in his more philosophical texts, such as *Being and Nothingness*. The novels and plays are here given more of their due, but are still seen as essentially illustrations. In 1960, John Wild writes that in the literary works, 'certain philosophical ideas of Sartre have been given literary expression, and…the more striking of

[14] Acton 1947: 162.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Grene 1948: 97.
[17] For other examples of this position see Coates 1953; Earle 1960; Newman 1966.

these ideas have been more carefully expressed in *Being and Nothingness*.'[18] Wild defends existentialism as a viable school of philosophical thought, arguing for its status as more than just a literary movement 'incapable of eliciting any responsible intersubjective agreement.'[19] However, Wild does not voice an opinion of the philosophical worth of Sartre's literary works other than to note their being a somewhat useful accompaniment to the philosophical work done in the other texts, and he does not leave much room for any of the other 'arty' pursuits that the existentialists followed, either. Neil Levy appears also to take this view in his 2002 book. Concise analyses of *Nausea* and several others of Sartre's literary works seen in light of their relation to Sartre's philosophical works appear throughout Levy's book, but when considering the philosophical worth of *Nausea* Levy still seeks to make a distinction between 'Sartre the phenomenologist' and 'Sartre the novelist', with the phenomenologist-Sartre seen as doing the bulk of the philosophical work.[20] Relatedly, David E. Cooper states that discussing existentialist fiction 'is no substitute for examination of the 'straight' philosophical works.'[21]

It is not the intention of this thesis to argue that the literary endeavours of the existentialists are a good 'substitute' for the overtly philosophical works, or that they provide an important but optional counterpart to the real hard work done elsewhere: nor does this thesis want to argue that the novels are actually worth *more* in a philosophical sense. It wishes to argue that they pull the same weight for the same purpose whilst being different modes of expression of the same theories and concepts.

This is a step that has been taken up by some scholars but by no means a vast number. In 1948, Henri Peyre wrote that the question posed by Sartre in his literature and by his characters, the question of why they exist, why the world exists, and why human beings

[18] Wild 1960: 45.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Levy 2002: 36.
[21] Cooper 1999: 12.

should have come to be, is 'indeed the fundamental one asked by all philosophical minds.'[22] Amy Kleppner, in 1964, agrees that the use that has been made of literature, the novel in particular, by the existentialist movement is not coincidental. She argues that the use of the novel by existentialist philosophers is more than just an illustrative mechanism, and goes so far as to say that 'without its imaginative literature, existentialist philosophy would not have achieved its fullest expression…'[23]

The main reason for this statement is that the ideas inherent in existential philosophy, such as 'authentic' existence, freedom and even the existentialist conception of consciousness,

are not ideas that can readily be explained in particularly technical or academic language, or as Kleppner puts it, 'in terms of abstract concepts and theory…'[24] Kleppner cites Simone de Beauvoir, one of the earliest philosophers to come to this conclusion (probably not coincidentally), who in 1946 wrote that '…only in the novel is it possible to evoke the primordial welling-up of existence in all its concrete, particular and temporal truth.'[25] de Beauvoir states that existentialism stresses the notion of concreteness, in that the philosopher of existentialism will lay out his/her ideas in terms of, as Kleppner puts it, 'the physical images, the sensuous qualities, the commonplace details of human and earthly existence, rather than in terms of abstract theory.'[26] The literary tools and devices able to be employed in the novel form give the notions of existentialism a much fuller, richer and more complete exposition than would otherwise be possible were they solely contained in a more theoretical treatise.

This is not at all to say that the ideas of existentialism cannot be explored and analysed conceptually and intellectually as well as experientially and intuitively. The theoretical treatise is also important to existentialism as a philosophical as well as literary movement, and

[22] Peyre 1948: 25.
[23] Kleppner 1964: 210.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Kleppner 1964: 211.
[26] Kleppner 1964: 210.

that mode of expressions' strength and importance lie in the ability of the author to justify arguments, consider and weigh up criticisms and objections to theoretical ideas and to support claims with academic evidence from philosophical sources. As Danto noted above, the modes of expression of philosophy, including literature and standard academic philosophical essays and treatises, are equally important to philosophy.[27] This is particularly pertinent to the domain of existentialism which as we have seen has always been intimately and intrinsically linked with artistic modes of expression, but has also always produced rigorous, scholarly essays, treatises and articles with which, either implicitly or explicitly, the literary outputs have been directly linked. After all, Sartre felt it necessary to write both literary works and philosophically rigorous treatises: the interplay of both appears to be the key to Sartre's philosophy, and as mentioned, this issue has not yet been treated as such in the literature by a great many scholars. For example, Kleppner poses a question that she thinks fundamental to the issue of the literary dimension of existentialism and that she asks with specific reference to *Nausea*: can one produce, with the same piece of writing, both 'a successful work of imaginative literature and an acceptable philosophical system'? Kleppner thinks that this is not possible, for the reason that the central aims and demands of philosophical and literary works are neither identical nor compatible.[28] Again there is a reluctance to analyse the literary works on the same level as the philosophical ones despite the acknowledgement of their centrality to existentialist philosophy.

What stands out most from the discussion of the literature is the apparent dominant conception that the artistic, literary works and the more scholarly philosophical works of existentialism as a whole and of Sartre in particular must be in some way fundamentally different in terms of purpose. There is an ambiguity in Sartre's works, both literary and strictly philosophical, that scholars do not really see as a positive feature, and which seemingly elicits a tendency to try to push them into corners entitled 'literature' and

[27] Danto 1984: 5.
[28] Kleppner 1964: 214.

'philosophy', even amongst theorists such as Kleppner and Cooper who appear initially sympathetic to the notion of an interdependency between the two.

However, ambiguity of and vacillation between notions, opinions and standpoints that initially or intuitively seem contradictory or mutually exclusive are actualities of human experience, and an oscillation, or perhaps interplay, between forms of expression that might at first appear to clash and controvert one another is thus crucial for these ideas to find their most complete manifestation. The relationship between the two modes of expression must be seen as Danto sees the relationship between philosophy and literature: as different modes of expression and ways to approach philosophical truths.

It may be argued here that the phenomenological approach, with its emphasis on conveying the commonality of the structures of consciousness and its experiences, might be somewhat at odds with the existentialist approach to fiction that seeks to convey the individualistic nature of the experiences of consciousness. This might be lent credence by the fact that *Nausea*'s readers (and readers of other existentialist fiction) can and do imagine themselves having the same kinds of experiences had by the novel's characters, suggesting that in some way the experiences of and responses to situations faced by characters are shared. This apparent tension does appear mitigated, though, when considering the role (or perhaps the task) of the reader who must imagine those experiences for himself – the situations faced, the responses required or elicited, the feelings evoked might be similar for many readers, but ultimately a singular reader placing himself within the story will inevitably face the fictional situations from a unique standpoint. As Rolls and Rechniewski note, 'An existential(ist) novel is, therefore, one whose meaning(s) must be constantly (re-)negotiated…at [the interface] of the text and its readers…To impose hegemonic meaning upon a novel (to tell people 'what it is all about') is to glue it in place.'[29] The strength of this existentialist novel is in its ability to bring together this apparent tension between the encompassing 'shareability'

[29] Rolls & Rechniewski 2005: 7-8.

of the situations and experiences of the novel and the individualistic imaginings, approaches, responses and meanings that its readers bring to play.

This can be a strength of existentialist fiction when it comes to the discussion of what we may call 'truths' of life and of experience. There are many ways in which existentialist philosophical perspectives consider truth, and Charles Glicksberg argues that a strength of existentialist fiction is that it does not take it upon itself to arrive at a truth applicable to or true for everyone - each consciousness (person) is unique, and this makes it possible for the existentialist author to break up the plot and disintegrate it. Indeed, he argues that fiction's greatest advantage when canvassing existentialist ideas is the author's ability to fragment the mind into 'discontinuous psychological states'.[30] This enables the existentialist writer to develop characters who are their own analysts, their own diagnosticians, and who are 'eternally alone': fictional examples of the situation in which individual human beings exist. This brings us much closer to an existentialist viewpoint of life, by placing the experience of the individual centre-stage in the discussion. Existentialist authors (Glicksberg calls them 'philosophical Hamlets'[31]) find in fiction the most suitable possible medium in which to do their philosophy, where their ideas can be given more adequate expression in language and style than would be possible with only the rigorous structures of the theoretical treatise to work within, and fiction is thus better able to bring home, in other words to centre and locate within individual human experience, the disintegration, disestablishment and uncomfortable implications inherent in so many of the existentialist ideas.[32]

Joshua Landy agrees that certain ideas as relates to the human being find their fullest expression in the domain of literature with its allowance for ambiguity and incongruity, far more appropriate to the human experience of said ideas than a straightforward treatise. In his book on Proust he argues that it is precisely because the narrator of Proust's most famous

[30] Glicksberg 1953: 39.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.

work is so unreliable and the expression of the ideas within it are less academically expressed that readers are able to use that work for philosophical 'training'[33], as he terms it, weighing up and turning over those ideas as applied to the reader. This unreliability, Landy argues, is seen as a problem only if one tries to read the novel as a straightforward philosophical treatise: but its greatest asset lies in the ability to act as a way to put philosophical ideas to work, an ability that is only apparent and able to be exploited because of that unreliability and capacity for discordant and fragmentary thinking and expression.

Yet the theoretical treatise is also important when considering ideas of existentialism, and this may be part of Glicksberg's dissatisfaction when he says that 'the reiterated affirmation of the mysterious complexity and uniqueness of man remains doctrinaire and unsatisfactory'[34] in existentialist fiction, in spite of the ability of fiction to communicate ambiguous ideas of existentialism such as nothingness, 'which in philosophical parlance remains necessarily abstract.'[35]

*

This thesis argues for the equal standing in terms of philosophical worth of the literary and strictly philosophical works of the phenomenological and existentialist theory of the early Sartre, and argues also that this relationship is such that familiarity with both modes of expression is essential to an understanding of Sartrean existentialism as a whole. Further, this relationship of interdependency and inextricability will be demonstrated as a fundamental characteristic of early Sartrean existentialism in the years just prior to *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre uses the method of fiction to 'do' philosophy for its ability to express and work out abstruse or ambiguous concepts, ideal for expression of the inherent concepts of his existentialism and phenomenology. Sartre's philosophy must be seen as a relationship and

[33] Landy 2004: 49.
[34] Glicksberg 1953: 39.
[35] Ibid.

interplay between these literary texts and the theoretical texts which present those concepts in a form and manner suited to rigorous scrutiny, defence of arguments and academic discourse.

This thesis will proceed as a case study. In each chapter, *Nausea* will be juxtaposed alongside a non-fictional text. Each chapter will first outline the theory presented in the novel, and then discuss the concepts of that theory and how they are expressed in the novel *Nausea*. *Nausea* is renowned for its treatment of many existentialist concepts and ideas in depth and detail, especially those of freedom, alienation, bad faith (*mauvais foi*), and 'Otherness' – many of the central notions of existentialist philosophy – and Sartre's novel has been rightly heralded as a flagship of existentialist literature, an epithet especially deserved given that Sartre was the most prominent philosopher to take up the label to describe himself and his philosophy (after initial reservations about doing so), in the hope that it would encourage understanding of the ideas he put forth:[36] a function this novel clearly fulfils in multiple ways, as will be shown. In this thesis we shall focus mainly on the concept of freedom ('what you do with what's been done to you', as goes the unsourced quote often misattributed to Sartre), its implications and manifestations, and will bring the concept to bear alongside related existentialist notions of selfhood and the constitution of an 'ego', and the structures of emotion, imagination and artistic experience: but we will always consider as central this concept of freedom in considering these related concepts and will relate each other concept back to its implications for the notion of the freedom of consciousness. In doing so we will consider the implications of presenting the existentialist approach and its aforementioned concepts in a fictional context, in hypothetical situations that involve fictional characters and their experiences.

[36] Fulton 1999: 12-13.

Furthermore, each chapter will examine the ambiguities that arise when expressing the theories using two inherently different modes of expression, with their differences of form, style and language. The ambiguities will be shown not to be a drawback attending the use of the two modes of expression (novel and theoretical text), but will be demonstrated as a strength of the relationship and as having positive implications for the theory. The notion of the freedom of consciousness remains a core and defining concept for Sartre throughout his work and finds its first detailed expression in these earlier texts. It is with particular relevance to this concept of freedom that we shall our demonstration of the importance of existentialist philosophical works to existentialist literature, and *vice versa*.

The first chapter will discuss the relationship between the novel *Nausea* and the text *The Transcendence of the Ego*. In explicating the theory in the first part we will see Sartre's dissatisfaction with and ultimate break from Husserl's phenomenology, focusing on Sartre's argument contra Husserl that the only ego that appears to consciousness upon reflection is the transcendent ego, not the transcendental ego as Husserl had claimed. Of crucial importance to this chapter is the revelation of freedom of consciousness to constitute its own self or ego, since none is inherent, which is shown in the novel *Nausea* through the dissolution and potential for reconstitution of Roquentin's sense of self and identity. The second part argues that the epistolary style of the novel is indicative of the importance of literary forms of expression to the apprehension of what are quite confronting and somewhat opaque existentialist concepts, in order to place them in situations that readers can interact with as if they were acting in real scenarios. The third part demonstrates the interwoven nature of the relationship between the novel *Nausea* and the theoretical text is shown by the novel's ability to elicit responses to situations. Thus, the novel asks its reader to engage in the theoretical concepts via asking them to constitute and posit hypothetical selves: thus making the novel critical to the central Sartrean existentialist idea of freedom and its theoretical expression.

The novel with then be juxtaposed alongside *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*, and we firstly consider the theory with a focus on showing that emotions are transcendent phenomena like the ego, and are modes of world-apprehension which allow consciousness to act upon the world in order to transform it into a magical world wherein I am able to escape from situations that I do not have the means to tackle in reality. In the second part the text and its relationship to the novel are considered in light of a claim made by Sartre that *Emotions* was originally intended to 'pair up' with *Nausea*, and consider how this pairing is to be conceived of given the status of *Emotions* not as a full and detailed work but an outline (though an ample one), and its origination as the opening to a larger work that was never completed. The relationship is not a case of a direct superimposing of concepts from theoretical to fictional expression, as will be shown, but one that for its intrinsic differences and ambiguities is no less strong or essential for that. The imaginary dimension of emotions will also be remarked upon, to lead into the third chapter.

The third chapter canvasses the concepts essential to the explication of the notion of freedom as relates to the imagination. We cover the ideas pertinent through *The Imagination* to *The Imaginary*, considering the two texts as one as they were originally intended by their author to be. We will cover Sartre's preliminary conception in *Imagination* of what a phenomenological account of the imagination must include, and discuss his dissatisfaction with the extremely useful, but incomplete, theory of Husserl. We then cover Sartre's own phenomenological theory of the image and imagination, and discuss it with reference to its explication in the novel which is shown to be crucial. Of particular interest is the fact that at times, the concepts of the theory as presented in the experiences of the characters in the novel and the concepts as presented theoretically demonstrate a lack of consistency when seen alongside one another. This discord, between concepts presented theoretically and concepts presented informally, is one that will be shown to paradoxically increase the importance and essential nature of the relationship between modes of expression, especially as relates to the

experience of those concepts had by the reader and the writer: reader and writer are enabled, in their different ways, to enact their freedom as consciousness (though to an extent bound by the parameters of the novel) through the novel's posited characters and situations by imagining themselves in those situations and what their reactions would be compared with the fictional characters' responses, thereby positing hypothetical and imaginary realities which, as we will see, is a hallmark of consciousness' freedom.

The fourth chapter considers the short second part to the conclusion of *The Imaginary*, entitled 'The Work of Art', in which *Nausea* is discussed specifically as an artwork in conjunction with Sartre's theory of art in the conclusion to his theoretical text. This is where the greatest forte of the novel is shown: as an object of irreality, and as a positing of imaginary objects and scenarios that are unconstrained by the laws and parameters of the real, the artwork is an act of freedom itself. Sartre does not explicitly make this claim in his theoretical work but it is able to be made, through reference both to his theoretical text and *Nausea*. Then again the ambiguity inherent between the two modes of expression shows itself, and with reference to Sartre's own words on the topic, we show that even the doubt expressed in *Nausea* about the novel's ability to perform this function leads to a greater understanding of the concepts involved: namely, that through the ambiguity inherent in these texts it is given to each individual person, as a free consciousness, to determine and apply these theoretical concepts in a manner unique to that individual.

In conclusion, we shall reiterate the complex, dynamic and interwoven nature of the relationship between these four early works of Sartre with the novel whose development spanned them all. Given that we now have a fuller comprehension of Sartrean existentialism that is due specifically to our treating the works as doing the same philosophical work and placing them on the same level in terms of philosophical import, we will briefly touch upon the ways in which the importance of literature retains prominence in Sartre's work. Even though much of Sartre's post-war work takes a quite clearly different direction than the work

we consider here, the important role that literature plays in Sartre's philosophy does not come to an end with *Nausea*. From the end point of this thesis, armed with a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of the relationship between literature and Sartre's philosophy at the very beginning, we lay important foundations from which to continue building the picture of a complex and dynamic relationship between philosophy and literature.

We shall start our analysis with Sartre's philosophical and phenomenological conception of the self, that elusive entity called an 'I'. Most of us take entirely for granted that it exists as a reality: but Sartre, as will become evident, appears to enjoy dispelling illusions.

Chapter I

The Transcendence of the Ego and *Nausea*: The Self and its Dissolution

As we saw in the introduction, the relationship between existentialist philosophy and literature can evoke questions in a reader about what kind of person that reader should become, and what kind of becoming might take place. This has specific relevance for the essay *The Transcendence of the Ego*, as an early manifestation of the idea that the freedom of consciousness, the central tenet of Sartre's existentialism, lies in its ability to constitute its own self. The first part of this chapter will be devoted to explaining that idea as it stands in T of E, and will focus specifically on the second section of the essay in which certain notions pertinent to our enquiry are discussed at length, such as the nature and structure of the 'self' and the ramifications of that nature for the freedom of consciousness, such that the freedom of consciousness has self-constitution at its heart. The second part will examine the relationship between T of E and *Nausea*, focusing on the content of the novel and its presentation of situations in which these notions are expressed, focusing on the dissolution of the self that Roquentin experiences and records in his diary, and show that the manner of expression the novel can offer, in this case an epistolary form, is indicative of the importance of literary forms of expression to the apprehension of what are quite confronting and somewhat opaque existentialist concepts. The third part will examine the novel and its relationship to the theory and theoretical text in terms of form, and argue that the importance of the novel goes even further than content and, as a tool for the actual construction of selves, shows how the novel can be regarded as a tangible expression, an actual instance of, the main concepts of the theory under discussion: this is perhaps more true here than at any other juncture between Sartre's philosophical and fictional texts. In saying that the novel is a 'tool' for the construction of selves, we mean that the novel itself offers the chance to experiment with or

hypothesise certain kinds or types of self through fictional situations and characters posited in the novel, rather than actually being used in an instrumental sense. The novel as 'tool' is not being used like a hammer or a saw would be used, a tool that requires a previously constituted self to use it, in the sense that one would pick up a hammer and saw to build a bookshelf. By 'tool' here, we mean that the novel is able to be used more like an example of bookshelves already constructed or hypothesised, an example of posited speculative selves whose design elements evoke certain sympathies, reactions, patterns of behaviour and feelings that may be incorporated into new and previously unconstituted patterns and arrangements that may then go into making up a self that, once created, can be continuously modified. Let us begin with the theory as outlined in T of E.

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Part 1: Sartre's Transformation of Husserl and his Rejection of a Transcendental Ego

Descartes' famous maxim *Cogito ergo sum* is probably the single most widely-known philosophical concept, one whose simplicity of form belies the complexity of its content. The I who thinks (and therefore is) has been the subject of much speculation amongst philosophers, and though it appears what we speak of when we speak of 'I' is intuitive and self-evident, questions surrounding the concept – including whether it is sensible to speak of an 'I' at all – resonate, and are enduring topics of discussion.

Sartre was a great follower of Husserl's[37]: yet this short essay, *The Transcendence of the Ego*,[38] written in Berlin in 1934 and published in 1936[39], demonstrates a departure from typically Husserlian modes of philosophical thinking to do with the concept of the ego. For

[37] The story of Sartre being so enthused about Husserl's idea of the phenomenological reduction (the *epochē*) as to apply it to an apricot cocktail in a bar for friends is well-known.
[38] Hereafter referred to as T of E.
[39] Contat & Rybalka 1970: 56.

Husserl and Sartre, the 'ego' is the stream of consciousness via which one acquires meaning and a sense of reality from the world around one. In this essay Sartre rejects the claim made by Husserl that there is a core to consciousness, and rejects his notion of that core as a transcendental ego. The first half of T of E explains how, contrary to Husserl's assertion, there is no such phenomenon as an ego that is found to reside within consciousness. There are no residents within consciousness, in fact, as will become a staple of Sartre's philosophy.

The concept of consciousness as used by Sartre broadly states that consciousness is the manner of existence, unique to human beings, that has the capacity both to be aware of *objects*, and to be aware of *itself being aware of objects* (though for Sartre, not simultaneously). In other words, a rock or a book, for example, can be objects *for* consciousness (in that consciousness can look at a book and apprehend it) and *consciousness* can also be an object for consciousness (such that consciousness can reflect upon itself and say, 'I am looking at a book.'), but not at the same time in the same act of consciousness: this will be given a more detailed explanation shortly.

Even those beings that do appear to have *some kind* of consciousness, like dogs, are not to be considered as consciousness in the phenomenological sense. This is because, as Sartre says in a slightly later work, '*The sole manner of existing for a consciousness is in having consciousness that it exists*.'[40] Dogs, for example, are able to act upon inert objects and they can even do so with reference to some event that has not happened yet but that they want to happen (i.e. my dog bringing me a ball to throw): but to speak of a dog doing this in the terms that we use in phenomenology when referring to acts of consciousness, like 'intend', is inaccurate.

One of the defining features of consciousness is *intentionality*, a notion adopted from Husserl (who adopted the concept from Brentano), which states that all consciousness is consciousness *of* an object whether that object is a rock, another person, or that consciousness

[40] *Imagination*: 113.

itself. This means that all activity of consciousness is aimed *outwards*, in a dynamic, directed manner, such that it is an error to speak of thoughts, images or ideas being 'held within the mind'. Desires, beliefs, opinions and all other intentions are intentions towards objects, whether that object is immediately present (like the water glass in front of me) or not. I can project my desires outward to intend an object, and transform it into a state of affairs that is preferable to me: I can also reflect upon my action, and be non-positionally aware of myself performing that action. This is reflective consciousness, and to be described phenomenologically as consciousness a being must have the ability to be both pre-reflective and reflective. This is not the manner in which a dog has consciousness.

Of course, dogs can form meaningful relationships with others, learn from past experiences, and project (somewhat) their intentions towards some object that they want to do something with, or some state of affairs that has yet to occur: but dogs cannot reflect upon their *own* consciousness. They are aware of themselves fetching a ball but do not have the capacity to, in another act of consciousness, form the thought or sentence '*I* am fetching the ball'. My dog's consciousness cannot be aware *of itself as consciousness*. Plants cannot perform these actions either, nor do they have the kind of consciousness (if their manner of world-apprehension can be called consciousness) that could form an abstract thought of some future occurrence or state of affairs: to speak of a plant 'wanting' some event to occur and then making it occur, like a eucalypt 'intending' to change sunlight into glucose through photosynthesis, is inaccurate phenomenologically.

To return to the discussion of the ego, this means that for Sartre the ego is not immanent to (within) consciousness, but transcendent to it (existing beyond it). Let us now define the term 'transcendent'. Sarah Richmond explains that, as Sartre's main target of criticism in this essay is Husserl (and as suggested by the essay's title), Sartre's use of the term is informed by Husserl as a kind of opposite to the Husserlian term 'immanence'.[41] For

[41] Richmond 2004: vi.

Husserl objects of consciousness are immanent to it if every aspect of the object is present in the same conscious experience; a sensation of heat when one touches a lit stove, for example, is situated within consciousness as it is presented to consciousness as a whole and with no smaller or unexperienced parts.[42]

Transcendent objects have characteristics that go beyond what is present to consciousness in the experience of the object; this includes physical objects the whole of which cannot be seen from one perspective in one viewing, but are only ever seen in instances. This is the sense of transcendence Sartre uses when discussing the ego in T of E: it is not a content of consciousness, but an object for it that exists externally to it, and is an ideal object which exists beyond me but which I falsely assume is the source of my feelings, actions and the like. Richmond also notes that the title suggests that in addition to claiming that the ego is not transcendental but transcendent, that as transcendent the ego is not some resident of consciousness, but an activity *of* and object *for* consciousness: in this essay that presents a reasoned alternative to traditional or given philosophical viewpoints, Sartre is giving his readers a push to transcend the false conception of the ego that those viewpoints offer. [43]

Sartre argues that it is not an ego but consciousness itself that is transcendental[44]. Rather than an ego making sense of and giving continuity and coherence to my experience of reality, it is consciousness itself that does this through the constitution of a transcendent ego. The transcendent ego that consciousness constructs has a public aspect in that it is accessible to and able to be understood by others, and is the phenomenon that the psychologists (who are frequent targets of Sartre's ire) attempt to study. This ego is comprised of three phenomena – actions, states and qualities – that are put into a unity or synthesis, or constituted, by consciousness, acting as unifying instrument itself. In other words, when Sartre says that

[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Howells 1988: 2. As Howells notes immediately after this, in his later writing Sartre stops using 'transcendental' altogether: Howells suggests this may have been done to move away from suggestions of Kantianism. This is implicitly supported by Sarah Richmond, who notes that though Sartre does use Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* as a beginning segue into the problem of the ego, rather than focusing on Kant the target of -Sartre's criticism in this essay is clearly Husserl.

consciousness constitutes the world, he means that consciousness unifies and brings coherence to the experiences it has including its interactions with the world by way of putting states, actions and qualities together into a synthetic whole.

As we have seen, this transcendent ego is a phenomenon outside of consciousness. As well as being outside of it, the ego is often, even usually, not immediately present to consciousness. We know that a fundamental tenet of Sartre's phenomenology, originally Husserl's and enthusiastically taken up by Sartre, is that consciousness is fundamentally intentional, always directed *at* some object. But consciousness is not always aware of the 'I' and it requires another act of consciousness to bring it into being, which Sartre calls a reflective act.

The ego only becomes present upon reflection, in reflective acts of consciousness. A reflective act of consciousness takes place when consciousness is not aware of itself, only of an external object or state: for example when I read a novel, I am aware only of the novel itself, and it takes another separate act of consciousness for me to become conscious of the fact, and be able to say, 'I am reading.' I can become self-conscious at any point in time but I cannot do both at once: as Phyllis Sutton Morris notes, 'It is clear that Sartre believes that nothing could be at once both the subject and the object of a reflective act'[45]. She argues that support for this idea can be provided by the idea of consciousness' intentionality that Sartre takes up from Husserl: in intending an object, directing our attention towards it, we necessarily step back from it, since to see an object is necessarily not-to-be that object.[46] Thus as I sit at my desk writing this thesis, the 'I' that would say 'I am writing,' is not the same 'I' that is writing the thesis.

The ego that appears in reflective consciousness is a transient phenomenon and unfortunately, 'the psychologists' (Sartre is prone to generalisations) are not in the position to

[45] Morris 1985: 185.
[46] Ibid.

attempt analysis of it, though this is their subject when they practice psychology. As a matter of fact, anyone trying to analyse the ego as an object will be led only to opaque and disjointed conclusions. The reason for this is that consciousness can never gain clear unfettered access to the 'I', or have any view of it that is not necessarily opaque: as the ego is not immanent to consciousness but is transcendent to it and outside of it, it is not possible to locate or examine it by looking inward, into the structures of consciousness itself. In trying to get a handle on the ego this way we get a shift between the reflective mode of consciousness (in which the ego becomes apparent), and non-reflective consciousness which attempts to zone in on a target not present to it: one that has 'disappeared'[47], as Howells says.

This leads us to a counterintuitive claim: that 'I have no privileged knowledge of myself'[48] in that I am no more aware of and have no greater access to my own 'I' than anyone else simply by virtue of being that 'I'. I can only know my own self to the same extent that I can know the selves of others. The only knowledge that I have of myself is attained in the same way as my knowledge of other people is, by observing, interpreting and cataloguing behaviour and trying to make those behaviours coherent. To try to look at myself just as I would another self is also a mistaken enterprise, however: to try this is to take an erroneous standpoint from the beginning of the enterprise, since I would be attempting to believe in what I know is my own creation.[49] If I were able to be an object for myself in this manner, Sartre says that this would pose a great problem for my idea of freedom: a real 'inner life', as Howells says this would be, would in fact deny and restrict the freedom of my consciousness, disabling its spontaneity.[50]

Spontaneity is defined at this stage as another essential feature of consciousness such that consciousness is a 'sheer activity transcending towards objects'[51] that creates its own

[47] Howells 1988: 3.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Howells 1988: 3.
[50] Howells 1988: 5.
[51] Williams & Kirkpatrick 1957: 21.

existence, *sui generis* and *ex nihilo*, in each conscious act. This spontaneity appears in pre-reflective consciousness, but does not come from the ego either. Sartre reverses the 'commonly accepted thesis' that ideas and experiences 'personalise themselves by becoming conscious'[52], and argued that ideas and thoughts do not come about prior to consciousness, but that consciousness is an 'impersonal spontaneity', meaning that there are no phenomena that exist prior to it as the aforementioned theory describes thoughts. Consciousness is impersonal in this way, and determines its own existence in each unique act of consciousness without their being created prior to those acts. This means that, since the nature of consciousness is spontaneity and any 'I' that appears is not essential or intrinsic to us, that grounds us and gives us coherence – in short, since 'I' as a subject am a 'derived entity'[53] - then feelings of alienation, disenfranchisement and the like will not be too far behind.

We have seen how consciousness is void of content, and all its activity is intentional. So, the core of consciousness is in fact a nothingness. Consciousness has nothingness at its core but must somehow define itself – this entails that at any given time, consciousness can sever ties to its past such that even the things about my past which are unalterable, such as the place in which I was born or my first language, are not determinant of my future states of affairs: I am utterly, completely, indisputably *free*. This is not a comforting realisation, however. I cannot decide *not* to be free: this is also unalterable, making it part of my *facticity*. I am free to, indeed must, be the sole determinant of all my actions in the present and future. I am do have some boundaries I exist within, of course, such as laws of physics and nature (I am not free, for instance, to decide to be another foot taller): but these things cannot explain what I do in the future and responsibility for my actions within those parameters lies squarely with me. Most importantly, those parameters do not determine my self: I must constitute my 'I'.

[52] T of E: 98.
[53] Carney 2007: 21.

Sartre suggests that the idea that we have some constant and immanent underlying structure of self to which we can ascribe feelings, behaviours and the like, is easier to deal with than the idea of complete, undeniable freedom, even if that self is very restrictive or even almost unbearable to us or to others. He claims that this is why we are rather pleased to find ourselves acting as if we acted at times in accordance with a character trait or other psychic trait that was inherent to us, rather than realising the spontaneous nature of consciousness and the derivative nature of the self. In fact we look for patterns that reinforce this idea, even patterns that we take to be fettering to our wants and needs.

For example, if one half of a couple is unhappy with the other because of some action or behaviour, such as never wanting to go out somewhere fun like a restaurant or club, the other half might excuse himself by saying that he is 'just not that kind of person'. Rather than taking full responsibility for those actions and acknowledging that each time he acts in that way is a separate intentional act of consciousness not determined by an immanent self (though our couple would probably not put it that way), and that at each time he could freely choose otherwise, the first half blames them on some aspect of his personality: he is an introvert and just inherently different to someone else who is an extrovert, perhaps. He may add that he wishes he could change to suit his other half, but he cannot: it is part of his character to act in this manner. He might even say that surely he cannot be blamed for that.

More worrying than the idea of the restrictive parameters and even of the potentially unpleasant aspects of 'my' 'personality' is the idea that in reality I do not have one, and therefore cannot account for or put blame upon it for my behaviours which, it turns out upon reflection, I can in fact freely choose from the outset. This might seem to be slightly out of sync with the idea of freedom of consciousness being bound by its facticity, as that facticity also includes past actions and behaviours that have entailed unalterable consequences. But it is not the case that those behaviours came about because of character or personality: this is the unreflective stance that consciousness initially takes and upon reflection, that attitude changes

and enables consciousness to see that its future actions are not bound by any personality trait or aspect of character, held within consciousness. Consciousness must constitute its own self and by doing so act as unifier of its experiences in the manner that Husserl said the transcendental ego, residing within consciousness, would do: in the absence of this transcendental ego, consciousness must self-constitute. So it is in the constitution of an 'I' in which consciousness is firstly and ultimately free: Howells says that it is in the domain of the constitution of a self 'that we are necessarily most free but feel it least'[54]. 'Psychological essentialism', as Howells notes, is a comforting set of ideas precisely because it reinforces these desirable but misguided ideas about stability of character and consistency of self.[55] But our ability to form our own character and constitute our own 'essence', as well as change it how and when we like, is what makes us ultimately different from all other forms of being: this is the basis for our freedom as consciousness.

Unfortunately, the realisation of this freedom only comes about upon dissolution of the sense of self, and this dissolution of the self and attending revelation of essential freedom, though it feels uncanny and unnatural, is the very subject of the novel *Nausea*, and the central preoccupation of its protagonist. We shall now turn to *Nausea* and Roquentin, and examine how he navigates the terrain in order to show how the presentation of the ideas we have just discussed from the perspective of experience and of human existence is at once edifying and crucial to the relationship between existentialist theory and existentialist literature.

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[54] Howells 1988: 2.
[55] Ibid.

Part 2: Roquentin, Dissolution and Reconstitution of the Self

In this part we shall see why the novel *Nausea* is necessary for the theory of the transcendent ego outlined above, which carries with it the ramification that the self is in fact constituted by consciousness, and that this realisation and the realisation of the spontaneity of consciousness and the freedom it entails are unsettling conclusions to come to. One of the ways in which the novel is essential is in its ability to take on a style appropriate to the situation that allows the reader to respond to that situation as if it were really occurring, which Amy Kleppner notes from reading de Beauvoir is one of the main reasons why the existentialist authors wrote novels, and in doing so were able to embark on a collaborative relationship with their readers. Existentialist authors present situations that prompt readers to react and engage with the ideas presented via situations in the novel as if they were responding to and engaging with events happening in reality. Reconstruction of events in a fictional setting enables the author to present experiences *as experiences*, 'embodied in an imaginative framework.'[56] Part of the strength of the novel present these experiences in a fictional setting is the ability of the author to adopt a literary style befitting the ideas in question, and the necessarily opaque and personal nature of the experience *as experienced*. The epistolary style in which *Nausea* is written is a significant key to the importance of the novel to the theoretical text.

Christina Howells notes that Roquentin is quite non-traditional for a Sartrean character, in that his preoccupation with his self (or, as she remarks, the lack of it) and its constitution figure prominently in his life and dealings with the world.[57] His various remarks on the events occurring in his life that are to do with his self and his character, and the gradual realisation that those phenomena are contingent and not grounded in reality, are indeed extensive and detailed.

[56] Kleppner 1964: 209.
[57] Howells 1988: 53.

In fact Roquentin senses this realisation early on, and it is partly this that motivates him to keep a diary, to track what is occurring and try to get to the bottom of it. It seems that a diary would be the perfect mode of expression for anyone particularly concerned with the relationship between himself and his world, particularly if he wants to discover truths about himself. In his notes taken down on an 'undated sheet',[58] before the actual beginning of the diary, he gives a statement of purpose that sounds quite scientific and methodical:

> The best thing would be to write down everything that happens from day to day. To keep a diary in order to understand. To neglect no nuances or little details, even if they seem unimportant, and above all to classify them.[59]

Roquentin explains his decision to keep a diary to get to the bottom of the strange incidents that have been occurring, such as the odd occurrence with the pebble on the beach, and it is important to note that in the first instance, Roquentin begins his diary to record how *things* are changing, not how he himself is undergoing a change:

> I must say how I see this table, the street, people, my packet of tobacco, since *these* are the things which have changed…all these changes concern objects. At least, that is what I'd like to be sure about.[60]

But soon enough, the growing sense of incoherence he feels perseveres even after he is sure that the uneasiness plaguing him for days has left him: thus he begins the diary by noting the feeling, rather like a premonition, perhaps, that some change is occurring in his very self even when he is not aware of it:

> But I have to admit I am subject to these transformations…consequently a host of little metamorphoses accumulate in me without my noticing it, and then, one fine day, a positive revolution takes place. That is what had given my life this halting, incoherent aspect.[61]

But it is not really Roquentin who changes, either, or perhaps change is not the right word. The circumstances surrounding Roquentin's existence remain as they always were in the

[58] *Nausea*: 9.
[59] *Nausea*: 9-10. Original italics.
[60] Ibid.
[61] *Nausea*:14.

sense that the change Roquentin senses is not in fact a change, but a revelation of the nature of his existence as a contingent, superfluous being. We are witness to his gradually becoming aware of the inconstancy and unreality of the self he thought he had, and that contrary to what he would perhaps like to think, he is the ultimate determining agent in all his choices, even those he thought constrained by his own personality: which as we have seen Sartre thinks must be unpleasant indeed. In the end, his very sense of self disappears, bringing him to the point of a completely impersonal consciousness. We are privy to Roquentin's progressive realisation of the emptiness of the self and the increasing sense of alienation and objectification he undergoes throughout the novel, in that he increasingly realises that rather than being a somewhat privileged subject, his 'self' is in fact an object like all other objects. In this, we see the demonstration of the self being an object in the world and not immanent to consciousness, towards which consciousness is outwardly directed.

Throughout the diary, the sets of actions and objects that he thought made up his 'I' – the biography of the grand M. de Rollebon, the possibly fixable (he thinks) relationship with ex-girlfriend Anny – all dissipate, and what he is left with is a large, empty sense of his own contingent, incoherent existence. The diary has some usefulness for Roquentin himself, recording the disintegration of the self he thought he had, and the realisation of its contingency and unreality. His consciousness (as consciousness does) has become a kind of revelatory mechanism, which as intentionality discovers the being-for-itself in every act of consciousness. No act of consciousness gives Roquentin the ability to reflect upon one's suspended judgements about the world and objects in order to look at his 'pure' consciousness as Husserl would like to do. This is because consciousness, identified with intentionality, can never be fully divorced from the existing world of objects. It is outside of itself, in the world with the intended objects, and does not exist independently of that world. It 'is outside, *in the world*. It is a being of the world, like the ego of another.'[62]

[62] T of E: 1.

Roquentin's diary is an attempt to see himself and what is happening to him as someone else might see him, or as he might view some object outside of him (like the root of the tree in the municipal park): objectively and somewhat scientifically. This is a clear demonstration of the fact that the 'I' that appears in reflective consciousness is born from the desire of consciousness to see itself as another - or an Other - would see it; 'to posit itself as an object in the manner of the consciousness of the "Other".'[63] A rather effective way for consciousness to do this from that standpoint would seemingly be to keep a diary of experiences, situations and actions. In doing so consciousness keeps the diary for another self – in fact, its own future self, given that a diary is not usually meant to be read by anyone else - to examine, explore and learn from the past self, the original writer of the diary. In this process, consciousness tries to discover itself, its circumstances and situations, and truths about its reality and existence. Howells has drawn our attention to the fact that adopting an external stance, trying to see my self as if I were an Other, will fail in the attempt to discover the structures of my own self.

Usually, as Joseph Catalano reminds us, reflection is not a good method to use when trying to understand one's self – this is because, as Sartre shows in T of E, the self that is engaged in the act of reflecting is not the self that is being reflected upon. Catalano notes how *Nausea* is a demonstration of the reciprocal nature of the relationship between consciousness and the world.[64] In particular, it shows how consciousness is always firstly conscious of something other than itself: rather than ceasing engagement with anything but his own consciousness or stopping what he is doing to devote himself to reflection, Roquentin is moved to begin keeping track of what is happening to him by keeping a diary.

Some coherence to his experiences and actions might have been bestowed by the act of keeping a diary about them: but ultimately, Roquentin abandons the diary and thinks that perhaps he will become an author of fiction, instead. The constitution of this possible future

[63] Robertson 1993.
[64] Catalano 1985: x.

self could serve as an underlying agenda or goal that can unify consciousness and endow it with coherence which at the end of the novel he is still searching for. Phyllis Sutton Morris argues that many who discount Sartre's view on the ego due to an apparent inability to explain how consciousness unifies itself need to look further than T of E, where remarks upon the subject are more fully expressed.[65] Yet rather than looking all the way forward to *Being and Nothingness* as Morris does to find the foundations of Sartre's ideas on the fundamental project, we can see from *Nausea* that the idea of embarking on a project involving constituting a self is a way by which consciousness can unify its experiences, putting them into a complete whole and creating a transcendent ego, gaining constancy and coherence along the way. Morris states how in BN one of the ways in which Sartre accounts for the unity of conscious experience is through the undertaking of a 'fundamental project', which the constitution of an 'ideal future self' is.[66] This ideal future self is different to the transcendent ego: the transcendent ego as an 'integrated series of past actions'[67] is unified by that self. Ultimately Roquentin hits upon the idea that instead of a diary the act of writing fiction might in fact be the ticket to self-constitution, and to acceptance of his existence.

The freedom to constitute ideal or potential selves is given to the writer and reader of fiction, albeit in significantly different ways that it is given to fictional characters. The third part of the chapter will examine this, and show how this is the crux of the relationship between the novel and the theoretical text, in that the novel may be used as an actual background against which to create and posit hypothetical or ideal selves: the novel is in fact an instance of the very freedom of consciousness to constitute a self that we have been discussing.

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[65] Morris 1985: 186.
[66] Morris 1985: 189.
[67] Ibid.

Part 3: The Freedom to Constitute Selves In and With Fiction

Kleppner notes that 'By participating imaginatively in the experiences of men…who act with both complete freedom and complete responsibility, the reader can discover his own potentialities as a free individual'.[68] This demonstrates the deeply interwoven ties between existentialist theory and existentialist literature to the fullest: it will be shown in this third part of the chapter that the novel in fact is an act of freedom in the sense that the positing constitution of hypothetical, fictional selves via fiction is inherent in the novel and thus, the relationship between the theoretical text and the literary text is shown to be entirely inextricable.

Hazel Barnes makes reference to another work by Sartre that comes later on in his oeuvre, the unfinished critical essay-cum-biography of Flaubert, *L'idiot de la Famille* (*The Family Idiot*) (1971-72). Sartre's remarks in that work upon the reader's identification and empathy with a fictional character, and the way in which fiction is so important for the formation of character (by 'character' here we mean the collection of dispositions and traits according to which one acts, reacts, feels and thinks in a certain manner[69]), speak directly to T of E, and echo what has been said in that work but in more depth. As consciousness without a transcendental ego we are always aware that my ego is apart from my consciousness and a product of my amalgamating my experiences in a certain chosen way. The ego becomes a 'quasi-object in the field of the reading consciousness.'[70] I can project it into the ego of the protagonist if I like, or one of the peripheral characters in the novel, making my self identifiable with theirs. In this action the fictional character's history and memories become my own, part of my past. Barnes writes that 'I cannot move into the fictional world of another being without modifying the colour of the world in which I live when I am not reading.'[71] Our

[68] Kleppner 1964: 209.
[69] Webber 2006: 95.
[70] Barnes 1993: 290.
[71] Barnes 1993: 291.

'I's fuse together, mine and the character's, but as reader I am aware that each 'I' is linked with another 'transparent' consciousness, that of the author.

As the character one locks 'I's with, the reader appears to himself as the object that he is in the world. The character's consciousness is an object (or as Barnes puts it 'the hero has been objectified by the author'[72]) and as such I grasp both my consciousness and the character's as objects whilst I myself as reader remain a subject. Barnes refers to the interesting point that though I, the reader, appear to freely 'create' the character and the world he lives in through the intersection of the words on the page and my imagination,[73] I am dependent upon the intention and predefined parameters of the author such that my apparently free creation becomes a recreation, 'guided by the inscribed intention of the author.'[74] Those parameters, the characters and their world, all the details have already been set down by the author of the novel.

These parameters, the facticity of the characters as it were, are also able to be transcended: but clearly not by the character. However the power of fiction means that through the fusion of my 'I' with the character's 'I', I can see how they might have acted and thought, and thus engage with and react to the presented conjectural scenarios like I would react to events happening in reality. Reading *Nausea*, it is quite clear from Roquentin's diary that, for example, the relationship with Anny that he initially thinks might be saved is doomed from the time she writes to see him. His encounter with her surprises and disconcerts him, as he is surprised to find her much changed: it appears they had both wanted one another to remain as each other was years ago when they were lovers and are unhappy, even irritated, to find that this is not now the case. They had both placed some phenomenon of their own identities into that relationship even when it ceased to be, such that their present existence apart was still affected by it.

[72] Ibid.
[73] For more on this see chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis.
[74] Ibid.

But in Roquentin's diary accounts of the history of their relationship and the events leading up to their meeting, it is quite obvious that this sense is misplaced. *We* know almost immediately that this relationship will never get off the ground again, and we are able to imagine ourselves in Roquentin's (or Anny's) place, and think of what we would have done in that scenario. We are able to transcend the fictional facticity, and in doing so, though we are still incapable (if we are being true to the story) of changing what has happened to those characters before, we can imagine ourselves *as* those characters transcending their facticity, or imagine other circumstances for those characters to attempt transcendence of. The novel serves as a microcosm of this theory in action: and importantly, it does so in a test-case environment, as we thought that it might in the same way that Landy showed that Proust's novel does.

This transcendence also applies to the writer. In the exercise of writing fiction, freedom is given to the author to construct selves, worlds, and their interactions exactly as one wishes, *ex nihilo*. With this construction of self in character form, fiction authors have the freedom also to project a universal element of self into the future. When one writes fiction one writes for a reader, who may be an indeterminate other: even one's self in the future, perhaps. Writers of fiction (and perhaps diaries) are able to transcend their *own* finitude and facticity, projecting what we may call a universal dimension of self which can then be passed through time, transcending the writer. Roquentin realises something like this at the end of the novel when discussing that if he were to write a novel for people in the future to read, 'who would say 'It was Antoine Roquentin who wrote it, he was a red-headed fellow who hung about in cafés'…'[75] By doing this, the self that he could potentially find (constitute) through writing a novel would be transmissible throughout time and to innumerable unseen other selves, engaging with what could perhaps be termed a universal plane or domain of selfhood.

[75] *Nausea*: 252.

Here the real importance of the novel to the fundamental tenet of the theory covered in T of E and in Sartre's existentialism becomes clear: writing a novel is also an act of the freedom given to consciousness to constitute a self. It is a tangible instance of the theory in that an author is given great freedom to create selves, and situations, in fiction. The fiction author can place all manner of selves in a plethora of different worlds, constrained only by imagination. This is some freedom: if as we have seen freedom lies in the ability to self-constitute and capacity for self-creation, once we realise the contingency and unreality of the self we think we have, then writing fiction is a great exercise of this freedom. Fiction allows one to posit selves without constituting them (at least not in the same way as I constitute myself). That self does not have to be myself, either, but it can be a projected version.

In his autobiography, *Les Mots* (*Words*) (1964), Sartre makes this statement:

> At thirty I executed the masterstroke of writing in *Nausea* – quite sincerely, you can believe me – about the unjustified, bitter existence of my fellow men and giving vindication to my own. *I was* Roquentin: through him I showed, without complacency, the framework of my life; at the same time I was *myself*…[76]

Perhaps this quotation means that Sartre used Roquentin as a kind of avatar to expose the fabric of his own life - but Rolls and Rechniewski discuss a film, *Vingt ans d'absence*, which shows Sartre saying that he had never personally experienced the kind of nausea that Roquentin has, or had the kind of reaction (described aptly as 'visceral') that Roquentin has to the facticity of his existence within the world.[77] It may be more to the point that Sartre uses Roquentin to show the structure inherent to human life in general and its fundamental lack of coherence, which the self must impose on life instead of its being there inherently. It also suggests creation of a posited self and world constructed to see what kind of interactions they would have. We note that the interactions between Roquentin and his world are quite unpleasant, and culminate in the realisation of the derivative nature of his self.

[76] *Les Mots*: 210.Own translation.
[77] Rolls & Rechniewski 2005: p. 2.

As we want to posit egos or selves in fiction and also say that I have one (albeit a constituted one) we might be curious as to what those egos would 'look' like. Jonathan Webber sees no reason to suppose that the claim that the ego is outside of consciousness instead of immanent to it, a part of the world external to consciousness, means that the ego is illusory as could be claimed from certain interpretations of T of E. He argues that Sartre's thought at this point does not entail that just because a phenomenon is external to consciousness does not mean that that phenomenon has no basis in reality.[78] Webber notes that in T of E, Sartre draws an analogy between the ego and a melody.[79] A melody is put together from the arrangement of musical notes we hear played on a musical instrument: a self or ego is put together from the arrangement of observable actions and states. The melody is not an underlying feature of those notes (thus Sartre says that 'it is useless to presuppose an X which would serve as a support for the different notes.'[80]) and this, claims Webber, is sometimes taken to mean that the self or ego has no existence independent of consciousness.

Frankly this claim seems intuitively correct. But Webber's interprets the analogy differently and argues that 'it is as mistaken to read Sartre as claiming that the self or ego does not really exist as it is to read him as claiming that melodies do not really exist. Of course melodies exist!'[81] Webber's basis for interpreting the analogy thus is that the claim that melodies are not objects that have musical notes as properties but are in fact ordered sequences of notes is only to make a claim about what a melody actually is and what kind of existence it has, and that even though we only have access to those melodies by way of the individual notes, those individual notes must be explained by the intentions of those who compose and/or play the melody as they cannot be explained by the melody's existence. Thus Webber argues that when Sartre claims that the ego is constituted, he is not claiming that the ego is not real.

[78] Webber 2008: 24.
[79] T of E: 73-74.
[80] T of E: 73.
[81] Webber 2008: 24.

Webber's justification for this comes from his analysis of the three phenomena, actions, states and qualities, which Sartre claims are usually conceived of as the composites of the ego, when in fact the ego is only comprised of actions and states. There is a distinction made in T of E between the actions and states, which really do exist, and qualities, which do not: still all three are constituted. States are revealed in thoughts, feelings and actions but it is not the case that the state is identifiable with any of those thoughts, feelings or actions: the state is composed of, but not the cause of, those thoughts, feelings and actions that by and in which it is given. The action is similar, existing as a sequence or amalgamation of both mental and physical events, but neither the cause of or contained within those events.

Qualities are described as 'optional unities of states'[82] and 'intermediaries'[83] in T of E to designate the fact that, though we can and do conceive of ourselves (and others) as having some kind of trait that points to an explanation of actions and behaviours, it is mistaken to do so. To postulate the quality as a reason or source from which a state originates, i.e. assuming that if I hate not just Pierre but Paul and Simon as well that this is an sign that I am a hateful person and that hatefulness is a quality of my personality or character, is an act of supererogation. States and actions 'can find directly in the ego the unity they demand.'[84]

The constituted transcendent ego, then, appears to be a real facet of the external world that can be experimented with and scientifically observed just like any other, even though we can only get to it via the more directly accessible actions and states just as we can only constitute a melody through its notes. The fabrication element of the ego lies in the mistaken assumption that qualities are composites of the ego: if one removes this from discussion of the ego as both Webber and Sartre suggest, then one approaches an idea of a self or ego that is real, an object for consciousness and existing independently of it.

[82] T of E: 70.
[83] Ibid.
[84] T of E: 71.

But this has ramifications for the idea of freedom. As Howells notes, the ego is essential for the idea of freedom – the constitution of a self is the domain in which we are in fact most originally free. Without this freedom, there cannot be much more. Whether or not it exists in reality needs addressing: if we discount the qualities which are seen as unreal phenomena but constitute the ego out of the real states and actions, we wonder whether we are in fact less free for that.

It does not seem that we are: in fact it only seems so if one confuses the actual idea of the ultimate freedom of consciousness with the notion that we are able to do whatever we like, and do not have any kind of facticity. Previous states and actions out of which we constitute the ego are elements of this facticity, as all past actions and states are: the constitution of them into a synthetic whole, the self or ego, does not mean that we are then bound by them because of that constitution, or by the fact that they exist in reality. Transcendence, a fundamental distinguishing feature of consciousness, means that though previous states and actions might limit our ability to self-constitute to some extent, we can transcend them such that they do not determine or direct (nor can they be blamed) for any future actions or states. We are not even bound to the ego we then constitute but can fashion it into different things than are given: this is why it is so important to be able to exercise the freedom to create selves in what we could call a laboratory environment. Thus creating an unreality out of a reality is in fact an act of the freedom of consciousness; and in fiction, an author is free to do just this: to compose a self exactly as one composes a melody.

It might also be the case that the intentions of the author are not to be relied upon, though, as this analogy would mean that we only have access to those fictional selves by manner of the states and actions they are said to have, and not the qualities they might seem to possess. This might be counterintuitive when it comes to fictional characters, given that their states and actions are by definition made up as well, but recall that Kleppner says that in existentialist fiction readers are induced to react to the situations posited as if they were

reacting to events in reality: the same remarks about the composites of the ego or self apply, even when that self is fictional. It is true that in many kinds of fiction readers react to situations presented in a similar manner as they would if reacting to the same kind of situation in reality: but the situations presented in existentialist fiction, those dealing with the dissolution of the self, for example, are those that evoke a particular kind of reaction not very similar to other kinds of fiction. Kleppner notes that in presenting experiences with which readers engage and in forming that kind of collaborative relationship, pleasing, entertaining or comforting the reader are not the only (or even the main) factors that come into play as they may well be with many other kinds of fiction (i.e. romantic fiction). She notes that those experiences presented to readers by existentialist authors are 'designed to irritate and to disturb…to produce perplexity and doubt. Successful existentialist works will be not diversions but obsessions; they will present a world not to be seen, but to be changed.'[85] This is the difference between existentialist fiction and other kinds of fiction: entertainment, pleasure, even empathy with characters, are not central focuses of the existentialist work, and it is the shifting of the world as it appears to the reader, causing them to react in a first-person, experiential way, that is the cornerstone of existentialist fiction. The intentions of the composer of the self whether in fiction or not remain obscure to us. However the epistolary form of the novel appears important once again to dispel a tiny part of the blurriness surrounding Roquentin's intentions in considering the hypothetical constitution of an ideal future self through writing fiction at the end of the novel.

Here again the ambiguity of the interplay between Sartre's two modes of expression, this time seen at the end of the novel, is significant for the concept of the relationship between *Nausea* and T of E. At the time we leave him we do not know whether Roquentin is going to write a novel, and we only know his very vague and unclear decisions through his diary. He abandons the diary at just the point when his life might start to get interesting as regards his

[85] Kleppner 1964: 209.

newly realised freedom, waiting for the train out of the town in which the truth of the nausea, the realisation of contingent and superfluous existence, became apparent in the dissolution of even his sense of self. He has not decided whether to do so or how exactly to attempt writing this novel, but only has a vague notion that it might be good to do to regain some sense of self, to create something that he can look back upon and that others can see, that might bring some coherence to his life. Ideally this is what the novel would do: and the ability to do this would lie in the fact that it would be a fictional text.

To work out dilemmas about self-constitution, even to 'try' selves in fictional format, is a freedom given to the writer, which might inform the choice of the self to be constituted. Writing becomes an act of freedom, a constitution of self and of selves. Author and character too can become fused in their selves, the difference between this and the reader/character fusion being that the character is entirely of the author's creation. Writing becomes an act of freedom of self-constitution, the place where Howells says we are originally most free. The exercise of freedom made possible in writing a novel, whereby one is free to constitute a world almost without boundaries or any other constraints (one can even take license with history if one likes) relates to a particular constitution of the self: one can also constitute oneself as writer. This self-constitution as writer brings unity to one's experiences, and allows for the exercise of freedom in creating that self and in positing others which one could then potentially adopt.

We arrive here at a conception of the ego in which the ego is not wholly fabricated by consciousness, but is not something that consciousness can have direct, clear access to, either (as in the earlier example of a melody only being able to be constituted through its component notes). Recall Howells' remarks earlier that if I were to try to see my ego or self from the viewpoint of another my view would necessarily be cloudy, since I would be trying to believe in what I knew I had created myself.[86] If the ego exists outside of consciousness this would

[86] Howells 1998: 3.

remove some of the chains hobbling self-reflection as a method by which to analyse the inner workings of my consciousness: but the fact of the ego's being real does not get us around the fact that, real or not, it still exists outside of consciousness, and thus we cannot look inwards to find and analyse it so I would still have no greater knowledge of my own ego than I would of anyone else's.

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Concluding Remarks

We have shown here that the relationship between T of E and *Nausea* is fundamentally inextricable such that comprehension of both is essential for an understanding of the tenets expressed within the theory, and we have done this by demonstrating two things: first we saw how in *Nausea* Roquentin actually experiences the implications of the theory in posited situations which we as readers react to as if reacting to a real situation, which is an essential component of the collaborative relationship that existentialists try to evoke. He gradually becomes aware of the central notions of the theory, the fact of the freedom to constitute a self, as none exists as an intrinsic component of consciousness but a transient one only appears upon reflection; and this ego or self is not a good vantage point from which to self-analyse. Through a gradual disintegration and finally dissolution of his own self, all recorded in his diary, we see that after the diary and other preconceived notions he had about what made up his self disappeared, writing fiction itself in the form of a novel was hit upon as a possible – only possible as we do not see whether he ever becomes a novelist - project of rebuilding a self. Second, it was shown that fiction can serve as a testing ground for self-constitution for both reader and writer, enabling them to make up a self, to see how it might work within the world and its potential relationships and interactions with other objects for

consciousness. In this positing of and constitution of self and selves lies the freedom of consciousness: thus, reading and writing fiction become acts of freedom.

We have not yet explored the extent of that freedom that we have to constitute a self, as well as the world it dwells in, entails. We are also told that just as there is no transcendental ego underlying consciousness and there as a cause for the emanation of actions or states, even phenomena like our emotions are a matter of freedom. They are not even involuntary reactions to a stimulus but are ways of apprehending the world, and as such are acts of the freedom of consciousness to constitute the world in which it resides. The conceivability and ramifications of this will be covered in the next chapter.

Chapter II

Feeling That Way: *Nausea* and *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*

We have seen that in the early manifestations of Sartrean existentialism part of the way we experience reality and the world around us is as free consciousness: but in the last chapter we saw that although this freedom and final responsibility for all our actions, including the constitution of our very selves, can make us wary and uneasy. This uneasiness motivates us to try to think up ways in which we can put this freedom out of our conscious awareness, to convince ourselves that the buck does not stop with us, but that some other system or phenomenon must have caused some action or behaviour in us. It is important to remember that phenomena that reveal our freedom, such as the transcendent ego, only become apparent upon reflection.

This is also the case for the emotions, as expressed in *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*.[87] This text is indeed an outline, begun as it was as part of a more comprehensive text which never eventuated called *The Psyche*[88]. The first part of this chapter will explicate the conception of emotional consciousness that Sartre articulates in *Emotions*: Howells states that the bulk of Sartre's interest in this work is with respect to our freedom concerning emotions, and it is with specific reference to the concept of freedom that the explication will proceed.

The second half of this chapter will examine the importance that *Nausea* has to *Emotions*, in light of an interview Sartre gave in the same year that *Emotions* was published, in which he makes clear his conviction that literary works tend to have their theoretical philosophical counterparts. He says too that technical matters are not well able to be expressed or worked out in the 'beautiful form' of literature; hence, Sartre says that he was

[87] Hereafter referred to as *Emotions*.
[88] Caws 1992: 1.

'obliged to pair up, so to speak, each novel with an essay. Thus at the same time as *Nausea* I was writing *The Psyche*.'[89] We will consider how that pairing manifests in these two texts. The structure of the pairing-up shows that the novel and theoretical texts are considered to be joined from the earliest conceptions of the theory itself, and the relationship between the two modes of expression of the theory exists even before that theory is fully formed. This is nowhere clearer than in this text: *Emotions* is an outline, although it is extremely comprehensive, and there are evident differences between the concepts as laid out in the texts and some of the emotional experiences written into the novel that are shown in fact to be strengths of the theory and important to its application to the individual human experience of the reader. In particular, as the freedom of consciousness is shown to entail that consciousness has control even of its emotions, we see that the emotional experiences in the novel allow the reader to engage with them in a manner that may catalyse the reader to, in taking a reflective attitude, realise their freedom as consciousness and in doing so reshape or reconsider their conceptions of emotional experience in their own lives: thus realising and exercising their freedom as consciousness.

Emotions takes to task the practice of psychology, and in it Sartre discusses how the practice might benefit from further examination and casting off of certain previously-held dispositions of the philosophy and psychology of emotion in order to reshape itself from a phenomenological perspective. He begins by criticising the psychological systems which have been unable to theorise properly about emotions: the systems must fail, due to their lack of focus on the phenomenological concept from which all else follows, the first-hand experience of consciousness.

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[89] Ibid.

Part 1: Outlining the Theory

In the latter part of the 19th century, psychologist William James had formulated the theory that emotions are no more than the mind's becoming aware of changes in the body.[90] For example, if I am stricken with grief and am crying, that grief has not caused me to cry: the emotion is not what causes the physiological change. Rather, the James-Lange theory proposed that the physiological state is the cause of emotion, such that my crying is what causes the grief: physiological changes precede emotional feeling and unless and until there are these physiological changes, the emotion is not real.[91] This account of emotions comes under fire from Sartre. His main criticism of the James-Lange 'peripheric'[92] idea is that although it recognises that emotions have a physiological state and this state is linked with emotional experience, it does not allow for the meaningful, purposive and cognitive nature of an emotion: and the study of emotions, their structure and their function needs a much wider context.[93]

In *Emotions* Sartre tries to formulate a 'phenomenological psychology', a psychological system that takes into account the essential structures of consciousness without relying on psychic facts like psychologists do, analysing human experience from the outside and then formulating scientific theories to explain human actions. According to Sartre, to gain its psychological facts psychology draws upon experience, but splits experiences into two types: those derived from 'spatial-temporal perception of organised bodies', and those derived from 'intuitive knowledge of ourselves that is called reflexive experience.'[94] From these, the psychologist hopes to arrive at certain psychological 'facts' about behaviour that are inherent in human experience. Sartre contends that the collection of facts that will be arrived at by the psychologist is not shown by psychology to be a collection of *related* facts: the psychologists'

[90] Warnock 1965: 33.
[91] Finger 1994: 276.
[92] *Emotions*: 24
[93] Baugh 1990: 357.
[94] *Emotions*, p. 1.

collection of disparate, fragmentary facts cannot be used to disclose the essential structures of consciousness, for which a phenomenological investigation is needed. Sartre says that a person is made up of more than the sum total of all the collected facts gained by psychological investigation, and that those facts could not form a whole in any case due to their irregular, inconsistent nature.

Further, as Marjorie Grene notes, the facts are non-significant, in that they are just blunt facts of existence ('they are *merely* there'[95]): human consciousness, on the other hand, is significant in the sense that each and every structure and aspect of consciousness 'involves, and, in particular, *means* something about the whole of consciousness.'[96] Sartre describes *Emotions* as an outline of a psychology based on phenomenology that does not need to rely on these psychic facts which are numerous and disconnected in nature as well as their having no relevance at all to individual human experience: the psychologists can try to gather the psychic facts in the world and those facts would not be able to disclose any information about what human experience is like, either for any individual, or for one.

Sartre argues for a phenomenological conception of emotions that places them squarely at the centre of conscious experience, such that emotions can only be adequately described in terms of consciousness. Consciousness has an intentional structure, always directed at an object, such that it *means*[97] objects, signifying an object with its intentions towards it: this is the same for emotions, as part of and a mode of consciousness. The emotion must be, indeed can only be, described in terms of the object that emotional consciousness intends.[98] This is what the James-Lange theory missed: 'the centrality of the *object* of emotion for the subject.'[99]

[95] Grene 1948: 98.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Warnock 1965: 36.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Fell 1965: 14. Original italics.

Much like the self or ego, the emotion is a transcendent phenomenon that exists as a fusion of separate experiences that are put into a pattern by consciousness, and the resulting whole comes to be seen as a reason or cause for ensuing behaviour and thus a choice of action. Emotions in Sartre's account are active affective states. They are intentional acts of consciousness upon an object: the object in this case is the world and its objects, and the action performed upon it is to transform it.

By transforming the world we do not mean that the consciousness has acted upon the world to change it in reality. In the case of a situation that I cannot or will not deal with directly, one that has become unbearable and which I cannot see a rational way out of 'when the paths traced out become too difficult, or we can see no path,'[100] an emotion such as anger is the temporary imposing of a partial and paltry substitute for the behaviour that should have been, but could no longer be, used to solve a problem. In responding with anger to a situation, the person who apprehends the situation and comes to the conclusion that they cannot come up with a viable solution to the problem they have been faced with, in their world of normal causes and effects, acts upon the world in order to transform it: this action is taken instead of the more rational action which is no longer accessible to consciousness. Reality itself, the real world, is not modified at all: but the emotion allows the illusion that I have escaped from reality and entered a transformed world, the magical world, wherein I am able to escape my situation rather than being unable to deal with it in the reality I (think I have) escaped from. The magical world is a world in which consciousness must perform an action which it has not got the required means to perform: and only in a magical world, an entire *world*, not just an isolated and thus incongruous instance, can consciousness act without the means to do so. I must slip into a whole other world.

[100] *Emotions*: 58.

To further explain these notions, Sartre gives the example of bantering with his friend, and at last being unable to come up with a witty riposte to his friend's last remark.[101] In becoming angry with his friend, Sartre substitutes the emotion (irrationally getting angry and haughty, perhaps) for the action now apprehended as unavailable (acting rationally responding in kind). This substitution points to the function of an emotion, which is twofold: to allow one to solve an internal conflict while simultaneously absolving one of responsibility to act on the problem at hand.

The anger that person A has does not affect person B, the antagonist, in reality, in any way that can actually change the situation or solve the problem of not being able to come up with another rejoinder. Unable to act rationally, or to perform some action that will actually serve to solve the difficult dilemma, person A only affects his apprehension of the situation such that through the irrational pseudo-solution of anger person A transforms the world such that s/he enters the magical world.

In this magical world, person A projects certain phenomena onto objects (in this case person B) that allow person A to see the argument as somehow won, without having to make a witty rejoinder – in other words, solving the problem without actually solving the problem, perhaps by claiming that person B has gone too far. Person A becomes, as Sartre says, 'the kind of being who is satisfied with crude and less well adapted solutions'.[102] The magical solution allows person A to come to see person B as annoying, rude or some equally distasteful quality in a transformation of the world that make person B, not person A himself, the one with the problem. Person A sees the problem as a clear defect in person B's character that nothing person A could do would change, thereby entirely absolving person A of the necessity of making clever repartee: no matter how witty person A's badinage might be (or not), person B would still be an arrogant annoyance.

[101] *Emotions*: 27, 37-39. We may assume this scenario is hypothetical.
[102] *Emotions*: 37.

Before we go further, it is essential to note the fact that emotional consciousness is initially unreflective. Emotional consciousness (like other modes of consciousness) is such that it is wholly 'engrossed in the objects of its concern.'[103] In apprehending the world in order to transform it thus, person A does not think that the qualities projected onto person B (i.e. the qualities of arrogance and rudeness) are in fact projections – via the transformation of the world into a magical world, person A really does experience the magical world such that person B is actually arrogant and irritable and really does think s/he is arrogant and rude - but that is what they are. Simple projection of qualities is not the entire story of what happens here: projection like this is not solely restricted to emotional consciousness, but occurs in all modes of consciousness. Emotion is a relationship between consciousness and the world: the reason for the transformation of the entire world in emotional consciousness is that this world of the emotions has to be one that consciousness can *believe* in, one that is internally consistent and coherent. This is only possible if everything about that world changes: hence projection entails the slip into the magical world, not simply ascription of qualities.

We must be aware also that when Sartre describes the emotions as both transcendent syntheses of past actions and states and as 'magical', in that they permit us to elude reality for a time, he is not saying that emotions are necessarily faked, or disingenuous in any way. Sometimes they are: I might actively pretend to be happy for someone else when I really am less than thrilled, or maybe pretend I am angrier than I actually am if I want to make a point. But when I am in the grip of emotion, I really do believe that I am angry with my friend who has bested me with a remark, and I do believe I am angry with him because he really is an arrogant person and doesn't listen to anyone else's voice but his own. In short I as unreflective emotional consciousness absolutely believe that the magical world into which I have transformed the real world through my emotions *is real*. My anger is the way in which the world appears to me: thus Sartre's claim that the emotions are a way of apprehending the

[103] Fell 1965: 14.

world. The consciousness that experiences emotions really does experience them: 'Emotion may be chosen, it is nonetheless undergone.'[104]

So if I am not aware that my anger, say, is not caused by the person who (I think) is making me angry, and given that as we have seen all consciousness is conscious of some phenomenon (i.e. there is no room for any Freudian-style unconscious), it seems peculiar that I do not apprehend the world in such a manner that I have choices over my emotions: in most cases of 'genuine' emotion, I certainly do not feel that I do. To claim that we actively choose to passively feel emotion is perplexing.

To try to get to grips with that, one phenomenon must be cleared up which perhaps we should have got to before: to identify Sartre's conception of freedom with the ordinary conceptions of the notions of free will is an error, and leads to misrepresentation of Sartre's theory. Howells notes that there is what she describes as a 'facile' view of Sartre's concept of freedom which takes Sartre's somewhat radical view of human freedom and draws the wrong conclusions: that consciousness is completely uninhibited and unfettered in its pursuits, and that choice and will are unconstrained to an irrational degree. This point of view is clearly mistaken: we have already seen that the facticity of consciousness does impose boundaries upon it, and past actions and states are unalterable. Howells notes that the concepts of choice and will in Sartre's work are often 'mistrusted' by him, and seen as simplifications used by consciousness in the exercise of rationalisation and justification for decisions made in the context of self-deception, and are often employed as a cover or mask for genuine choice so that consciousness does not have to confront the ultimate freedom it has to determine its actions. The real experience we have of choice is different: 'Real choice and apparent decision-making are not identical and may at times be at odds.'[105]

[104] Howells 1988: 5.
[105] Howells 1988: 54.

In his work (including his novels, which we shall arrive at shortly) consciousness is never characterised or described as entirely beyond limitation but is always shown as embodied and situated, constrained by facticity. In the case of the emotions, Sartre does not and never intends to imply that physiological changes or reactions do not factor in to the emotional sphere, or that we can be free of them via willpower or the recognition that an emotion is a behavioural choice. Bodily sensation and response can indeed be beyond my power to change or do away with even if the behaviour attending my emotion is not, nor the mistaken ascription of my emotion to a wrong cause. These physiological states are part of emotional experience, 'a hard-core of somatic response irreducible to interpretation in terms of the freedom of consciousness.'[106] As if in a dream, emoting consciousness becomes a kind of prisoner of its emotional world. The genesis of the emotion is spontaneous but experience of it is a passive act. So, whilst we choose our emotions, we really do have them and, through their manifestations in physiological changes and states, they 'tend towards their own perpetuation'[107]: firstly because the fact of the physiological response is an immutable part of it, and second because it is impossible for consciousness to posit the world as, for example, hateful, neutral and uplifting at the same time. This is an odd circumstance, bringing about the interesting situation of feeling alienated from even one's own body. Annoyingly enough, emotions have the tendency to self-propagate via said physiological states, making it a real difficulty for consciousness to get out of the magical world it has created for itself since all the evidence suggests (before reflection) that the way it is apprehending the world (i.e. through the gaze of emotion) is how it is.

Fortunately, we are able to get out of the captivity that we are under via an act of reflection. Sartre argues that in the first instance, the emotional consciousness is unreflective. Recall the discussion in T of E about reflective consciousness – in the same way that the consciousness that writes is not directly conscious of writing, the emotion of, say, fear, is not

[106] Howells 1988: 7.
[107] Howells 1988: 55.

identified with the consciousness of being afraid. In T of E, Sartre had argued for a conception of consciousness as always thetically aware of an object, and non-positionally aware of itself – consciousness is usually conscious of phenomena, but not of its being conscious of them. One may not be, and is not usually, directly conscious of the emotions one has – unreflective emotional consciousness is only ever non-positionally aware of itself, too. Reflection can allow consciousness to escape the vortex of emotion that it has created for itself since as we saw in the last chapter unreflective consciousness is always able to make the shift into reflective consciousness, but this is not easy to do, especially in light of the fact that reflective consciousness often is more prone to attempts at justification for its emotions via further study of the object that, in non-reflective consciousness, it appears caused the emotion. This it would rather do than recognise the 'affective, value laden charge' as projections, or face up to the fact that the only bearer of responsibility for constituting the 'emotional world in which I find myself trapped'[108] is me.

In short, emotions are modes of world-apprehension. They function as substitutes for real engagement, as avoidance mechanisms for difficult or unbearable situations: via a shift of consciousness, which we recall is originally non-reflective, consciousness attempts escape into a magical world in which that unsolvable conflict or insurmountable problem is done away with by making it 'so' that the problem with which I must deal in reality is displaced or projected elsewhere, or I am distanced from it in some way. Importantly, as the emotional consciousness is initially unreflective, I really do apprehend the world as transformed: I believe in the transformed world, and I believe in my emotion. The psychological state of emotion catalyses a physical reaction, which in turn is perpetuated by that reaction, thus the comment that they are actively chosen but passively undergone. Extracting oneself from the magical world can be done, but with difficulty: reflection reinstates consciousness as the arbiter of its magical world, but has the tendency to behave as more of a justificatory

[108] Howells 1998: 6.

mechanism than a disclosive one. The unpleasant realisation of freedom and responsibility that reflective consciousness entails means that unreflective emotional consciousness would rather stay in its magical world: consciousness can, upon reflection, come back to the world of the real but this is not easy. Consciousness at first attempts to justify its emotional reaction with respect to the object that it pre-reflectively thought caused the emotion, looking for evidence that proves it right.

Sartre's early philosophical works are remarkable demonstrations of his ability to pack a dense, complex system of thought into such small volumes. Recall that the entire web of concepts discussed to this point is only an unfinished outline of a phenomenological system. For an outline, it is very thorough. We will proceed now to an analysis of that literary counterpart and its relationship to the novel. Given the depth of the theoretical concepts we cannot expect the relationship to be straightforward, but as we have already seen considering the reader's ease is not a requirement for existentialist fiction.

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Part 2: The 'Pairing Up' of *Emotions* and *Nausea*

This section of the chapter will examine the theory we have just seen in the context of Sartre's claim that it was intended to match up with the novel. We are particularly interested here in the fact that the theory intended as *Nausea*'s foil is an outline of a philosophical principle, and that it was initially written as a first part to a larger work. We note, along with Howells, that *Emotions* is clearly not a rough draft or an imprecise proposal of vague ideas, but is in fact a detailed and refined work that is comprehensive in its elucidation of a philosophical position: outline is something of a misnomer, though it is also true that this is just the beginning of a bigger and more complete work that was never finished.

We must first consider the sense in which the two are to be considered a pair. It is more than just the fact that they were written at the same time. Sartre's claim, as noted by Caws, that 'technical matters' of theoretical texts are not able to be given expression in literary art and that this is the reason for a pairing up of *Nausea* and *Emotions*, could be viewed as stating that *Nausea's* mode of expression of the ideas in *Emotions* cannot do philosophical work with respect to them. This claim is clearly false when we consider the nature of Sartre's literary works and their content, much of which is clearly and specifically to do with the concepts and notions put forward by the philosophical disciplines within which he works.

Caws notes that Sartre's whole life of writing is to do with both sorts of text, the 'technical' philosophical works and the 'beautiful' literary ones: he felt it necessary to write both.[109] We should consider the claim in light of the quotation from another interview with Sartre that we have previously seen, that if he had more fully conceptualised the 'technical matters' of the theory, he would have written not a novel but a theoretical text. This implies that the novel's role is specifically to do with working out said technical matters in a manner that helps to develop them so that they can be put into a conceptual, technical framework, once worked out with the help of the novel. This is the nature of the pairing. We see that it exists from the earliest conception of the philosophical idea or schema, and before the two texts are even completely conceptualised. Literature is intended to help work out vague and obscure ideas so that they can be given technical expression in an essay or treatise, which in turn presents the ideas found in the literary work as a philosophical schema. In Sartre's philosophy, literary texts must exist alongside philosophical ones even if there is not the kind of pairing we discuss here but a whole net of relationships between several texts: in fact, this is the central argument of this thesis, with its focus on five technical works that are interconnected not only by shared philosophical concepts, but by the relationship to *Nausea*.

[109] Caws 1992: 1.

These circumstances provide us with an excellent opportunity to show how the pairing between *Emotions* and *Nausea* might proceed. The pairing between the two will be shown to be such that no precise, one-to-one mapping of theoretical concepts onto the plot or content of the novel takes place: the novel's situational positing of emotional experiences does not always match what is said about emotional experience in *Emotions.* We shall now demonstrate the nature of the pairing novel's ability to act as a tool to give ideas that have not yet been fully developed hypothetical expression and thus to enhance the development of those ideas. This is extremely important work that the novel does for this text which is an outline of work that was intended to be larger and even more comprehensive, as a method of working out how the emotions actually work *from the viewpoint of individual experience*.

The best way to begin looking at this pairing of texts is to see how emotional experience is covered in the novel, in the emotional experiences of its characters and how they bear out or differ from the descriptions of emotional consciousness in *Emotions*. Roquentin is not much given to overly emotive language or expression though he does 'get that way' sometimes, and considers his emotional responses to different circumstances worthy of recording in his diary. In the beginning he is a prime example of the fact that emotional consciousness is not initially reflective (even if he would not phrase it in those terms): his emotions and their causes do tend to escape him to the extent that he is sometimes not even sure of the exact emotion that he is feeling: 'There was something which I saw and which disgusted me…it's certain that I was frightened or experienced some other feeling of that sort.'[110]

Initially Roquentin assumes in the 'undated sheet' at the beginning of the diary that the emotions and feelings he describes are actually caused by objects: the change he feels is in them, not in himself. This is different to the beginning of the diary proper, in which he states that the simplest albeit the most unsettling answer to the problem of the change is that the

[110] *Nausea*: 10.

change is in him and cannot be related to objects, but has a 'more general modality' that is a defining characteristic of emotions themselves under Sartre's paradigm – they allow us to reshape the entire world into a more palatable one.[111]

The scenario that is probably most appropriate for the current discussion is set in the ubiquitous café-bar in Bouville, where Roquentin finds himself having lunch with the Autodidact, the self-educated bailiff's clerk who has a habit of expressing bountiful professions of love for knowledge and humanity[112]. Sitting in the café discussing humanism with the Autodidact, Roquentin gets angry at, he says, the fact that both he and his meal of chicken are cold. He describes his feeling thus:

> yes, a sick man's rage: my hands were shaking, the blood rushed to my head, and finally my lips too started trembling. …Anger went through me like a whirlwind, it was some phenomenon like a shudder, an effort by my conscience to react, to fight against this lowering of my temperature.[113]

The physiological dimension of the emotional state of Roquentin's anger, rushing blood and trembling lips, clearly do not cause the anger: for a start, as Roquentin tells it the 'feeling' precedes the physiological disturbance. We can easily tell that Roquentin is no model of the James-Lange theory. But his anger serves more than just this purpose. Unreflective Roquentin is angry that he is cold: upon reflection, which we have seen cannot always bring consciousness out of unreflective emotional consciousness easily, he would note that the situation he is in and the fact that he is finding himself in a quite unbearable set of circumstances in the sense that he is running out of ways to deal with them was contributing to his anger. He approaches this realisation gradually, and in the recounting in his diary is obviously unsettled by his surroundings in the café-bar.

The influence that the Autodidact and their conversation, as well as the general environment of the bar, has over Roquentin's emotion is reported in detail in his diary. The

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[111] Caws 1992: 2.
[112] The Autodidact's 'love of man' takes on a somewhat literal meaning later on in the novel, as pre-empted by this passage, but brevity requires the discussion of this to be excised from this thesis. See Schehr: 2005 in full for further discussion of the Autodidact's apparent homosexuality, and its implications for the novel.
[113] *Nausea*: 166.

cold, it appears, is the first step towards anger in the problem-solving substitution that is the emotion Roquentin feels and his behavioural response to his situation. The cringing discourse of the 'mental masturbator', as Lawrence R. Schehr[114] rather viscerally describes the Autodidact, centres around humanism, which Roquentin finds thoroughly excruciating. Roquentin's anger and annoyance at both the content of the conversation and the fact that they are having it at all is constant through the whole passage, taking the forms of an overt declaration of anger and also manifesting in streams of thought which, rather than saying at the time, he was content to confine to his diary.

The intended function of the emotion, to solve the internal conflict that arises when one cannot solve the external problem by way of a magical transformation of the world, appears evident. This involves projecting characteristics onto the situation or object causing the conflict (in this case the Autodidact) which would allow Roquentin to escape. In their discussion, Roquentin sees quickly that the Autodidact's incessant questions are often puerile and leading ('Don't you feel as I do, Monsieur?'[115] 'Perhaps you are a misanthrope?'[116]), and Roquentin is certain that any answer he gives will be twisted by the Autodidact to serve his own purpose to somehow convince both Roquentin and himself that they agree. He cannot say anything that will affect the Autodidact's position or influence his argument other than superficially, and so gets angry, to be sure, and responds to the Autodidact with anger (or, more accurately, irritation: ''You don't love them either,' I tell him in irritation.'[117]) by projecting characteristics such as unoriginality ('Is it my fault if, in everything he tells me, I recognise borrowings, quotations?'[118]), obstinacy and stupidity onto his companion – against this, Roquentin thinks, he cannot win. Eventually, much like Sartre in the earlier example, Roquentin runs out of energy and inclination to keep the argument going, and leaves the café.

[114] Schehr 2005: 34.
[115] *Nausea*: 169.
[116] *Nausea*: 170.
[117] *Nausea*: 171.
[118] *Nausea*: 168.

We may say, here, that he gets angry at the Autodidact because he cannot respond to the Autodidact in a rational manner – in fact he could, as shown by his internal thoughts - but rather, it seems that Roquentin realises the pointlessness of continuing against the Autodidact, and *will not* keep going. This, in Sartre's eye, is an instance of avoiding the problem by assigning to the Autodidact certain qualities against which it is impossible to keep up the fight – transforming the unbearable state into a magical one. Yet Roquentin has decided that the source of the problem lies with the Autodidact, the state of affairs he has put them in makes it so that Roquentin cannot affect him with any rational rejoinder. It would be a stretch to say that Roquentin gets angry because he *cannot* respond, as is shown by his internal monologue during the scene, railing against the humanism of the Catholics, the Communists, the Leftists, the 'radicals' and the 'philosophers', all of which he finds risibly abhorrent.

But is he satisfied with the 'less well adapted solution'? Once he does see the futility of the conversation, his anger dissipates – the emotion fades. The question of why Roquentin decided to attempt escape from what he considers an unbearable set of circumstances, rather than dealing with the Autodidact's questions directly, as his diary shows he could, is an interesting one.

Sartre argues that in the first instance, the emotional consciousness is unreflective. Recall the discussion in T of E about reflective and unreflective consciousness as relates to the self, or ego: in the same way that the 'I' that writes is not the 'I' directly conscious of writing, the emotion of, say, sadness, is not identifiable with the consciousness of being sad. In T of E, Sartre had argued for a conception of consciousness as always thetically aware of an object, and non-positionally aware of itself – consciousness is usually conscious of its objects such that it is 'engrossed'[119] in them, and thus not aware of its being conscious of them.

[119] Fell 1965: 14.

Let us consider the circumstances surrounding Roquentin's egress from the café. An attack of the nausea strikes him just before he makes his exit:

> The waitress puts a plate in front of me with a piece of chalky Camembert on it. I glance around the room and a feeling of violent disgust comes over me. What am I doing here? Why did I get mixed up in a discussion about humanism? ... I can't speak any more, I bow my head. The Autodidact's face is right up against mine. He smiles foolishly, right up against my face, just as people do in nightmares…I feel like vomiting – and all of a sudden, there it is: the Nausea. A really bad attack: it shakes me from top to bottom. I had seen it coming for the last hour, only I didn't want to admit it.[120]

The attack continues and then:

> So this is the Nausea: this blinding revelation? To think how I've racked my brains over it! To think how I've written about it! Now I know: I exist – the world exists – and I know that the world exists. That's all.[121]

The nausea appears, and with it the existential realisation that existence is brute and excessive, with no essential reason behind it. No hidden truth of existence appears, no clouds open and no message is brought forth to explain the 'why' of existence. The only revelation the nausea brings is a non-revelation: there is no hidden truth to it. It might be that Roquentin until this moment has been in a magical state all along, until the overbearing facticity of existence, of the real, overcomes even the considerable power of reflective consciousness to stay squarely within its magical world. Here is the actual locus of the emotion: Roquentin himself.

The Autodidact might have brought home to Roquentin some realisation about his existence that makes the final dam wall burst, allowing the flooding in of the nausea that follows these events. Before we leave the café let us consider Roquentin's anger at the Autodidact anew in the face of the nausea and its truth/non-truth. Roquentin is irritated with the Autodidact's sycophantic, overblown exhortations to love one's fellow man, which seems fair. But he also gets annoyed with conversation like this:

> He [the Autodidact] goes on thinking for a moment, then he says gently:

[120] *Nausea*: 176-177.
[121] *Nausea*: 176.

> ‘A few years ago I read a book by an American author, called *Is Life Worth Living?* Isn’t that the question you are asking yourself?’
>
> No, that obviously isn’t the question I’m asking myself. But I don’t want to explain anything.[122]

The Autodidact is a microcosm of all that Roquentin does not like – it is possible that he is also a reflection of realisations Roquentin does not want to face about his existence, trying to keep a toe in the magical world for as long as possible. There is no escaping the nausea, once he can no longer believe that it is a real world: as believing in the reality of a magical world is essential for the transformation of the world, the entire world must be transformed as isolated instances of the magical within the real world do not make the magical world coherent. Unfortunately, contingency of existence means that this is no longer possible: nothing is hanging together quite like it did before, and situations, objects and Roquentin himself are all increasingly alienated from each other so that connections between them exist contingently, too.

Let us stay with Roquentin and his emotions and also bring into play some of the emotional experiences of other characters in *Nausea*. The variety of experiences within presents situations that do not quite align with the conception of emotional experiences in *Emotions*: we shall see how the pairing-up of the texts is construed when this occurs.

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Part 3: The Variety of Emotional Experience in *Nausea* and *Emotions*

Sartre conceives of emotions as irrational responses, used when the prospect of a rational response is no longer on the horizon, and by virtue of this irrationality emotional consciousness transforms the world into an irrational, magical one. Are emotions really

[122] *Nausea*: 162.

irrational, and if so, in what sense? This assertion seems questionable. The function of an affective state, say anger, as a substitute action for a rational action now unavailable is also worth questioning further, especially given the fact that anger as we experience it can be a motivational force for and is usually accompanied by behaviours. How does an action accompanying anger such as, for example, throwing a punch work?

Sartre would probably say that this accompanying behaviour works the same way as the case in *Emotions* discussed by French psychologist Pierre Janet in which a woman has panic attacks ('she rolls on the floor, a prey to violent emotion, which returns a few days later…'[123]) when the idea of possibly becoming carer to her chronically ill father becomes too hard to bear.[124] Sartre says that the panic is a 'setback-behaviour. It is a substitution for "sicknurse-behaviour-unable-to-be-endured."'[125] Sartre would probably say that the punch works the same way.

It might also be that the behaviours accompanying an emotion like anger are functioning as avoidance behaviours too: recall that emotions are chosen in the first instance (by unreflective consciousness) but they are passively undergone, but are perpetuated by physiological response. Since consciousness chooses and directs its emotions, behaviours like working out how to get even look like perpetuations of the magical state, prolonging the state of anger to remain within the magical world for longer to escape the need to confront the problem.

But when anger is motivated not by an act that looks irrational but one that looks perfectly rational, the situation is not so clear. The experience of anger can also be, not a substitute for behaviour, but a motivation for it, and sometimes the emotions and their associated actions might actually be regarded as helping to solve problems, not escape from them. Cox, La Caze and Levine cite a hypothetical example of an Indigenous Australian

[123] *Emotions*: 26.
[124] *Emotions*: 26-27.
[125] *Emotions*: 26.

living at or around the year of Federation, and the anger and bitterness at the injustice of Indigenous Australian people not even being counted as Australian citizens at that time. The emotions those people would feel at that are rational, as they 'constitute a development in our epistemic ability.'[126] Further, they facilitate thinking that is more long-term than focused upon immediate solutions, and is in turn perpetuated by that thinking: but this is not a physiological state perpetuating the emotion, or even a magical state, as consciousness remains focused on the problem at hand.

The Indigenous person's anger is not only legitimate and rational,[127] even though as Cox et. al. remark the inclusion of Indigenous Australians as citizens of the country did not occur for nearly seventy years afterwards, but is also very much engaged in dealing with the actual problem really faced by that person. Emotions such as anger at injustice and its associated actions might have the power to directly facilitate other behavioural responses that do cause change in problematic situations in the real world. This is not an instance of magically transforming the world so the problem is seen as not existing: in this case the *real* world is being transformed and we are actually working to fix unacceptable circumstances, not escape from them. Under Sartre's theory it is very hard to see this emotion as an irrational or magical state: rather, it may be that anger helps to elicit the real problem-solving behaviour, in order to further a goal which is not immediately in front of the person. Being able to see the problem clearly, in this case a clear example of injustice, may in fact be facilitated by the emotion of anger.

This brings up the issue of an appropriate emotional response. The function of an emotion is to attempt to displace the problem directly in front of a person and transform the world into a magical one in which the problem does not exist: all emotions share this function under Sartre's account. Could there be room in this context for the concept of an appropriate emotion? Some emotional responses are deemed to be 'inappropriate': a classic example

[126] Cox, La Caze, & Levine 2003: 54.
[127] Ibid.

might be laughing at a funeral. On the one hand, this idea of an 'appropriate emotion' in the face of a situation might be an example of some 'fact' that the psychologists might posit, without recourse to how individual people actually experience circumstances. On the other hand, being thrilled when one hears news of a massacre somewhere is intuitively wrong. We are not talking here about the kind of incongruent emotional response that can occur secondary to, for example, cognitive deficit, brain injury or neurological disorder, nor are we specifically interested in the emotional behaviour of those with psychological disorders or problems (such as borderline personality disorder, for example) rendering them incapable of 'normal' emotional feeling or response. Here we are more interested in what takes place when someone like Roquentin, an individual with no physiological or psychological disorder or injury, can react in ways we find inappropriate.

Happiness at news of a massacre appears inappropriate: so does the lack of any emotion at all at a horrible situation or event. Consider the scenario in which Roquentin comes upon a scene in the street of a man who it appears is about to assault a young girl: 'I should have liked to stop him. It would have been enough for me to cough or to push open the gate. But I in my turn was fascinated by the little girl's face. Her features were drawn with fear and her heart was beating madly: but on that rat-like face I could also distinguish something potent and evil.'[128] When Roquentin does have occasion to confront the man, after the man spots him and tries to retreat, Roquentin still does not respond with any emotion-driven *action* which common sense and intuition would deem appropriate for the circumstance, which has the modern term of 'blunted affect': ''A great menace is passing over the town', I said politely as I walked past him.[129]

Later, after the nausea has struck in earnest and Roquentin's alienation from the world and dissolution of self have taken hold, Roquentin becomes so disconnected from himself that he starts to imagine he has some privileged insight into the emotions of others, such as the

[128] *Nausea*: 117.
[129] Ibid.

rapist of a young child that he had read about in the paper.[130] Roquentin never mentions this incident again, though it seems important to him, at least important enough to fill four diary pages with a somewhat disconnected recounting of the incident. We do not know whether these two incidents are related; but we can see that the emotional response Roquentin has can hardly be deemed appropriate in either case. It might be that the theory in *Emotions* that consciousness is able to freely choose its emotional affective responses cannot account for appropriate emotional responses, again because all emotions are seen as irrational and freely chosen. Also, as consciousness' responsibility for all its actions extends to include the idea that consciousness is also freely responsible for its non-actions – non-action is action, in short – it might be the case that this lack of emotion is as irrational as any other affective state. Then again, it would be hard to know what would perpetuate it, if it is not accompanied by a physiological action.

Roquentin's recapping of his emotional experiences is often disjointed, vague and disconnected, like many of his emotional states themselves. Drichsler mentions the scenario where Roquentin is recounting reading about the child rapist in the paper and the insight he thinks he has into the man's emotional affective state, and states that this shows a kind of transitory period in Sartre's thinking about the emotions.[131] There is a dynamic inconsistency to the account of this incident, explained as both Sartre's uncertainty of thought and Roquentin's inability to honestly appraise himself, and that, combined with the fact that Roquentin never speaks of it afterwards (not in the diary) leads Drichsler to believe that some Freudian repression and sign pointing to the unconscious are evident here. It also might show a movement on Sartre's part from the more Freudian account of psychology and the emotions

[130] *Nausea*: 146-149Kendra Drischler says that this particular passage was inspired by Sartre's experiences with psychedelic drugs (Drichsler: 2008) and her remarks on this bring to mind Riedlinger: 1993, in which Riedlinger stated that Sartre's experiences with mescaline in about 1935 contributed in no small way to the 'nightmarish' scenes of *Nausea*, particularly pointing to Sartre's report that he had hallucinations of being chased by large lobster- or crab-type creatures. This would be a rather interesting perspective from which to consider *Nausea*, since the physical symptoms of mescaline intoxication include loss of appetite, high body temperature, sleeplessness and nausea, amongst others, as well as the psychological effects of dissociation, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and distortions of impressions of reality. See Bridger & Gantt 1956.
[131] Drichsler: 2008.

to a more phenomenological one: Drischler notes that Roquentin does not mention this episode again, suggesting 'some kind of repression or Freudian unconsciousness',[132] yet after this incident his increasingly fragmented and sometimes violent interactions with objects may demonstrate another, more phenomenological understanding of the emotions that Sartre is writing into Roquentin's emotional reaction to the incident. Drichsler suggests that analysis of Roquentin's interactions with objects and the emotions he feels when interacting with them might focus on the fact that he enjoys touching the objects and picking them up, but a more phenomenological reading of his interactions with objects and the emotions they entail might focus on the role that he gives them as signifiers for keeping emotions at arm's length rather than focusing on a wholly Freudian account.

In demonstrating this Drichsler provides an interesting account of Roquentin's engagement with objects in the novel. Drichsler states that Roquentin makes a kind of amulet of the objects he touches: she argues that given all the terrible emotional encounters he has with specific objects, all other objects attain a neutral standpoint, meaning that the objects he encounters cannot be simply random but are assigned the role of a kind of shield that strong emotions cannot penetrate. His odd love of touching paper, as well as the more extreme example of the self-inflicted knife wound, clearly demonstrate this, although Freud would probably have something to say about his admission that 'for two pins I would put them in my mouth as children do.'[133] It is true that throughout the novel no great feeling ever seizes him, except for the nausea, which it is inaccurate to label as an emotion: however we note, as does Caws, that the nausea as a 'physiological state with existential consequences' exactly mirrors what an emotion is under the James-Lange theory's conception.[134]

All the strong emotions that he does feel are gone in a matter of minutes, which as Sartre recognises is the nature of emotions, and no feeling except the nausea stays with him

[132] Ibid.
[133] *Nausea*: 21.
[134] Caws 1992: 210.

for very long. When he does have an emotional experience, it often involves an object that *appears* to be the catalyst – the pebble, the Autodidact, the cheese-knife – though, as we know from *Emotions*, the object does not give rise to the emotion. With reference to the situation in which it is found consciousness itself is responsible for choosing its emotional attitudes: emotions emanate not from objects but from consciousness. It looks to be the case that Roquentin is projecting the emotion onto the objects to try even at this later stage to hold on to the idea that the vague yet imminent dilemma of the nausea is not to do with him, clinging to them to avoid responsibility for action. The penknife he uses to stab himself in the hand can be seen as part of the magical transformation of the world to avoid unbearable situations: he has just, a few moments ago, abandoned the Rollebon project, which until then took up a large part of his emotional life:

> I want to jump up and go out, to do anything – anything at all – to dull my wits…The great Rollebon affair has come to an end, like a great passion…He stood in front of me and had taken possession of my life in order to perform his life for me.[135]

What we have seen of Roquentin's emotional life has been quite negative. Similarly, much of the early discussion in *Emotions* centres around anger, fear, panic and the like, leading one to wonder how to deal with happiness, joy, and other positive emotions under this theory. It is hard to see how the magical transformation of the world to avoid an unbearable circumstance could stretch to the 'good' emotions, which by all common sense appear to be the result of positive experiences. Sartre attempts an explanation with regard to joy.[136] Though we might *perceive* joy as stemming from a pleasant experience or situation, Sartre contends that the situation from which the joy arises is actually fraught with difficulty and dilemma. This discord arises from the way that joy 'tends by incantation to realise the possession of the desired object as instantaneous totality.'[137] His example is that of a man waiting for the arrival

[135] *Nausea*: 142-143.
[136] *Emotions*: 68.
[137] *Emotions*: 69.

of a loved one who has been absent for many years. The time he spends waiting for the loved one's arrival is excruciating and seems interminable, and even once s/he appears, s/he is still unable to be experienced in the fullest sense. In this explanation, the emotion is still brought on by internal conflict whereby one cannot get enough of what one has that brings one joy. Joy also has a certain impatience to it, where one desires to have the object of one's joy all at once, all the time. It is also magical, in the sense that one 'pretends' that the entirety of the desired object *is* completely there in the moment for one's own pleasure, which is clearly impossible given that objects, as long as they remain in the real and not the 'magical' realm, can only be revealed to consciousness by degrees. To resolve the internal discord attending this knowledge, the 'instrumental world is overthrown by the magic'[138] of joy.

This is not just yet an entirely convincing explanation. For example, as David Detmer says, from this explanation combined with the explanation of the arising of negative emotions the counterintuitive conclusion follows that each and every emotion experienced is the result of a negatively charged situation,[139] a point which will be returned to shortly. David Weberman argues that this conception of the locus of a positive emotion is too one-sided to be a defensible position. Sartre's attempt to 'save the theory'[140] by postulating that positive emotions arise from the same cacophony of discord as negative emotions – in particular, the assertion that positive emotions like joy are characterised by an irrational wish for possession of the desired object in all its totality - becomes unsustainable in face of the fact that positive emotions are in fact moderated by realistic expectations. For example, Weberman cites the pride he might feel after giving a successful lecture to enthusiastic and engaged students. Pride in the students' enthusiasm does not entail the assumption that their enthusiasm be an instantaneous totality: it is hard to see how it could be one, and Weberman says it would be quite bizarre to think that this may be the case.[141] An apologist for Sartre's position might

[138] Detmer 2008: 40.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Weberman 1996: 397.
[141] Ibid.

argue that the positive emotion of pride in the students' enthusiasm for the lecture stems from the misguided apprehension given by the emotion that every fibre of the students' being was wholly and completely engaged with the lecture and their lecturer while it lasted, coupled with the desire for them to be so constantly, even beyond the temporal length of the lecture and outside the confines of the classroom, which are unattainable aspirations and likely to create discord.

Perhaps it is too much to say that this is actually what Weberman would be thinking. He understands the transitive and temporally finite nature of a lecture, and that it is one part of a sequence if it is part of a lecture course – he also knows that the students are not present in any totality, in the phenomenological sense. We must remember the assertion that we are not immediately conscious of our emotions, but emotions are a mode of consciousness of the world – even if we grant to Sartre that Weberman's emotion of pride might come from the misguided wish for the enthusiasm of the students to be an instantaneous totality, it does not follow that the emotion could not still be present after it had been tempered by moderation.

We may be justified in looking to *Nausea* for further elaboration, given *Nausea*'s original intended status as a correlate to a treatise on phenomenological psychology of which *Emotions* would have been a part. Obvious joy is rather hard to spot in *Nausea*: it does appear early on in the novel when Roquentin recalls how, just a couple of years hence, he was able to recall travel experiences with his head 'buzzing like a beehive' – Morocco, Japan, Spain and Greece fly through his mind, evoking recollections of tastes, smells, houses and faces, now all past. In travelling, he says, he felt joy: but the joy he felt 'was worn out a long time ago, is it going to be reborn today?'[142] His somewhat hopeful question is answered abruptly in the negative: the joy belongs to the irretrievable past, and is thus tainted by melancholy and dejection. It appears that, using Sartre's argument that joy is 'characterised by a certain

[142] *Nausea*: 51.

impatience'[143], the inconstancy and displacement entailed by travel contributed to the joy Roquentin felt while travelling, so that he will fail to recapture it now he is ensconced at Bouville. We can also see something of joy in the Autodidact's simplistic happiness in his love for humanity and knowledge, though even this is a way to avoid his own loneliness and the accompanying disagreeable feelings. An example of the search for a positive emotion out of a negative situation in the recent life history of Anny, Roquentin's former paramour, whose search for sublime happiness in 'perfect moments', which she causes to occur through painful experience (even at the cost of trying to amplify them), eventually leads her down much the same path as Roquentin with his quest for life's meaning through projects like his biography.

Returning to Detmer's criticism, we can look at *Nausea* and see that none of the 'happy' emotions expressed arise from undeniably positive situations, and some of the most clear and obvious positive feelings stem from occurrences which are downright unpleasant. The scene of the Autodidact's eventual disgrace, in which he is unceremoniously and forcefully ejected from the public library after a decidedly indecent encounter with two young boys, is a striking example of a positive emotion (for the Autodidact, at least) evoked by circumstances which are inarguably negative and full of dissonance and discord. Roquentin tell us that he could see the Autodidact 'bending over his young neighbour, and smiling at him; I could see his lips moving and, now and then, his long eyelashes trembling. I had never seen him look so young before, he was almost charming.'[144] The boys are not yet in the grip of any obvious discordant feelings: 'The little brown-haired boy wasn't talking, his face, marked with deference and interest, was turned to the right. Half-hidden by his shoulder, the fair-haired boy was listening and laughing silently.'[145] They appear to be having some fun in mocking the Autodidact, but abruptly the situation changes: the boys become uncomfortable and frightened in the face of the Autodidact's gross and obscene actions, described in savagely sensual language by Roquentin, and any happiness or pleasure that the Autodidact feels (in the few minutes before

[143] *Emotions*: 68.
[144] *Nausea*: 233.
[145] Ibid.

he is spotted and unceremoniously ejected) is now quite obviously coming from a negative state of affairs.

We also see an example of the idea of the emotional reaction as behavioural substitute and realise just how complex this situation can be. Consider Roquentin's record of the Autodidact's emotional reaction and behavioural response after the accusations from and his forceful ejection from the library:

> 'I don't know what you mean,' he stammered. 'I've been coming here for years…' He was feigning indignation and surprise, without conviction. He knew perfectly well that the event was there, and that nothing could hold it back any longer, that he had to live through the minutes of it one by one….Scarlet, his eyes filled with tears, he had assumed an expression of extreme interest and was gazing intently at a reproduction of a Byzantine mosaic….'Leave me alone, please, Monsieur, leave me alone.' He was on the verge of hysterics: I let him walk away.[146]

Even assuming Roquentin is right in his characterisation (which he might not be but, unfortunately, he is the only source we have), we have no idea exactly what the Autodidact is feeling at this moment, whether positive, negative, both or neither. We may return to Cox et. al, who make a point that even under this theory we can agree with: both positive and negative emotions deserve close scrutiny as essential parts of human experience. They argue that 'We sometimes need to be willing to accept our emotions even though we do not approve of them….We can sometimes be successful at redirecting our emotions, although it might be more effective to reflect on their deeper sources.'[147] I do not wish to co-opt or steal this argument and directly apply it out of context to Sartre's theory: but this example does serve to show the complexity and variability of emotional responses when faced with situations, and the necessity for closer study of their sources. Sartre will say that the ultimate source of the emotion is consciousness' freedom: the emotion is actively chosen, as we recall, but it is passively undergone.

[146] *Nausea*: 236.
[147] Cox, La Caze, & Levine 2003: 55.

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Concluding Remarks

Richard Baker argues that the diversity of form provided by the novel is vital for Sartre as a mode of resistance to becoming isolated within one genre of writing, and being obliged to use its tools only to describe being-in-the-world. There is an 'object/subject setting' possible within the novel that proves essential in the discussion of emotion: in the character's fictionally posited experience of emotional consciousness (or the lack of it) in the novel, each reader has the opportunity to experience the emotional situation presented therein, while simultaneously having the ability to pick whatever aspect or facet of it is most important or meaningful to that particular reader.[148]

It is also the case that describing emotions (or the lack thereof) in purely theoretical and technical language will make sense when we think of the standard psychological picture of emotion, but will not be much use for a phenomenological psychology trying to get away from the need for 'facts', which Sartre claims are too disconnected to form a picture of the whole of the experience. In analysing emotions as a structure of consciousness, Sartre says that every individual structure of consciousness (or the psyche) relates to and discloses something about the *whole* of consciousness. For this more complete account to work to its fullest extent, one needs actual emotive language, or to be able to describe emotional experience in terms other than the technical: this is true also in the case of a lack of emotion, where a term like 'blunted affect' (another modern term, describing a person's lack of emotional reactivity in response to an appropriate situation) cannot tell the reader nearly enough about the phenomenon of it as the human experience of it posited as a fictional scenario. Consider a passage like this:

[148] Baker: 2007.

> It's strange that I should care so little about everything: it frightens me…I don't care anyway. I can feel that I could do anything. For example plunge this cheese-knife into the Autodidact's eye…Only it would be necessary to make a gesture, to create a superfluous event: the cry the Autodidact would give would be superfluous - and so would the blood flowing down his cheek. There are quite enough things existing already.[149]

Granted, there are a plethora of psychological texts which spell out in precise scientific detail[150] the phenomena that this passage might be describing, which is quite crucial also to the understanding of the phenomena, but it is testimony and experience of the phenomena that allow the reader to both experience the phenomenon and the meaning that it has in the context of situation and circumstance, both of which are crucial to the Sartrean account of emotion. Whether it is accurate to characterise Roquentin's emotion (or lack of it) in the passage above as 'blunted affect' or not, we are not obliged to categorise, label or draw a box around Roquentin's experience, as would be the case in a psychological textbook or examination: this would be making it into an example of the kind of broad psychic 'fact' Sartre wishes to avoid that would not tell us much of value about the individual.

Even other layouts for the book would not be as effective as the epistolary layout Sartre has chosen for this book. Howells picks up on this as well, and argues that the choice of the epistolary form of this novel is essential for the notion of the individualistic ideas that Sartre is trying to project. A novel that involves the use of an omniscient narrator who discloses all, what characters are feeling, exactly where they are and what they are wearing and all manner of detail, would not work here. The spontaneity and freedom of consciousness mean that the device of the omniscient narrator would be totally at odds with the actual experience of the world. We know that the phenomenological argument in *Emotions* began with Sartre's dissatisfaction with psychology's misguided emphasis on facts, which allows no room whatsoever for the spontaneity of consciousness or for its freedom. It is crucial for the novel to be able to capture the spontaneity of consciousness: the presence of an omniscient narrator would come far too close to mirroring one or a synthesis of these psychic facts, which

[149] *Nausea*: 177.
[150] E.g. Liddle 2007: 167-186; Davies & Hastings 1991: 157.

Sartre says can never actually join to form a coherent, believable, relatable and experiential account of being human. Omniscient narrators do have their place: but it is not in existentialist literature.

We have seen that the pairing up of the two texts we have considered in this chapter is extremely complex and interwoven: we have also shown here how the relationship between philosophy and literature can exist before the texts do, in their very precursory stages. We have also shown that because of this, it is unreasonable to consider that in this case the novel and the theoretical text are doing unequal philosophical work, or that they are not working towards the same purpose: working out and clearly delineating a new philosophical discourse of phenomenological psychology of the emotions.

What we did not really go into in this chapter is the inextricable relationship between emotional consciousness and imaginative consciousness. In the next chapter we turn to Sartre's philosophy of the imagination: we will show this relationship, as well as elaborating further and with respect to the imagination the central place that the novel has in the imagination and in the conception of freedom.

Chapter III

The Problem of the Imagination

I recently saw a documentary about the family of January (Jani) Schofield, who was diagnosed with child-onset schizophrenia at the age of six.[151] She had always behaved slightly differently to other children, but this was not initially thought of as having a pathological cause: she was highly intelligent, and extremely mentally active. Jani did not much like playing with other children but she had a huge host, in fact hundreds, of imaginary friends, including numbers or days of the week. But after her behaviour turned erratic and violent, it became clear this was not a case of an overactive imagination. Jani's behaviour increased in severity, and it became clear she was having frequent and pronounced hallucinations and delusional thoughts: psychiatrists were consulted, and all other diagnoses (autism, bipolar disorder, OCD and the like) were ruled out. She was medicated but her resistance was high and after a psychotic break in 2009, Jani was placed under involuntary psychiatric hold for weeks. Strict living arrangements and 'last-resort' medication regimes were worked out before she could eventually return home. Jani is now ten, stable and at home with her family, but it is likely that she will require medication for the rest of her life.[152]

It is often difficult really to tell whether a child is seeing something, imagining something or hallucinating something, perhaps especially if they are very intelligent. When a young girl with a newborn baby brother is asked why she attacked and hit him, it would not strike anyone as very unusual if she tells her parents that her imaginary pet cat scratched her and told her to do it, as Jani did. It sounds like an imaginative excuse: at least, a psychotic disorder does not immediately spring to mind. In normally functioning adults, it appears much easier to tell when someone is imagining something as opposed to perceiving it, and

[151] Truitt 2010.
[152] Elsworth 2013.

hallucinations appear to be entirely different phenomena. We think that imagination and perception, at least, can be clearly distinguished from one another, and it does not seem controversial to state that in ordinary circumstances we know instinctively when we are imagining something as opposed to actually seeing that object in front of us. Even so, how to interpret that difference correctly is not an easy question. Further, how exactly are we to characterise an imaginary object as different from a perceptual one? Again there is an intuitive difference, but a categorical explanation is hard to pin down. This is the impetus behind Sartre's two works *L'Imagination*[153] (1936) and *L'Imaginaire*[154] (1940).

Thomas R. Flynn suggests that the first of the two texts we consider here, *Imagination*, forms an introduction to the second text, *Imaginary*,[155] whilst Jonathan Webber notes that Sartre intended the first text to serve as a 'historical and critical propaedeutic' to the second.[156] These are fair judgements of the work – in fact, the texts were originally conceived as one full-length treatise to be called *L'Image*, and commissioned by the editor of a publication entitled *Nouvelle Encyclopédie Philosophique* to form the tenth volume of the series: but only this first part was actually accepted, while the second part went on to be revised and published as *L'Imaginaire.*[157] Given this, *Imagination* has often taken a back seat to *Imaginary*, in terms of philosophical input to the discussion of the imagination and the image. But by considering the two as one text, we can see more completely the full early development of expressions of the fundamental notions of Sartrean phenomenology as they relate to the imagination, and gain a more comprehensive understanding of their importance for his theory of the image and imagination, as well as the essential concept of freedom underpinning them.

[153] Hereafter referred to as *Imagination*.
[154] Hereafter referred to as *Imaginary*.
[155] Flynn 1975: 440.
[156] Webber 2012: xiv.
[157] Contat & Rybalka 1970: 55.

Following this we shall see that, if we consider them as as a whole also and present analysis of both texts here, we will get a fuller account of the importance of the novel to the theory and the reasons for its use as a vehicle for the ideas and concepts therein, as well as the philosophical work that is unique to it.

The first and second parts of this chapter draw a linear progression through *Imagination* and *Imaginary*. In order to keep exegesis to a minimum, and because Sartre's own theory is my focus here, the first part will not go into great detail about the criticisms Sartre makes of the received views of the image or imagination that take up the bulk of the work, but will focus on the introduction and the first and fourth chapters of *Imagination* which outline Sartre's central thesis in this work: the need for and move towards a phenomenological solution to the problem of imagination and perception, and the contribution of Husserl towards the phenomenological theory Sartre presents in *Imaginary*. The second part of this chapter describes this theory and the crux of the argument Sartre makes with it: the concept of freedom as relates to the imagination, such that consciousness is free because it can imagine, and, in acts of imagining, consciousness is free.

The third part brings *Nausea* into the equation through a canvassing of an idea suggested by Thomas R. Flynn: that to gain a comprehensive understanding of the theory of imagination it must be understood in conjunction with Sartre's theory of the emotions. We will also see how the novel differs in some respects from the theory as fully expressed, and note that this ambiguity between the modes of expression is actually a positive, especially considering the nature of the concepts under discussion. That argument will lead us directly into the next chapter and the discussion of the conclusion to *Imaginary* and the concept of freedom as it relates specifically to the artwork.

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Part 1: *Imagination*: The Problem of the Imagination and the Contribution of Husserl

In the introduction to *Imagination*, Sartre presents and formulates the problem that he wishes to tackle in this work and its successor – that of explaining and clarifying in a precise manner the distinction that one intuitively makes between imagination and perception, and between imaginary objects and perceptual objects. Sartre asserts that the distinction is made spontaneously and that under ordinary circumstances we are always correct in making it. However, intuition cannot account for a full explanation of the problem and further explanations must be given, but they will not be able to be done using the same methods with which we clarify how and what we perceive. Sartre contends that imagination and perception as different processes with different outcomes cannot be analysed or considered in the same terms or manner as can be used to analyse the process and structures of perception, contrary to many of the prevailing theories of the time that he critiques in this text.[158]

To explain the basic problem, Sartre first asks us to consider a sheet of paper, as indeed a writer might. We look at the paper on the desk, appraising its form, position, colour and the like. On the table, the characteristics of the sheet do not depend on me: I do not cause them to appear or produce them myself, nor do they appear because of any kind of self-generating power that a consciousness besides my own might possess. Though consciousness was involved with the making of the sheet of paper and some of its properties were assigned to it by its maker's decision (e.g. its whiteness, whether it is an A4 or A3 size, etc.) during its making, the characteristics are still determined and limited by the real, physical world and its laws (gravity keeps it on the table, its colour is determined by its chemical composition and the way light reflects off its surface and into our eyes due to said composition) and even though consciousness can fashion or shape the matter of the paper (e.g. change its chemical

[158] Again as the focus here is in Sartre's theory, and as it is more influenced by the phenomenological theories of Husserl than any of those theories, we shall confine discussion to Husserl.

composition to give it another colour, cut it to make it smaller) during the making of the object, the laws of the physical, real world are not able to be contravened.

The sheet of paper and all other objects are inert and external to consciousness, and we must observe them gradually and learn about them by instances. They are beings-in-themselves, which consciousness is not; consciousness, as a being-for-itself, does have a spontaneous and self-generating power, as opposed to 'the world of things, which is pure inertia.'[159] As we recall, consciousness, as the only phenomenon that has the defining characteristics of intentionality and self-awareness, is the only being-for-itself: all other beings are being-in-itself. Here we have probably the clearest and most succinct explanation in Sartre's entire *oeuvre* of the two modes of existence identified by Sartre: those phenomena that exist in-themselves (*en-soi*), and those that exist for-themselves (*pour-soi*), the former characterised by the lack of the spontaneity and self-determining capacities of the latter.

Consciousness is the only phenomenon that is *pour-soi*: and human beings are the only beings that are consciousness, as we saw in the first chapter. All phenomena that are *not* the human being, not consciousness, are the *en-soi*, even those beings that we do not consider as objects (at least not in the same manner that we would consider a rock, for example, to be an object), such as plants. The defining features of consciousness do not apply to a dog or to a plant, and it is also an error to try to apply those characteristics to a rock, or a mountain, or a sheet of paper. Because of this, none of these are to be considered consciousness in the phenomenological sense: they are *en-soi*, beings-in-themselves.

So the sheet of paper that we are discussing is a being-in-itself, an object in the world. But in turning my gaze away from the sheet of paper on the desk in front of me to the wall behind my desk, in one sense the sheet of paper ceases to be. For me, it is no longer present: it ceases to be for-*me*, but not to be *in-itself*. I can, however, present the sheet to myself again, *without* physically refocusing my gaze upon it, through imagining it. As I do this I am well

[159] *Imagination*: 4.

aware that it has not stopped existing, and I know that the image I have of the paper is the same sheet I was looking at only a moment before. I form an image of that sheet that I perceived a moment ago and not any other with similar qualities (nor do I form an image of any generic sheet): in *Imaginary* Sartre explains how this happens in more detail. He says that reflection upon the imaginative act teaches us that the object of the perception and the object of the image are one object, the difference being in the relation of consciousness to the object: in one case, the object is encountered by consciousness (the perception of the sheet), and in the other it is not (the image of the sheet), since the sheet is not present. Upon reflection, we find that in both imagining the sheet and perceiving it, consciousness aims specifically at the same sheet. My image is of the sheet I perceived a moment ago, and is possessed of all '*the same* qualities'[160], but we are *not* in the presence of the actual sheet of paper that remains on the desk, out of view; for this to occur, to *see* the sheet, we must return our gaze to the sheet on the desk.

On whether our real, desk-located sheet of paper is actually returned *as present* to us in the image, Sartre is not precise: his answer is 'Yes and no.' He concludes that the sheet as-imaged and the sheet proper share an identity of essence, but not an identity of existence: in other words, the same sheet of paper exists on two planes of existence. The image and the perception have in common the 'very individuality' of the sheet of paper as well as its structures and characteristics, but the image does not exist in the same manner as the object. The image exists as neither inert, unchanging in-itself matter, like a perceptual object that can actually be *perceived* or *seen*, nor does it exist as spontaneous, non-positionally aware of itself or able to intend objects; in this context the sheet exists outside the realm of fact and reality, existing as-imaged.

Sartre asserts that the distinction between the sheet as-imaged and the perceived sheet is made spontaneously and that under ordinary circumstances (i.e. when not inebriated, not

[160] *Imagination*: 4.

mentally impaired, not psychotic, etc.) we are always correct in making it. This I would say is uncontroversial. Yet to form a robust general theory of the image, it must be forbidden to make any claims about the nature of the existence of images that does not match our own reflective experience. Thinking about images can only be done via the formation of images, and there is no way of getting to grips with the nature of images that does not involve actually forming images oneself. As Temenuga Trifonova says, 'the phenomenology of imagination must necessarily be imaginative.'[161] Moreover, it is necessary to refrain from basing assertions about all modes of existence purely on the physical mode of existence, as Sartre says we are wont to do. This leads into the fallacy of the received theories of the image and imagination criticised by Sartre, that assume the image is an object like any perceptual object, existing as a simple facsimile of the object in the mind, as it were, and analyse it using the same methods as they would to analyse an object. Sartre's dissatisfaction with psychology appears in this work when he identifies this as the main error of psychology in this area. We must, as phenomenology exhorts us to do when attempting theoretical conceptualisations of the structures and workings of consciousness, place human experience at the beginning of our investigation into the image.

From the data of intuition and of experience (that of actually having images) we come to realise that the image cannot be what the '*a priori*'[162] theories mentioned above think it is: 'a lesser thing, which has its own existence, *gives* itself to consciousness as any other thing, and maintains *external* relationships with the thing it is an image of.'[163] The above theories try to fit experience into the equation only after the theory itself has been proposed, shaping our intuitions and experiences to fit the theory (hence the '*a priori*' epithet), and thus consider the image without actually forming images, and begin to theorise without actually knowing exactly what it is they are theorising about, its structures and characteristics, and such. The image must be directly accessible to consciousness for a phenomenological investigation – the

[161] Trifonova 2007: 68.
[162] *Imagination*: 7. Original italics.
[163] Ibid. Original italics.

data of experience must be present in the equation before any investigation begins, rather than trying to fit it back in to the equation after it has reached its conclusion.

Phenomenology as a science of essences, as Sartre calls it, seeks to gain direct access to the objects themselves, placing itself on the 'terrain of the universal' at the outset to begin with, rather than working backwards as the '*a priori*' theories have done. A phenomenological theory of the image attempts to rectify this error. Sartre thinks we can draw upon the work of Husserl to achieve this. His influence on Sartre should not be understated, and Husserl's theory forms the basis of Sartre's phenomenological theory. The idea of returning to the objects themselves is his, as is the concept of the intentionality of consciousness (in which Husserl follows Brentano) which forms the basis of Sartre's theory. We have seen an outline of this concept in the first chapter but, as this concept is so crucial to the discussion in this chapter, we shall give a concise and more detailed definition of intentionality here so that we can see its relationship to the imagination in immediate detail.

We have seen that Sartre 'embraces completely'[164] the Husserlian idea of intentionality being the defining characteristic of consciousness, alongside the capacity to be self-aware. All possible acts of consciousness are directed *towards* an object, which may be what is immediately present or what is believed, desired or posited. In other words, all consciousness is necessarily consciousness *of*. Husserl's idea as relayed by Sartre is that the intentionality of consciousness is comprised of two elements: the sense-data of an experience, such as the data of how an object feels or how it sounds (hylē), and the intentional animating act of consciousness that is performed upon it (morphē). There is an important distinction between the sense-data itself and the appearing characteristics of the object, constituted by consciousness' intentionality and aimed at through the sense-data – as Helena de Preester puts it, there is a difference 'between sensory material (e.g., a red-impression) and the perception

[164] Blosser 1986: 164.

of red as the quality of an object, which is transcendent to consciousness.'[165] In other words there is a difference between the actual object and the sensory impressions that that object evokes in consciousness. So the hylē and the object are not to be confused: the hylē is the scope through which consciousness aims at the object, not the object itself. The apparent redness of an object is in fact a subjective sensory impression, and it is through the impression that the red is intended and apprehended by consciousness as a feature of the object.

The object with all its attendant characteristics, such as its colour, only ever becomes apparent upon the animating act of consciousness: consciousness acts upon and intends the sense-data, animating it so that an actual object appears, with attendant characteristics and properties. So, even if the object is a real object (as opposed to a wholly imaginary one), is it 'never a real part of consciousness.'[166] It is up to consciousness to constitute the objects it intends, and as the objects lack intentionality and spontaneity (i.e. the power to self-generate) consciousness must also animate them. In Husserl's phenomenology (and Sartre's) consciousness has direct access to the objects transcendent to it, and 'reaches to the things themselves',[167] 'reaching' being significant and a good way to characterise how consciousness *actively intends* its objects directly through those sensory impressions.

We can see that there are three facets to imaging consciousness: the intentional animating act of consciousness, the hylē or content upon which the intentional act of consciousness is performed, and the object as-imaged, which is constituted by the intentional animating act of consciousness performed upon the content. The perceptual object is clearly *not* part of imaging consciousness, and is wholly external to it.

Thomas R. Flynn neatly sums up the relationship between the three facets:

[165] De Preester 2012: 504.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.

Mental *Act* (intending) → via *Content* → *Object*[168]

Flynn also notes that, of course, the whole of the image (as consciousness) is more than the sum of these parts.[169] As consciousness, it has the capacity to be aware that it has constituted an object as-imaged, and upon reflection, the capacity to see as we have seen here, that it is the driving force and the constitutor of that image. Sartre argues that if one applies the theory of intentionality to the concept of the image, one neatly does away with most of the problems that crippled the received theories of the image that make images like residents of consciousness, or study them in the same way as perceptual objects are studied (as well as analyse perception 'in terms of mental copies of the outside world'[170], since intentionality makes perception an act *of* consciousness).

It is very clear that the image itself does not reside in consciousness at all in Sartre's conception of imaging consciousness. Sartre argues that the failure of the *a priori* theories to correctly interpret the data of reflection, due to the fact that in these theories the data of reflection is inserted into the theory after the conception of an image has already been formed, leads them to the 'illusion of immanence'[171], as Sartre will come to call it, that held that images could be analysed as if they were perceptual objects. We see that, under Sartre's account that begins with the data of reflection, the image as consciousness entails that it must be an image *of*, as consciousness is consciousness *of*: in other words, the image is an *activity* of consciousness. Here we follow De Preester's analysis of this rather dense part of Sartre's argument. From Sartre's reading of Husserl we see that the only phenomenon that can be said to be in any way immanent to consciousness (aside from the intentional animating act) is the hylē, through which consciousness aims at an object.

[168] Flynn 1975: 433. Original italics.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.
[171] *Imaginary*: 6.

The analogy of the centaur, which is Husserl's, helps to explain this further. As the centaur is not held within the mind, the image cannot be said to be a psychic state:[172] in other words, the image of the centaur is not in the mind and so does not underlie or characterise it and as an act of consciousness and thereby consciousness itself, there is an emptiness to it such that the image itself cannot be said to give to consciousness an underlying essence. Due to this, the object that is represented by the image, the centaur, cannot be a psychic content (held within consciousness). The experience of imagining is a psychic experience: the image is not an object, but is, as Sartre will clarify in *Imaginary*, a mode of consciousness related towards an object. Even though the experience of imagining the centaur is a mental phenomenon, an act of consciousness, and emphatically *not* an object, the fact that the centaur does not exist in the empirical sense 'should not tempt us to accept that a centaur exists (psychically) in our head.'[173]

So far the theory that Sartre develops is heavily informed by the concept of imaging consciousness developed by Husserl in *Ideas*. However Sartre does diverge from Husserl to form his own theory: he finds a sticking point in Husserl's theory at the point where Husserl discusses image-consciousness (which De Preester defines as consciousness directed to some tangible, physical image like a portrait or other artwork[174]). Again de Preester helps us traverse Sartre's argument.

Sartre begins to diverge from Husserl when he discusses Husserl's explanation of the mental image with reference to the sixteenth-century engraving *The Knight, Death and the Devil* by Albrecht Dürer, and how consciousness forms an 'esthetic appearance'[175] of it.

In forming an aesthetic appearance (i.e. in forming the image of the knight, his horse, etc.) we apprehend exactly the same sense-data, the same hylē, as we do when simply

[172] De Preester 2012: 505.
[173] Ibid.
[174] De Preester 2012: 505.
[175] Ibid.

perceiving the black lines of the engraving (in this example, the black lines on the page of the book in which the engraving is reproduced). Depending on the intention of consciousness in animating the hylē , we can see either the black lines and only those; or we can intend the hylē such that we form an aesthetic appearance of the black lines, and we can 'see' the figures of the knight, the devil and the Reaper *in* the black lines.[176] The centaur, too, has some hyletic data: we can 'see' in the centaur either a man and a horse, or a centaur *in* the man and the horse. The intention animating the hylē determines which we see. In each case, the hylē is the same.

Sartre's claim is that, in Husserl's theory, the image's function is to compensate for the empty cognition, such that it serves as a fulfilment of intentional acts of perception: in other words, as a basis for consciousness' constitution of the perceptual object, what can be called a meaning. But Sartre contends that the function Husserl says the image performs, 'the 'filling' of empty cognitions just as *things* do for perception',[177] can be accomplished by either an image or a perception. Filling an empty cognition of a lark, for example (in which a vague 'signifying intention', or a meaning, is called to mind based on seeing or imagining the word), can be done either by seeing an actual lark or by imagining one.

Moreover, Sartre claims that Husserl recalls the concept of a 're-emerging sensible impression'[178] of an object such that in calling up a mental image of, say, a theatre which one attended some nights ago, the perception itself is reproduced: this means that the mental image is 'nothing other than a modified perceptual consciousness, that is to say, affected with a coefficient of being past.'[179]

This is the source of Sartre's dissatisfaction, and the reason that he eventually diverges from Husserl to form his own theory of the image: the lack of distinction between the hylē of

[176] ibid.
[177] *Imagination*: 135.
[178] *Imagination*: 136.
[179] Ibid.

the engraving perceived as black lines, and 'perceived as an image'[180] such that the knight and his ghastly entourage appear. This is too close to equating imagination with perception, and the imaginary object with the perceptual object, for Sartre to hold with. Even the intentional attitude is 'necessary but not sufficient'[181] to enable us to make our distinction. De Preester points out that the fact that the hylae are indistinguishable (post-reduction) in both imagination and perception in the case of the engraving, for example, would not be a problem for Sartre if it were the case that imagination and perception could be differentiated by virtue of the intentionality of consciousness alone, but even this cannot be done.

Sartre cannot see what the motivation would be for consciousness to from an image at one time and a perception at another.[182] If the difference between the image and the perceptual object could be made solely at the 'whim'[183] of consciousness, then consciousness could animate hylē as an image or as a perception as its whim dictated, and the difference between perceptual object and imaginary object, being based on the 'self-same impressional matter'[184] could then be made: but in the case of mental images, like the centaur, that hylē *cannot* ever be a perception. The empirical non-existence of that centaur, given to consciousness as a feature of the imaginary object, makes this so.

In the mental image, as a spontaneous activity of consciousness, even the hylē has to be active and spontaneous, somehow self-created by consciousness, as the matter of the image (as *en-soi*) cannot create itself; but as De Preester notes, the matter involved in an imaginative act 'should not be *as* spontaneous as an act of consciousness, for it should retain its hyletic character. On the other hand, it should not be too passive either, since this would blur the distinction with the hylē of sense perception.'[185]

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[180] Ibid.
[181] *Imagination*: 141.
[182] It is possible that some desire for action, what consciousness wanted to do with the object once constituted, could be the motivation for this: we will consider this in the third part of the chapter.
[183] Ibid.
[184] ibid.
[185] De Preester 2012: 506.

So Sartre has two contentions: if the hylē of the mental image and the perception are identical or equivalent, then the 'true image' cannot be differentiated: and if it could be differentiated at the whim of consciousness, solely by virtue of its intentionality, there still would remain a lack of motive to do so, since 'the matters are of the same nature.'[186]

The summary of the claim made by Sartre is that in a phenomenological account of the image and imagination there must be some clear delineation between the hylē, the matter, of the image, and the perceptual object, to avoid the 'illusion of immanence'[187] of the *a priori* theories and determine the manner in which the image and the perception are different as reflection upon the data of experience tells us they are, and this distinction is not made strongly enough by Husserl. Sartre does note that Husserl's work on imagination is not extensive, and that he might have extended it in unpublished work and lecture courses, but it remains incomplete in his published theoretical work. Husserl has been invaluable in showing how the devaluing of the intentional nature of consciousness and the failure to recognise the importance of the data of experience that it will divulge has helped to show how all the prevailing psychological theories of the image are under an 'illusion of immanence' and mischaracterise the nature of the image and the imaging consciousness, and has enabled Sartre to conceptualise and form the beginnings of his own phenomenological theory of the imaging consciousness and what that theory must include if it is to clearly delineate the difference between imagination and perception, and imaginary objects and perceptual objects, but Sartre argues that Husserl's theory cannot fully account for this due to his unsatisfactory account of the mental image.

The mental image's hylē must be delineated clearly, as must the nature and characteristics of the mental image and the structure of the consciousness that produces them, the imaging consciousness: this is Sartre's central concern in *Imaginary*, in which he takes his

[186] *Imagination*: 140.
[187] *Imaginary*: 6.

cue from Husserl but diverges from him, and presents his own phenomenological theory of the image. It is to that work that we now turn.

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Part 2: *Imaginary*: Sartre's Phenomenological Theory of the Imagination

In this part we shall discuss the characteristics of the image and the explanation of the imaging consciousness that Sartre distils when forming his theory of the imagination. Sartre's central aim in *Imagination* is to tackle the problem of mental images - those images, like the centaur, that require consciousness to spontaneously generate hylē, or sense data – and provide a phenomenological account of the nature of these images and the imaginative consciousness that produces them as acts of consciousness. Rather than the meanings that Husserl wanted to fill 'empty cognitions' with, Sartre's focus is how the intended meanings transform the objects of consciousness into a differently existing phenomenon. The imaginary object and the perceptual object are not denizens of two different worlds, as we remember from the example with the sheet of paper. The sheet of paper shared an identity of essence with my image of it, as I have direct access to the sheet via the image, but existed differently. The world of objects that consciousness intends is the same in both: but in imagination, the object is changed. This has important implications for the concept of the freedom of consciousness and this will become clear. We will first look at the structure of the imaginary object, and the structure of the imaginative consciousness.

We saw in Flynn's diagram that imaging consciousness aims at the object through the hylē of the object, animating it in an intentional act, and constituting an object as-imaged with properties and characteristics. In forming images of perceptual objects, the content of the image is given by the hylē and Sartre argues that there must be some phenomenon analogous

to the hylē and performing this function (acting as a scope by which to constitute the object of the image) for mental images: Husserl does not clearly delineate this distinction. Sartre's conception of what the analogous phenomenon would be is called the 'analogon'. Flynn and others use the English translation 'analogue'[188], but, as the word 'analogue' has several meanings and we want to be extremely clear about exactly what we are discussing, we shall keep the French 'analogon' as previously noted.

The analogon is what provides the content of the mental image, through which consciousness forms the object of the mental image. Sartre discusses the concept in the second chapter of *Imaginary*, and gives the example of a portrait of the French king Charles VIII. The portraitist of Charles VIII did not realise on canvas a mental image of the king, but fashioned an analogon. An analogon could be a photograph, a painting, a mental image or other phenomenon that serves the same purpose as whatever perceptual object the painting (or photo or image) is of. As the imaginary process occurs, the analogon loses its own sense and takes on the sense of the object that consciousness is actually aiming at and that the analogon is standing in for. So, when we cease to look at the canvas and the brush strokes and engage in the imaginary process, Charles VIII's painting loses the sense of being a painting, but becomes imbued with the sense of Charles VIII: we ascribe our feelings and thoughts about him to the king himself, not to his painting, though he himself is not present. We begin here to see the clear delineation of the object of imaging consciousness as opposed to the perceptual consciousness' object: we no longer need to find a motive to animate the hylē, since it is no longer exactly the same in both cases.

The analogon takes on new senses and meanings depending on the intention of consciousness towards it. Objects are not actually constituted by the analogon: viewers of the portrait can perceive the analogon and grasp the image of the king, but the image is still an image and the imaginary is not actually realised, as it cannot be made into an object. In

[188] Flynn 1992: 434.

aesthetic contemplation, we appear to shift along a continuum, with pure perception at one end and pure imagination on the other. When we appreciate the aesthetic in a real object, we 'stand back' from the object and it 'slides into nothingness'.[189] The object becomes its own analogon, and through its current presence an irreal mental image of the object arises.

This irreality is very important for the concept of imaging consciousness, and for the intrinsically related concept of consciousness' inherent freedom. Irreality pervades the concept of the imagination, and in looking at Sartre's conception of the characteristics of imaging consciousness we see it becomes an inherent, intrinsic feature of the mental image.

The method to be used to discover those characteristics is the one laid out in *Imagination*: first to produce an image in oneself, and then via reflection, attempt to describe its characteristics.[190] Via reflection, again seen to be at the forefront and centre of Sartre's (and Husserl's) phenomenological image theory, Sartre distils four of these characteristics.

The first is that 'the image is a consciousness.'[191] In the discussion of this characteristic Sartre defines the mental image: in fact, he says that the phrase 'mental image' is somewhat confusing, and that a better phrasing would be 'consciousness of Pierre-as-imaged' - in other words, consciousness directed at an image of a perceptual object - or 'imaging consciousness of Pierre'.[192] This is because the image is not, as we have already seen, an *object*, but a way consciousness relates to and aims at an object. Thus, since consciousness is defined by its intentional acts, the mental image is a consciousness.

The second is that the image (as an intentional relation of consciousness to its object), involves '[t]he phenomenon of quasi-observation'.[193] Broadly, this means that the image is comprised of no more than what consciousness has put into it in the first place. Put another way, when we try to contemplate an imaginary object, we find we can learn no more about it,

[189] *Imaginary*: 193.
[190] *Imaginary*: 5.
[191] *Imaginary*: 6.
[192] *Imaginary*: 7
[193] *Imaginary*: 8.

since the image is 'entirely determined by the knowledge I use to create it.'[194] Observation or contemplation of an image cannot yield any more information than what was already known, as observation of a perceptual object can; thus the term 'quasi-observation'.

The third characteristic is that imaging consciousness always posits its object as a *nothingness*.[195] imaging consciousness posits its objects in one of four ways – as absent; as non-existent; as existing in another place; or as not existentially posited at all (neither existent nor non-existent). All these manners of apprehension entail that the imaginary object is posited as a nothingness: when I have an image of a friend, for example, not only do I not see my friend, but I actually see nothing at all. Put another way, since the mental image (as the relation between consciousness and its object) is consciousness of an *image* – recall, too, that intentionality means consciousness is *empty* or, put another way, it has nothingness at its core – the imaging consciousness is aiming at, and must posit its object as, a nothingness.

The last characteristic of the imaging consciousness is the fundamental characteristic of spontaneity. As consciousness, and thus possessed of the capacity for spontaneous generation of intentional acts, when imaging consciousness gives itself to itself it does so as a self-generating act, causally independent and independent of the laws governing perception.

Objects of imaging consciousness do not exist within the parameters of the physical and natural world, but are acts of spontaneous imaging consciousness, and do not exist independently of that consciousness. As such, the physical laws and restrictions that determine the characteristics (and the relationships between the characteristics) of perceptual objects as they are given to consciousness in perception do not apply to imaginary objects. Nor do they apply to the imaginary objects' relationships with each other. They are

[194] Kearney 1998: 60.
[195] *Imaginary*: 11.

independent of the parameters of the real: and as we saw they are always posited as a nothingness, which negates the real, so that they are posited as irreal.

Nothingness and irreality figure heavily in the Sartrean account of the imagination, and as we will see, his account of freedom. But first let us turn to *defining* the object of the mental image (the imaginary object): this can be done only with reference to its being an irreality, and thus being posited as nothingness. Sartre claims that the phenomenon of nothingness as related to the imagination involves three interrelated types or states of irreality that characterise the mental image. All three become apparent when describing the characteristics of consciousness and, following Richard Kearney's example,[196] we shall describe them separately here.

The first is a state of spatial irreality. Spatial characteristics (e.g. sizes) of imaginary objects do not depend on the object's relationships with other objects as occurs in perception (such that, for example, the size of animals is partly limited by the square-cube law).[197] The imaginary object's background and spatial context are not independent of imaging consciousness either, or perhaps it is more accurate to say that they only exist insofar as they have relationships with the imaginary object, such that in Kearney's phrase, when I imagine Peter in a room 'If Peter leaves the room, the room will have to leave with him.'[198]

The second is temporal irreality: objects of imaging consciousness do not exist within the normal temporal laws governing real perceptual objects, either. Thus they are external to time, though dependent upon consciousness; this is what occurs when one drifts into a daydream that one is surprised to find lasted only a few minutes, when one felt an hour must

[196] Kearney 1998: 62-63.
[197] As applied to biomechanics the square-cube law broadly states that the size of an animal determines its structure such that if, say, a mouse were scaled up to the size of an elephant, keeping all other physical laws and circumstances the same, its bodily systems and structures would need to change to the point that they could no longer function. This is also why some fictional characters could not exist in reality: the sheer size of the giants in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* would make it such that the transferral of weight involved in taking one step would be so great that their femurs would simply shatter. Since, as imaginary objects, they are not bound by this or any other circumstance of spatial reality, they can be the preposterous size they are. See Haldane: 1927.
[198] Kearney 1998: 62.

have passed. We can also manipulate time, from past to future and back, imagining objects in places and times that they could not be in reality, so that I can imagine that I am a guest at the court of Tutankhamun. Imaginary objects have their own set of relationships with time, just as they have their own spatial relationships, and none of these relationships exists independently of the imaginary object as the imaginary object itself does not exist independently of consciousness.

The imaginaries' relationships to each other are also irreal. This is the third irreality. Perceptual objects have their characteristics determined by physical laws, and are independent of consciousness (such that, unlike the imaginary objects, they still exist with those same characteristics even if no consciousness perceives them). Thus, perceptual objects have clear boundaries between one another, their different parts and features are predictable, and the relationships between their characteristics and between one another are constant. For example, the Pauli exclusion principle of quantum mechanics, when extended, entails that no two solid bodies, or objects, can occupy the same place in space at the same time. But imaginary objects, not bound by laws like this, can be jumbles, composites, or even complete contradictions (e.g. the mythical Chimaera, part lion, part eagle and part goat). They do not have physical or logical parameters to entail their individuation.

Imagination has an incongruous nature such that no single image is actually related to the other in a way that mirrors perception, but each imaginary object depends upon its own unique set of relationships. Because of this, one image cannot impact upon another, nor can anything act upon it save itself. The lack of perceptual parameters, and consequential lack of individuation, entails that if one aspect of an imaginary object is changed, the whole object changes: in fact, since it is no longer an object for consciousness, the original imaginary object with its attendant features ceases to be, and an entirely new, *sui generis* one takes its place as the object of imaging consciousness.

These points bring us to the main crux of the argument Sartre makes with these points: acts of imagination are acts that negate the real. The imaginary object is an *irreal* object: 'haunted by an essential *lack of existence*.'[199] This leads us to the first part of the conclusion to *Imaginary*. In order to imagine, consciousness must be able to conceive of a hypothetical irreality. This is what imagination actually is: a transcendence of the given, and a transformation of what is into what is *not*. The irreality of the imaginary life, the 'world of existential 'irreality''[200] as Kearney terms it, is the basis of the freedom of consciousness. In intentional acts of imaging consciousness, which entails spontaneously generating and positing the irreal and thereby negating and transcending the real, consciousness performs an act of freedom.

Imagination allows us to project desires onto objects, and manifests with recourse to action: the parallels and overlaps with emotions. Images are acts sustained once produced by consciousness' 'spontaneous flow'[201]. Recognising that the world of perceptual objects alone and unattended by the transformation given by imagination would be 'impoverished'[202] due to the objects' inability to be present to consciousness except by degrees, imaging consciousness attempts to transform perceptual objects to fill out the perceptions. This does not work in the same way as Husserl's idea, which gave to the image some concrete matter to fill them up, or give them meaning: rather, the meaning given here is to do with *action*, transforming objects of desire into objects desired, like emotional consciousness transforms the world to escape from the real, imaging consciousness changes objects and circumstances into what it wants them to be, construing them as-imaged, in terms of desired potential action upon and with it. It does this via imagination synthesised with information it possesses already, putting together cognitive and affective into a whole. Thus, imaging consciousness' transforming of the object is described by Sartre as a 'degraded' form of knowledge: a point to which we shall return.

[199] Kearney 1998: 63. Original italics.
[200] Kearney 1998: 66.
[201] Kearney 1998: 64.
[202] Fell 1965: 41.

These comments might put us in mind of a phenomenon encountered in the last chapter: a magical kind of world, in which objects are transformed by consciousness' intentional attitudes. Thomas R. Flynn notes that any study of Sartre's image theory is incomplete without reference to his theory of emotions[203], and this is one of the keys to the importance of *Nausea* to this part of the theory: but before we consider *Nausea* and its importance to Sartre's work on the imagination let us explore Sartre's theory with reference to the points covered in the last chapter. Joseph Fell's 1965 analysis of the emotional theory of Sartre has already been useful to us, and we shall use his work to provide a brief account of the nature of the imagination as related to the emotions, and the important role that *Nausea* plays in this account. Additionally, though freedom has not been the focus throughout this exegesis, it must now be brought back into the discussion. The next part of this chapter will examine the emotional dimension of imaging consciousness, with particular reference to the way that *Nausea,* as an artwork and thus an object for imaging as well, connects to Sartre's theory.

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Part 3: *Nausea* and the Freedom of the Imagination

The importance of the novel *Nausea* to the concept of the imagination and to the concept of freedom is multilayered. In this part, we will discuss the relationship between the two. Certain situations and scenarios presented in the novel have particular relevance to the relationship: we will consider this threefold interaction, and show that the importance of the novel to the intricately related concept of freedom which the relationship entails.

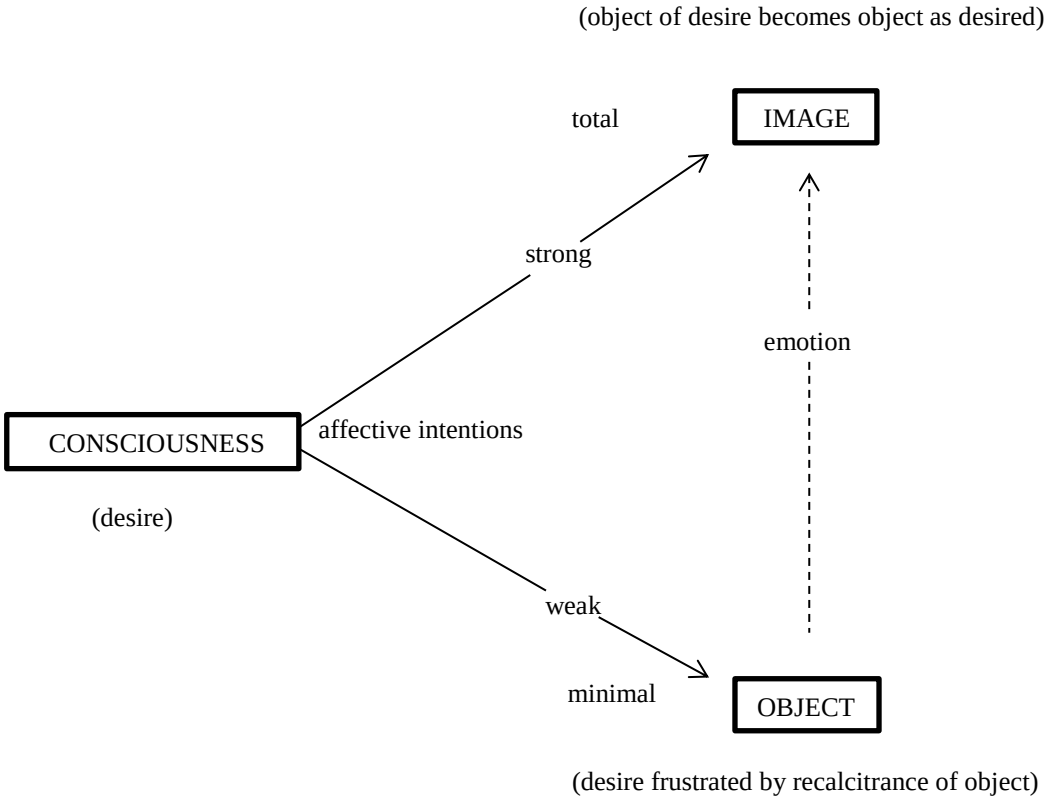
We know from Sartre's characteristics of imaging consciousness that the reality of objects, once imagined, is negated and the object as-imaged becomes irreal. Perceptual

[203] Flynn 1975: 435.

objects are given to consciousness as determined, fixed, predictable and unchanging ('recalcitrant' as Fell puts it[204]) in their relationships, but imaginary objects are not. With imagination, we can transform them and change them as we like without recourse to these external relationships. I can imagine an object however I want it to be: by projecting my wants onto the external object, I act upon it in the imaginary attitude and can intentionally transform it into an irreal object, and it appears as I desire it to be.

This depends on intentional emotional attitudes of consciousness and its relationships to both image and object: all have links to each other. Fell has a useful diagram (Fig. 1, below) that helps to make sense of this labyrinth.

Fig. 1. Imaginary and Emotional Transformation



Imaginary and Emotional Transformation[205]

Consciousness directs its intentions about what it wants to do with the object onto both object itself, and the image of it. Sartre thinks there are degrees of 'affective transformation' of

[204] Fell, 1965: 42.
[205] Fell 1965: 43.

objects in imaginative consciousness that relate to emotional dispositions towards objects. In 'weak emotion', what Fell calls 'minimum affective transformation',[206] directed towards the object the degree to which consciousness is able to transform the object into a more desirable object is very low, hampered by the object's 'recalcitrance'[207]. Consciousness projects its emotions increasingly towards the image which takes on the sense of the perceptual object of desire until the object itself is entirely negated, and replaced by the object as desired. It is not that emotions are necessarily stronger, or that 'emotion would be at a vehement maximum',[208] the lesser the recalcitrance: the diagram does not include, as Fell notes himself,[209] what the motivation conditions are for consciousness' reaction to the object in the situation in which it is encountered.

This depends on what consciousness wants the object *for*: the strength of the reaction to the object depends on 'the subject's evaluation of the actual or potential effect of the object upon his aims or goals.'[210] 'Weak' emotions are only possible because emotion, transforming the world of the real into a magical world in which it escapes the unbearable, is a 'limiting case of emotion and not a formula descriptive of all emotion.'[211]

To see more clearly what is meant by this let us turn to *Nausea*. Anny, Roquentin's vivacious English ex-lover, writes and asks to see him. Roquentin is anxious when he recalls their often troubled relationship, marked by failures in communication and empathy. He concedes that he would like to see her and possibly rekindle their spark, yet when we meet Anny, we find her more lacklustre and lethargic than we have been led to believe from Roquentin's descriptions – he too is quite surprised to find her more changed than he expected after only a few years, older and somewhat less attractive, as well as more sordid, being the kept mistress of other men. They discuss their previous relationship to some extent:

[206] Fell 1965: 42.
[207] Fell 1965: 43.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Fell 1965: 44.
[211] Ibid.

Roquentin finds it more difficult than Anny to remember precise details of their relationship, though he remembers her as she was rather well, and is disconcerted to find Anny's memory of their affair more intact than his own. Most of Anny's conversation revolves around their past relationship, and how she has changed since then, particularly in respect of her search for 'perfect moments'.

The perfect moment would be born out of a 'privileged situation', a life experience of the kind which one would expect to elicit some kind of strong, unforgettable emotion or at least allow the appearance of this to the world (which was also crucial), the experience of which would entail a perfect moment: as Hazel Barnes notes, Anny tries to make this happen in much the same way as an artist might seek inspiration (Barnes actually says 'material') out of which to create an artwork[212]; though for Anny, there is an order that she must impose upon the world, an aesthetic order.

The real objects and situations encountered by Anny in the privileged situation must be adjusted, adapted or negated in order to form the perfect moment. 'In other words,' Roquentin says, 'the situation is the raw material: it has to be treated.'[213] Anny agrees. To manufacture the perfect moment, Anny says, 'I recall everything that has happened to me and I arrange it…I add a few touches here and there and it makes a whole string of perfect moments. Then I close my eyes and try to imagine that I'm still living in it.'[214]

The best example of this is Roquentin's recollection of fights he and Anny had while they were together but living apart. They were to attend an open-air cinema in the evening, and for the entire day before his departure, Anny

> contrived to multiply the misunderstandings between us until there were only sixty minutes, exactly sixty minutes, before I had to leave…we were desperately unhappy, she as much as I…At eleven o'clock, at the beginning of the main picture, she took my hand and pressed it between her hands without a word. I felt

[212] Barnes 1999: 200.
[213] *Nausea*: 212.
[214] *Nausea*: 217.

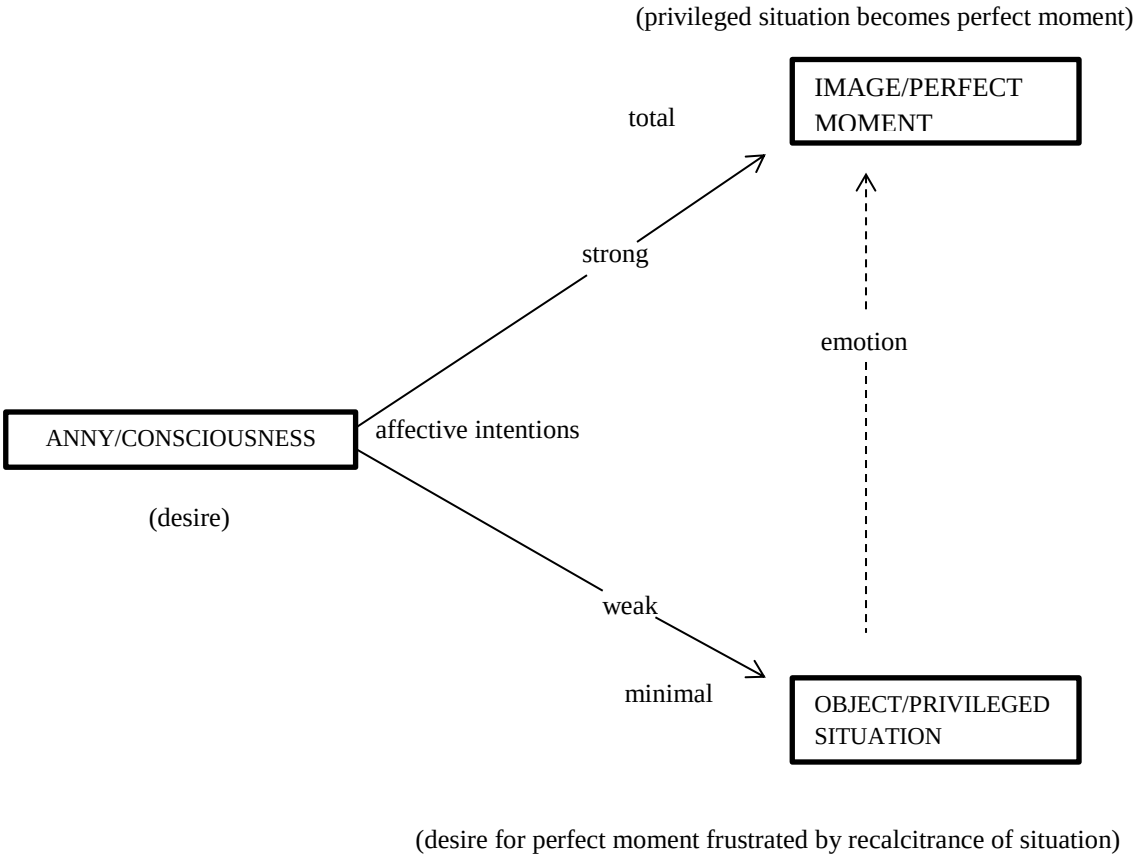
> myself flooded with a bitter joy and I understood, without needing to look at my watch, that it was eleven o'clock…Then, at midnight, she let go of my hand, after pressing it violently; I got up and left without saying a single word to her. That was a job well done.[215]

The problematic situation, that Roquentin will be leaving at eleven o'clock, leads Anny to impose 'magical' qualities onto the world (by increasing the enmity between herself and Roquentin) to transform it into a state she would favour. She chooses the emotions of love and anger and makes them function as her attempt to turn the situation into her imagined perfect moment. Roquentin describes how Anny attempted to create her 'perfect moments':

> The rain has stopped, the air is mild, the sky is rolling along beautiful black pictures: this is more than enough to make a frame for a perfect moment; to reflect those pictures, Anny would cause dark little tides to be born in our hearts. But I don't know how to take advantage of the opportunity…[216]

Reading these passages alongside Fell's diagram above, we get the following state of affairs.

Fig. 2. Anny's Imaginary and Emotional Transformation



Recalling that in the end Anny concludes there are no perfect moments, we can say that this (Fig. 2, above) is what she *attempts*. So Anny's 'perfect moments' are images,

[215] *Nausea*: 86.
[216] *Nausea*: 104.

irreal situations and projections of how she desires the world to be. She projects emotions onto the object, the privileged situation, to transform it via emotion into the irreal image. Unfortunately for Anny, an image is a product of the freedom and spontaneity of consciousness and its related ability to posit the irreal: and this is part of what makes it such that she never attains a perfect moment. Her magical world is one in which objects and circumstances are responsible for her reactions and images, not Anny herself.

As we recall, the vehemency of the reaction to the object or situation, in this case Anny's potential privileged situation, will be a product of Anny's calculating how effective the situation will be in creating the perfect moment. But none of the situations she encounters evoke strong enough emotions for her. Consider the recounting of this one, the death of her father when she was a child:

> When my father died, they took me up to his room to see him for the last time. Going upstairs, I was very unhappy, but I was also as it were drunk with a sort of religious ecstasy; I was at last going to enter a privileged situation. I leaned against the wall, I tried to make the proper gestures. But my aunt and my mother were there, kneeling by the bed, and they spoiled everything with their sobs.[217]

By the time she meets Roquentin in Paris, she has abandoned the search, stating that there are no perfect moments at all. Anny has come to the realisation, she believes, that the emotions without which the perfect moment could not be created do not exist, and without them, nor do the privileged moments:

> I used to think that one could radiate hate or death. What a mistake! Yes, I really thought that "Hate" existed, that it settled on people and raised them above themselves. Naturally, I am the only one, I am the one who hates, I am the one who loves.

Importantly, she does not actually realise that the emotions are not determined by objects, but by *her*. The objects and situations she thinks failed her in not evoking strong enough emotions for her to have a 'perfect moment' are not to blame for this. It

[217]*Nausea*: 210-211.

is not exactly that the emotions do not exist: it is that she has not realised her freedom over her emotional responses. This entails that she must create them in order to attain the freedom of consciousness that will allow her to have a perfect moment, to imagine a situation beyond the boundaries of the real. The responsibility for this lies with Anny, and this is why she lives in a magical world. Anny as unreflective emotional consciousness is trying to find reasons or justifications within the privileged situation for her not being able to attain perfect moments (such as her mother and aunt crying).

She tries not to realise that her emotions are her responsibility as a free consciousness, but is unwilling to face this unbearable circumstance and thus remains in the magical world where she imagines it is the object, not Anny herself, who is responsible for the circumstance. This is curious given her statement that 'I am the one who hates…': but it is clear she is relying on objects and situations too much to realise how accurate her statement is, in that she does not face the fact that her reaction to her situation, that she thought would be privileged, is not going to happen with the vehemence required to transform the world because she herself is creator of those emotions.

Unfortunately for Anny, she cannot completely *believe* in her magical world, as emotional consciousness does when in the grip of the magical world.[218] There is a point at which Roquentin thinks she has come to the same realisations about the nature of existence as he has when discovering the nature of the nausea. The problem is that in deciding that there are no privileged situations and thus no perfect moments, Anny is still in the pre-reflective state of consciousness that thinks emotions are caused by objects. This is what Roquentin has realised through his increasing objectification within the world: emotions are acts of *consciousness*, not the world. He thinks that upon her declaration, she has realised that she is the sole constitutor of all her actions and

[218]Barnes 1959: 200.

behaviours, even down to her emotions. However, Roquentin is wrong. In her wish that Roquentin had remained exactly as he was four years ago, to try to give her some sense of constancy and coherence, she has not realised anything of the sort: she remains unwilling to face her ultimate freedom as consciousness.

We will return to Anny in the next chapter. We can see that the novel is able to describe emotional situations, which are intended to evoke a reaction in the reader such that it is as if they react to a real situation.

However, ambiguity shows its face, as it might, and leads us to a point that cannot be left alone having to do with the point about relationships between the real and the irreal. Fell reminds us that perception and imagination never overlap but are 'the two main irreducible attitudes of consciousness. It follows that they exclude one another.'[219] We must also remember Sartre does not think that there are two worlds of objects, one imaginary and one perceptual: rather the one world of objects is apprehended differently in each attitude. Yet the claim that they are always completely separate and mutually exclusive does not seem totally believable after this discussion.

The claim above about the imagination being a degraded form of knowledge is a sticking point for many scholars including Philip Blosser, who thinks that it is Sartre's over-reliance on the analogy with perception that leads him to make this point. Due to his insistence on that analogy mental images are 'isolated within the poverty of their own appearance'[220] such that their impact on and interplay with the world of reality is actually denied.

Blosser suggests that this is problematic for Sartre's views of perception as well as imagination. He has an opposition to the fact that Sartre allows for no interplay at all between perception and imagination. Yet Blosser wonders how all the relationships between

[219] *Imaginary*: 120.
[220] Blosser 1986: 169.

perceptual objects can be constituted at all if they are not first contemplated and consolidated within the realm of the imaginary: the objects 'come to be sedimented and habituated, at least in part, through the imaginal shaping of perceptual reality'[221]. We cannot see all the relationships that perceptual objects can have with one another, but we can infer and imply them via contemplation of the images we have of them, and hypothetically weigh up evidence to see whether we may not be right. The image might be a degraded form of knowledge, since we would have to verify any hypothetical scenario empirically to come to real knowledge about the object, but this does not mean that the imagination has not been instrumental in our constitution of reality itself even if it has only been so in an indirect fashion. In fact, rather than 'degraded knowledge', Blosser prefers the more pleasant term 'nascent significations'[222], which neatly turns the phrase into something more positive in the sense that there is some actual consideration given to the conception of an active or performative role for the image, and implies that there is in fact some function the image can perform.

Blosser brings up Paul Ricoeur's argument that mental images ('imaginal fiction') could be productive in the constitution of reality, and could even enhance it. The imagination can function in the same way metaphor does in a conversation through the multiple facets of meaning that it has: imagination might have the same relationship to perceptual reality, meaning it can actually broaden and deepen knowledge, not degrade it.[223]

This point is supported to some degree by *Nausea*. Consider the novel's function at this point, and the commonly designated role of novels in existentialist philosophy, as a novel of ideas: as we saw from Amy Kleppner's paper the novel evokes questions in the reader and attempts to engage them to interact with and react to situations in the novel in the same manner in which they would react to situations in reality. This could frankly not occur if there

[221] Blosser 1986: 170
[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid.

were no degree of interplay, or at least one's ability to affect the other: and we see clearly that the novel has this power.

In the novel, the imaginary is blurred with reality to a great degree, and this is precisely what makes the novel so useful to existentialist philosophy, including its central tenet of individualistic freedom: the ability of the novel to embed theoretical concepts about reality into the imaginary world of fiction, positing objects as nothingness and thereby negating the real for the irreal and the hypothetical, gives the reader a hold on those concepts that enhances and informs their own constitution of reality. We take these fictional scenarios and imagine ourselves in the situation of the characters, and/or take the situations from the novel and imagine what we would do in those scenarios.

If I were Roquentin, what would I have done when, for example, I saw the argument in the street between Lucie and her boyfriend? Roquentin does nothing: in fact, he does nothing about quite a lot that intuitively it seems that he should do something about (the stalker of the young girl in the street, the Autodidact's overtures to the boy in the library). The freedom of consciousness to act entails that the doing of nothing by Roquentin is still a choice of action, as Sartre will later affirm, but the fact that Roquentin does nothing in so many situations (or at least does not seem to respond appropriately, as we saw in the last chapter) allows us to easily place ourselves in that scenario via the imagination and imagine what we would do. We can imagine how we would act. The emotional reaction that we have towards the scenario would be a function of how much we calculate that the action can help achieve our goals: Roquentin's lack of emotional response invites us to consider what our goals in the situation would be. If saving a little girl from a potentially horrific death is not enough for Roquentin to act, would it be enough for us?

Views of reality can be changed entirely, even if reality cannot. The claim that reality and imagination are mutually exclusive does not seem quite accurate, and it could be that the image does in fact perform a function that can directly motivate a reader to modify his views

of reality. As Nussbaum states, 'People care for the books they read; and they are changed by what they care for.'[224]

Through the imaginary scenarios we get to a conception of the real world informed and shaped by them, as well as greatly enhanced by the embedding of the concepts within an imaginary world: this the theoretical text does not give us. Reality does not change in accordance with our imaginations or our projected desires, this is true. The perceptual and the imaginary do remain separate for the most part. But we can play the concepts off each other: in fact, this too, as a part of imagination, is part of the freedom of consciousness: and in doing this, we can come to learn about our reality.

Recall one of Sartre's dissatisfactions with Husserl's incomplete theory of the mental image: that we cannot see what would motivate consciousness to animate one set of hylē to form a mental image at one time and a perceptual object at another. De Preester posits an answer to this based on action, and what consciousness wants its object to do: specifically, intended consequences. De Preester explains that 'simulation' theories of the imagination, 'inspired'[225] by sensorimotor theories of perception, might overcome this worry of the distinction of the hylē in the formation of mental images. Broadly, the simulation theory of the imagination states that when we imagine an object, we simulate (as opposed to remembering or recalling) the experience of that object. The experience is neutralised, in the sense that in imagining the experience we do not need to believe in the experience's reality or the reality of the object. This cannot yet help to make the difference since simulating a behaviour involves internal generation of some sensory input that resembles a perception (thus being an experience of a kind of 'inner world').[226] But if we add elements of the sensorimotor theories of imagination, in particular the idea that there is a sensorimotor mechanism that allows anticipation of the *consequences* of a behaviour, such as a simulating

[224] Nussbaum 1990: 231..
[225] De Preester 2012: 509.
[226] De Preester 2012: 508.

or imagining act, we might find that it is the imagined or intended consequences of the act that can motivate consciousness to constitute the same hylē as an image at one time and a perception as another.

The worry with this theory, based as it is on a sensorimotor theory of the imagination, is that it might fall under the category of a psychic fact of the kind Sartre rejects in *Emotions*, and thus not be able to give any information about what it is to actually *have* an experience. Yet the emphasis of De Preester's idea on the *act* of consciousness and on what it wants to *do* with the object, in terms of awareness of *intended* consequences, makes this seem unlikely: we may have an answer here to Sartre's question of what would motivate consciousness to intend a mental image or perceptual object from the same hylē. Then again, whether this can get us out of the worry that some hylē cannot be a perceptual object and thus would mean that the motivation of consciousness could not matter in all cases is unclear: this theory may fall victim to that worry.

Related to this is also a curious claim that Sartre makes in *Imaginary*, in the discussion of the second characteristic of quasi-observation: that since in an image there is only what consciousness has placed in it, there is nothing new that consciousness can learn from it. Sartre says in *Imaginary* that since the perceptual object 'overflows' consciousness, in that there is more to that object that I am able to perceive in one instance. So seeing a skyscraper is 'a phenomenon of an infinity of aspects,'[227] such that we cannot see it from more than one perspective at any one time: thus there is always some feature of the object that escapes us, that is not present, every time we see it.

I see the wall of the skyscraper as the wall of the skyscraper, not as some random stand-alone wall: but since it is not present to me in certain perspectives I adopt, such as looking at the opposite wall, it is possible that the first wall has disappeared, or that I am not actually looking at a skyscraper (some aspect I see from a future perspective might mean I

[227] *Imaginary*: 8.

have to abandon my conclusion that what I am perceiving is a skyscraper). Only being able to take one perspective at a time, I cannot absolutely affirm otherwise.

When I imagine the skyscraper, however, I imagine the whole object with everything I know about it: 'I apprehend its entirety in one glance.'[228] . In other words, there is nothing about the imaginary object that I do not already know. It is still more accurate to say that in imaging consciousness all features of that object as given to me, all that I know about it, are accessible via the image – I 'have no apprenticeship to serve'[229] in that all I know about the object is there in the image of it. So, Sartre says, no new information about the object can be learned from contemplating the image of it.

But it is entirely possible to make what we might call educated guesses that serve to inform our conceptions of and relationships to real, perceptual objects. There is no reason to assume, when an engineer visualises 'in his mind' how a bridge is going to take shape, that the relationships between the imaginary objects that he posits, which he chooses to keep constant and fixed like those between the corresponding perceptual objects, cannot lead the engineer to discover problems or better ways of constructing the bridge. He will of course have to test these ideas and actually build the bridge: he could be empirically wrong, of course. But even though this is not discovery of new information about the object or its relationships via empirical knowledge (since he already knows and chose to keep constant the characteristics of the perceptual objects when forming images of them), it is disingenuous to devalue the theoretical, hypothetical quasi-knowledge that is available to us through positing imaginary objects and their potential relationships.

This is in fact the most important function of the novel and the philosophical work that it does: it invites us to do just this. The ambiguity that we see between the modes of expression – the novel and the theoretical text – is coming to be a strength of the relationship

[228] Ibid.
[229] ibid.

between the two, as when reading the novel it invites the individual, the centre of the existential equation, to reflectively consider these hypothetical experiences (and think about them in relation to his own experiences), thus doing the philosophical work of the theory: placing individual experience at the beginning of the inquiry into the reader's own consciousness. It thereby becomes a tangible motif, an actual physical proof as it were, of the freedom of consciousness. We are free because we can imagine: in imagining, we posit irrealities and fictions, with characteristics and relationships we desire: in a novel, we are invited to practice our freedom. This is the central importance of the novel for this point in the theory: and it leads directly to our final chapter and the discussion of art and freedom it contains.

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Concluding Remarks

This is the crux of the argument that we have been working towards: an artwork is an act of freedom, and can serve as a catalyst for the reflective exercise of that freedom in a reader. The concept of freedom has taken something of a back seat in this chapter, yet it is still clear that throughout Sartre's formulation of his original take on the problem of the imagination, including in his divergence with Husserl and the setting out of his own theory, the concept of freedom permeates.

The relationship between imagination and emotion has provided us with a detailed look at the importance of the novel for both modes of consciousness, and shown some inconsistencies between the modes of expression of the theory (i.e. the novel and the theoretical text). It appears that the novel and the images formed when reading it have the capacity to evoke changes in the experience of reality: this does not quite gel with Sartre's emphasis on the idea that no image can influence reality.

The ambiguity between the two modes of expression of the theory, the novel and the theoretical text, is a strength here that points to the importance of both to Sartre's theory. The importance of the novel is becoming very clear: the novel is an act of freedom that can cause acts of freedom in others. This will be more thoroughly canvassed in the next chapter, when we discuss the second part of the conclusion to *Imaginary* where Sartre gives his description of the nature of the artwork.

Chapter IV

Irreality, Art and *Nausea*: The (Possible) Freedom of Art

In the last chapter, we saw how Sartre conceives of the mental image and imaging consciousness, as well as the concept of freedom as relates to the imagination. His theory states that acts of spontaneous imaging consciousness, aimed at irreal objects, negate what is real and actual and divert its attention to the realm of the 'irréel', the domain of the not-present in which the imaginaries (i.e. imaginary objects) lie. There must be an active consciousness involved to imagine: as has been said, the imaginaries may be suggested or evoked by objects of consciousness in the world of the actual, but to encounter imaginary objects imaging consciousness must act, of its own volition, to disconnect itself from this deterministic order, to stand away from it, and focus upon what is not (i.e. what is not present or non-existent) rather than remaining 'bogged down in the real'.[230] It is because we have this capacity to imagine that we are free.

This chapter will be almost entirely devoted to the second part of the conclusion of *Imaginary*, a very short section entitled 'The Work of Art', in which Sartre discusses the 'existential type of the work of art' as an irreality.[231] In this part of the text Sartre discusses the concept in relation to several of the visual arts, in particular the arts of portraiture and painting, theatre and music. Yet, oddly enough for a philosopher-novelist, there is not as much specific discussion of fiction or the novel in either of the theoretical works devoted to Sartre's theory of the imagination as we might expect.

The first part of this chapter outlines the theory of the irreality of art as its 'existential type' and, though Sartre does not do this explicitly, argues that that theory's obvious ties to the theory of the freedom of the imagination means that we can say that the act of

[230] *Imaginary*: 184.
[231] *Imaginary*: 188.

apprehending or creating a work of art is an act of the freedom of consciousness: because consciousness can do this it is free.

The second part will outline this in more detail and see how the concept applies to the novel *Nausea*. We will consider the notion of the 'artistic life' as a life that is engaged in attempts to transcend the real, and in looking at some important acts of reading and writing that are contained in *Nausea*, we will see why Roquentin thinks – but only thinks tentatively – that writing a novel as opposed to making some other kind of literary creation would allow him to live what looks much like the conception of the artistic life that we will consider.

The third part of the chapter will take particular note of the end of *Nausea*, in which Roquentin tentatively decides to write a novel to posit some justification for his existence: we will specifically look at the tentative nature of his idea and suggest that, if the ideas posited in the first two parts of the chapter are conceivable, Roquentin would be hesitant about writing a novel. We will also consider Roquentin's creator in this part of the chapter to offer an explanation of why Sartre would have written the end of Roquentin's diary this way and show that, even if the novel offers no proof that it is actually an act of a free consciousness or that the artistic life can entail acts of free consciousness, the novel is still essential to the concepts outlined, and to the theory of art that Sartre proposes in this text.

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Part 1: 'The Work of Art'

In the second chapter of *Imaginary* Sartre discusses a portrait of King Charles VIII and comes back to it in the conclusion's second part, a section entitled 'The Work of Art', and

it is the first example Sartre gives in this section to discuss the nature of the artwork as relates to the imagination here.

We know, from the discussions in the last chapter, that Sartre's formulation of the acts of imaging consciousness is such that in acts of imaging consciousness in which consciousness construes an imaginary object, it aims at that object via the hylē, the content of the image.

We also understand that as Sartre conceives of this relationship, the hylē of the mental image must be clearly defined, as he argues against Husserl that, when the hylē is the same for the mental image and the perceptual object, the intentionality of consciousness alone cannot be what makes the mental image distinct from the perceptual object such that it can constitute an mental image at one time and a perceptual object at another. Sartre's theory is that the content of the mental image is different, and takes the form of the analogon, that takes on the sense of the object and is the scope through which consciousness aims at its object.

When we consider the portrait of Charles VIII, we see that the king himself is an object for consciousness, but he is not the same object as the portrait of him, or its canvas, its frame or any of the other related components of the portrait. The king does not appear to us so long as we are considering those components of the painting. These components and the painting they make up do not exactly hide him from us: rather, the king is not an object for consciousness until that consciousness, in an act of world-negation, 'constitutes itself as imaging'.[232] The intentional act that apprehends Charles is 'complete and exclusive' of the intentional act that apprehends the painting: Charles-as-imaged is 'necessarily the correlate of the intentional act of the imaging consciousness.'[233] As we apprehend him on the canvas,

[232] *Imaginary*: 189.
[233] Ibid.

Charles appears as an 'irreality',[234] or an unreality. He is the 'object of our aesthetic appreciations',[235] and aesthetic objects are, Sartre argues, always unreal.

This is a very important distinction, especially given the commonplace error that Sartre says is often made when apprehending objects like portraits. Ordinarily, a spectator might say that a portraitist paints what is in his mind: the painter's idea of what to paint originates in his mind as an image which is then realised when he actually paints the portrait on the canvas. This is not what happens according to Sartre: the painter does not begin with some inexpressible mental image that he then translates through paint onto a canvas so that there is in the end an object that is that image realized into a tangible object. Of course the paints, the canvas, the frame and all these things are real, but they are not at all what is grasped or aimed at in aesthetic appreciation: the aesthetic object, what we might call 'beautiful', is unreal, and cannot be grasped by a perceptual process.

This is because the aesthetic object is never actually present: as we have seen, imaging consciousness always posits its object as a nothingness. The portraitist of Charles VIII did not realise on canvas a mental image of the king, but fashioned an analogon. An analogon, as we recall, serves the same function as the object would in perception – an analogon could be a photograph, a painting or a mental image that serves the same purpose as whatever perceptual object the painting (or photo or image) is of. When we say that it serves the same purpose as the aesthetic object of which it is an analogon, we mean that as the imaginary process occurs, the analogon loses its own sense and takes on the sense of the object that consciousness is actually aiming at, and that the analogon is standing in for. So, when we cease to look at the canvas and the brush strokes and engage in the imaginary process, constituting the image of the king, Charles VIII's painting loses the sense of being a painting and in an intentional act of consciousness becomes imbued with the sense of Charles VIII: we ascribe our feelings and thoughts about him to *the king himself*, not to his painting.

[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid.

Aesthetic objects themselves are not actually constituted by the analogon: viewers of the portrait can perceive the analogon and grasp the image of the king, but the king is still an object for imaging consciousness and is not given as present. The same applies to music. In hearing a piece of music, I perceive only an analogon of the piece of music, not the music itself which is an intangible nothingness. The performance of a piece of music that one listens to is the analogon for the unreal music. If one night I hear it performed by the Berliner Philharmoniker and another night by the Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra, on both occasions I am in the presence of the same symphony. This is because the symphony *itself* is independent of time and space and the laws that govern and restrict objects within them and their relationships to each other. The symphony is 'given *in person*'[236] but is given as absent. If suddenly the first violinist snaps her strings and the performance stops, it is not the symphony itself that is interrupted, only the performance. It is absurd to think of the symphony itself as being interrupted, since that symphony is 'outside the *real*, outside existence.' [237] So, when I hear the music, I actually hear nothing: 'I do not really hear it, I listen in the imaginary.'[238]

This is the reason for the annoying jolt that we feel when, for example, we are abruptly interrupted in listening to the music: we are passing out of the imaging attitude of aesthetic contemplation, and back into reality with attendant parameters and concerns. The passing out of the imaging attitude is an 'authentic awakening',[239] and we must now deal with the real concerns that we did not need to worry about in being engrossed in the music.

Sartre contends that this does not adequately account for the same kind of annoyance felt after passing out of the imaging attitude upon the completion of a play that is dark, terrifying or very realistic: or a film, for example, like *Saw*, or even a realistic black comedy like *Withnail and I*. In this case, Sartre says, we would think that the return to reality would be a comfort. The jolt that we still feel when our viewing is interrupted or when the play or film

[236] *Imaginary*: 192.
[237] *Imaginary*: 193.
[238] Ibid.
[239] Ibid.

ends is the annoyance of a consciousness that was 'fascinated [and] stuck in the imaginary', [240] and has been shaken out of it, like being suddenly awakened from deep sleep.

Sartre argues that from all this, it is clear that beauty is never applicable to the real, but 'can only ever be ascribed to the imaginary.'[241] For this reason, we should never confuse morality with aesthetics: values such as goodness are aimed at behaviour of denizens of the real and are bound by the absurdities of real existence, such as contingency and facticity. When we appreciate the aesthetic in a *real* object or event, such as when we find a sunset beautiful, we 'stand back' from the object and it 'slides into nothingness'.[242] The object becomes its own analogon, and through its current presence an irreal image of the object arises.

The idea is that once an object is seen as beautiful, it ceases to actually be perceived, but instead becomes an irreality. Oddly enough, this also applies to people. In an interesting aside, Sartre discusses seeing a beautiful woman and desiring her: once one sees her as beautiful, one ceases to want her, and 'in order to desire her it is necessary to forget that she is beautiful, since desire is a plunge into the heart of existence'[243] and back into the realm of contingency and absurdity.

To connect this with the idea of freedom is quite simple. Sartre does not do this explicitly in 'The Work of Art', but to do so only requires us to look at the ideas of the last chapter, and at the first part of the conclusion to *Imaginary* entitled 'Consciousness and Imagination'.

The essential question in the first part of the conclusion is what consciousness must *be* in order that it can imagine: the answer given by Sartre is that it must be able to stand back from the real, by a sui generis act, and spontaneously posit irreal objects. As we saw in the

[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid.
[243] *Imaginary*, p. 194.

last chapter, acts of imaging consciousness are acts that negate or nihilate what is real, overstepping or transcending what *is* and positing what is *not*. In this, they are acts of freedom.

As a product of the imagination, the aesthetic object seen via imaging consciousness is an irreality; and thus an act of freedom. It transcends what is directly in front of us, and thus, imbued with our own sense of how circumstances might be rather than how they are, it negates the real and allows consciousness to transcend it: this is the basis of the freedom of consciousness.

Aesthetic objects are not bound by any constraints of the real: in Sartre's words, 'the existential type of the work of art' is that 'the work of art is an irreality.'[244] In aesthetic contemplation, we are in the presence of irreal aesthetic objects and we constitute them through their analogons. The aesthetic objects are *not* constituted by their analogons, as we have just seen, but by consciousness in aesthetic contemplation. Thus, in aesthetic contemplation, consciousness is positing an irreality: and because of this, acts of aesthetic contemplation are acts of freedom.

This will also apply to the *creation* of artworks, the creation of analogons for the unrealisable mental image. In creating the artwork the artist directly aims at a mental image, beyond time and space and unbound by the constraints of the real: even though the analogon is not identifiable with the irreal object, the act of creating an artwork is therefore an act of freedom.

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Part 2: *Nausea*, The Artistic Life and the Irreality of Fiction

The act of imagining as an act of freedom is best exemplified in the domain of the arts: and as we have just seen, creation of aesthetic objects and creation of their analogons is an act

[244] *Imaginary*: 188.

of freedom. This will be outlined in more detail here. As we saw in the introduction, the arts have had intimate ties with the existentialist movement since its inception (even before works expressing what would now be called existentialist ideas could be conceived of as 'existentialist').These ties lead Van Meter Ames to describe French existentialism as 'fundamentally a philosophy of art and the artist. Its basic teaching of freedom can best be understood as the aim of the artist to be free and creative in each stroke.'[245]

Ames argues that for an existentialist it is only the person who lives what we call the 'artistic life' who is really living at all. The artistic life is not to be confused with 'an aesthetic attitude to life', which Sartre says 'is to confuse the real and the imaginary.'[246] The aesthetic attitude to life would be to constantly be in a state of aesthetic contemplation, and never dealing with the real but always escaping it, much like the magical world that emotional consciousness uses to escape the real.

Ames argues that those who devote their lives to 'business and industry in a mechanized world'[247] are also attempting to escape the real, avoiding the freedom to which they are condemned, as Sartre will later say, and eschewing the burden of responsibility that freedom places upon consciousness. Whether this is actually the case is contentious - after all, who is to say that there is no room for at least some artistic creativity within the 'mechanised world', or that many who take a place within it do not do so at least partly of their own volition, and with eyes wide open? – but we can take the point that Ames is arguing for.

The artist or the person who takes up the artistic life is the person who is constantly engaged in acts of freedom and rebellion against constraint, in this sense the constraint of what is, the boundaries of the real, and attempting transcendence of the real in favour of the

[245] Ames 1951: 252.
[246] *Imaginary*: 193.
[247] Ames 1951: 252.

irreal. The artistic struggle, even though fraught with doubt and uncertainty sometimes even of the artist's own capability, is the mode of living as if nothing were set in stone, as if one were free.

Thus, art for the artist is an act of freedom, a dynamic act in which the artist's individualism, to use a Wildean phrase, is asserted. For Oscar Wilde, the true artist does not create because he must, or because he is told to do so, but because he chooses to. There is no higher claim upon the artist than his own, and the person who takes up the artistic life realizes this completely: art is 'the most intense mood of individualism the world has known. I am inclined to say that it is the only real mode of individualism that the world has known.'[248] It is entirely possible that, at this early point in his work, Sartre would have shared this sentiment.

For the reader or viewer, the analogon is a catalyst for acts of freedom. Let us consider this specifically as relates to fiction, and how it is conceived of as an irreality. There is no lengthy or sustained discussion of fiction in *Imaginary* (most of Sartre's work on this is done in the second chapter), and though his remarks on the subject indicate that the same theory that he creates to apply to theatre, poetry and painting will apply to the novel as well, for the most part we are left to ourselves to find out whether he is right. In fact, all Sartre says as relates specifically to fiction is this: in the same way as a painter constructs visual analogons and in doing so constitutes an irreal object, the novelist constructs analogons and thereby irreal objects using language: they construct verbal analogons. When reading a novel and in doing so activating the imaginary process, words lose their sense as simple signs, and the reader's own sense and previous experience with them and what they signify takes over; the words become analogons. This is how we are able to picture the novel's 'world': in reading about the Bouville café in the middle section of *Nausea*, I engage with the words and draw upon what I have read about the café earlier (as well as my own imagination), and so imagine Bouville. Thus the novel and its world become irreal, and thus they transcend the constraints

[248] Wilde 1999 [1891]: 261.

of the real and, importantly, the words the novel is made up of: giving us the example of freedom. As we have seen the act of writing a novel is also to be considered an act of freedom.

However, the inconsistency that we have seen between Sartre's theory as explicated in the theoretical texts and as expressed in *Nausea* appears in the discussion of the novel as an act of freedom, too. At the end of *Nausea* we see Roquentin almost convincing himself to write a novel (as opposed to any other kind of book) in an attempt to come to terms with his superfluous existence – but he is not sure that it will work. The tension he feels about his own place in the world and his search for meaning within it, up against the odds of an inherently meaningless and indifferent universe, are best exemplified and situated within the sphere of the arts; the imaginative capacity of the human being, and imaginative acts as acts of human freedom in the face of worldly constraint, appears to offer a way out, but this is far from certain. As Roquentin comes to see, there is no 'way out' – yet he pins his hopes on an act of imagination, the creation of a novel, as a way to justify his existence, and to transcend the dead and sinking weight that he finds himself chained to by the fact of his brute existence. Whether Sartre's theory of imagination as laid out in *Imaginary* will bear out Roquentin's insight, and whether Roquentin's experience in the novel is the experience of the freedom that the novel offers, is not certain. On the face of it there seems to be no reason to doubt it, except perhaps for his own misgivings; and yet, Roquentin's decision to become a novelist is tentative: possibly for good reason.

To lead us into the discussion of this and situate the novel within the novel, as it were, let us first examine some of the other books that we find in *Nausea*. In fact, there are four books within the novel that are significant: Anny's beloved *Histoire de France* (by Jules Michelet), Roquentin's biography of M. de Rollebon, Roquentin's diary, and the novel Roquentin intends to write at the end of his diary; also to be factored in is the novel *Nausea* as written by Sartre that contains them all. In first looking at the non-fictional texts and why they

fail to offer any kind of consolation or solution to Roquentin's problem of the nausea, we might discover what is unique to the novel he wants to write that might make it up to the task.

In the final meeting between Roquentin and Anny, Roquentin remarks (somewhat exasperatedly) on Anny's continuing fascination with Jules Michelet's *Histoire de France*. In his nineteen-volume *magnum opus* (completed in 1857), Michelet was the first historian to use the term *Renaissance* to describe the period of cultural shift in Europe directly after the Middle Ages;[249] Michelet states that the French Renaissance was particularly driven by a search for a greater understanding of the place of humanity within the world, and of humanity itself. This was driven by the tenets of Humanism, which sought to employ the teachings of classical literature as well as a commitment to empiricism and rationalism in order to understand humanity and its place within the world; this was a reaction to and break with the Middle Ages which relied on dogma and authority (mainly of the religious kind) to comprehend humanity's situation.

This sounds exactly like the kind of book that could be a guide, or at least offer some vague pointers towards, a transcendence via imagination of the fact-based, empirical and rational: the real, in short. This is what we must transcend to achieve and realise our freedom as consciousness. And on first glance, we can be cautiously optimistic. For a historical account, *Histoire* is imbued with far more of the personal and humanistic than one would expect a historical account to be. According to Brian Hamnett, Michelet 'placed his literary skill at the service of a new historical narrative, which argued for the centrality of popular action.'[250] It is worth noting that prior to his career as a historian, Michelet was an avid reader of the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, whose writing influenced his own.[251]

For Michelet it was the perspectives of the people involved in historical events that must be put front and centre to create a full account of history. Hamnett argues that during his

[249] Brotton 2002: 21-22.
[250] Hamnett 2011:139.
[251] Hamnett 2011:138.

career Michelet found it hard to reconcile his vision of the destiny of humanity, which appears to be based in what seems to be an early form of socialism and the self-governance of a self-determining people[252] (which was 'the product of his imagination'[253]), with the rigorous evidence- and source-based approach that a historical account must have if it is to be credible, and though Michelet argued vehemently that the imaginative and speculative did not hold sway over the fact-based and historically authentic in his work, this is demonstrably dubious: in fact contemporary philosopher and historian Hippolyte Taine denounced Michelet's methodology and interpretation of historical sources as too poetic to be of much value to history.[254]

Anny has been obsessed with this work since her childhood, rereading it repeatedly, particularly fascinated with the full-page pictures therein. Those pictures, she states, never seemed to have any relevance to the text that was on the adjacent pages, or any pages closely juxtaposed; she always had to anticipate the pictures 'fifty pages in advance'.[255] But she gets annoyed with Roquentin when he tries to talk to her about it, and finally resigns herself into having to explain it to him.

In the explanation, we discover that it appears Anny had in fact taken an aesthetic attitude to life, living in a constant state of aesthetic contemplation and as such withdrawing from the real, and this has not allowed a confrontation with the brute fact of existence or of the freedom of consciousness and the attendant responsibility of consciousness for all of its actions. As we saw in the last chapter, Anny tried to make the real into the irreal, in transforming her 'privileged situations' into 'perfect moments' via emotion, but got stuck in her magical world by imagining . She concludes that the emotions she tried to project onto those situations were not real: she ends by concluding that there are no perfect moments, but

[252] This would be very interesting to consider in the context of Sartre's later political thought: but as stated this is beyond the scope of this thesis.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.
[255] *Nausea*: 209.

this is in fact a product of her unreflective consciousness which does not allow her to fully realise her role in the determination of those moments. We can see here another relationship of emotional consciousness to the imaginary in Sartre's work: the magical world of the emotions allows Anny to escape from the real for a time, as does the aesthetic attitude to life that she has adopted, but she is too focused and bound by the objects of her world. She could upon reflection realise this and be able to posit the irreal, and she has not got far to go, as it were. She has also distanced herself somewhat from Michelet's book.

The discord Anny feels about this state of affairs looks like the disorientation Sartre says we feel when a piece of music we have been engrossed in is interrupted: Anny has been jolted back into the real. However, despite Roquentin's hope, she has not come to the same conclusions regarding existence as Roquentin has: she remains mired in the past, as shown by her exclaiming to Roquentin that she is glad that he has not changed:

> 'You're a milestone,' she says, 'a milestone by the side of the road. You explain imperturbably and you'll go on explaining for the rest of your life that it's twenty-seven kilometres to Melun and forty-two to Montargis. That's why I need you so much…I need you to exist and not to change.'[256]

The tension in *Histoire* between the fictional and the historical is mirrored in Anny; the work's dedication to the recreation of history led Anny to believe that she too can recreate and reimagine the past, and her attempts to do so have left her not only stuck in the past, but stuck in the real, and though she realises its inefficacy now, she still clings to the recreation of past circumstances.

We must note the similarity of the starting point of the *Histoire*, and Michelet's aim in writing it: to put human experience at the forefront of even historical investigation. Michelet was onto something – interjecting the speculative and imaginary into history is one way to transcend the empirical – and he comes much closer to evoking or performing an act of

[256] *Nausea*: 196-197.

freedom than Anny; unfortunately, he remains too committed to actually resurrecting the past and thus becomes trapped there.

Talk of Michelet's work and his recounting of the humanistic goal of the French Renaissance leads to talk of the Autodidact, the enthusiastic humanist. Existentialism refuted several tenets of humanism, including the dedication to rationalism. The Autodidact is making a study of every book in the Bouville library, on a quest to learn all the facts he can and apply them for the benefit of mankind. He exemplifies the humanists' goal of using classical literature (such as Greek and Roman texts), empirical analysis and rationalism to discover the place of humanity within the world, and what it means to exist within it; and as we see, he gets nowhere. The type of humanism that decided that mankind was an end in itself, the meaning and purpose of life, and that the progress of mankind is something that we all share in and that gives us our essential value and meaning,[257] is disavowed here.[258]

The conversation between Roquentin and the Autodidact in the café is an example of this: though he keeps it to himself for the most part, Roquentin makes rather derisory remarks about the Autodidact's Humanism, as we have seen. Their argument about humanism is also spurred on by Roquentin's distaste for and disagreement with the Autodidact's certainty that all of existence is rational and can be explained in terms of mankind's love for one another, and that as the truth of the nausea reveals itself he sees is absolutely backwards: he is the exemplification of the way of thinking that Sartre's existentialism rejects.

The existentialists contend that the rationalistic approach and the emphasis on the empirical does not explain to us the problem of human experience and existence; the Autodidact is absolutely convinced that that love of humanity is the 'meaning of our

[257] The refutation of this specific 'brand' of humanism is seen most clearly in Sartre's 1946 essay (based on a 1945 lecture), *Existentialism is a Humanism* (alternatively titled *Existentialism* by Frechtman (1957)), in which Sartre states that 'it can not be granted that a man may make a judgement about man…The existentialist will never consider man as an end because he is always in the making.' *Existentialism*: 50.
[258] Earnshaw 2006: 152.

life…There is a goal, Monsieur, there is a goal…there are people.'[259] But these are just regurgitated platitudes, as Roquentin immediately recognises:

> His eyes are as soulful as could be, that can't be denied, but soulful isn't enough. I knocked around with some Parisian humanists in the old days, and scores of times I've heard them say: 'There are people.'…Virgan was unbeatable in this respect. He would take off his spectacles, as if to show himself naked, in his human flesh…and then he would murmur melodiously: 'There are people, old fellow, there are people,'…as if his love of people, perpetually new and astonished, were getting caught up in its giant wings. The Autodidact's mimicry hasn't acquired this smoothness; his love of mankind is naïve and barbaric…[260]

Platitudes and truisms of the kind the Autodidact is fond of and thinks in ('Life has a meaning if you choose to give it one.') are not useful; the humanistic approach, or at least that of the Autodidact, seems to assume that 'humanity' is a real concept, that there is some commonality, an essence, perhaps, uniting all individuals, and that can be rationally explained and used to explain human actions. The existentialist objects. The freedom of the individual is the paramount realisation that all must come to if they are to recognise their freedom: all the universal laws in the world, all the empirically-based fact-finding missions that can be undertaken, still leave us with the fact of our own brute, superfluous, blunt *existence*. There is no rationality to it, and no essence belonging to it; this is what the individual must recognise and transcend to be free. Add to this the Autodidact's project of reading every book in the library - in alphabetical order, no less – and we find a consciousness that is fatalistic also, even though the project of the Autodidact is a self-chosen one, and seems by all accounts to be his own, his dedication to fact and empiricism leave him, too, mired in reality: he takes no aesthetic attitudes, and does not engage in any aesthetic contemplation.

Regardless of the motives of the Autodidact, his trite observations about 'people' and their nature and his mission to become learned in an alphabetic way adds up to the existentialist argument that the freedom of consciousness cannot be asserted in reading or writing a history book. Michelet tried to restore the human and aesthetic element to the study

[259] *Nausea*, p. 162.
[260] *Nausea*, p. 163.

of history, chiefly by the use of imaginative and poetic license as we have seen from Hamnett's work, yet his dedication to the resurrection of history leaves him stuck in the realm of the real, as well as his readers.

The biography Roquentin returned to Bouville specifically to write cannot do this either. The boundary is between history and literature is never so blurred as in the biography. Sometimes speculation about what a person did, or said, or thought must be put into a biography to give a coherent account of a life. Yet over-speculation is a worry if one wants to tell a *true* story. If that is to happen and the biography is to be an honest account, one is not permitted to over-speculate, and to say, 'At this point in this situation, Person X must have thought…' when it is not certain at all that Person X would have thought that way: the entitlement of the biographer to insert some speculation to create a narrative does extend only so far and cannot be employed in the situation, for example, when there is a considerable distance in time or space between biographer and subject.

Roquentin probably realises this, and over-speculation is one of his worries in the biography: in fact he takes precisely that over-imagining action when regarding the paintings and making up life stories from what little he knows about those pictured. After realising that after all, M. de Rollebon was not all Roquentin thought he was – in fact, it is highly possible that he was an out-and-out liar about his own life - Roquentin eventually abandons his biography, after coming to the conclusion that research upon it was an attempt to escape into the past, fleeing from facticity, and the superfluous nature of his own existence. He is also aware of his incompetence as a narrator, and is worried that the biographical narrative will be clouded with inaccuracies and speculation. Unlike Michelet, Roquentin worries that imagination might get the better of him, and he does not assert the opposite. Paradoxically, for Roquentin (the anti-humanist), his worries about the imagination asserting too much of an influence over his biography ends up acting as something of a revelation. The biography too

is a way of fleeing from the real back into the non-existent past, negating the present, it is true, but only insofar as relates to the past.

Before we move on to the novel, there is one more book to consider, and that is Roquentin's diary. In a diary we are free to make up as much as we like, intended as it is for no other reader save possibly our future self – yet we will know if we are imagining, or lying. The purpose of a diary is to recount the past, for oneself to read in the future and, usually, we do not have the specific intention for anyone else to read our diaries. The reason why Roquentin moves beyond the diary and potentially towards the novel is that the diary is an account of his *past*: his factical circumstances that cannot be changed, but must be transcended via a spontaneous free consciousness. The diary ties him too closely to his past to allow for this. At this point in Sartre's theory the past events in the life of consciousness do not absolve consciousness of the responsibility for its actions in the future: it is when he realises this, that he must be spontaneous and battle against the constraints that are tying him to his past, that he begins to conceive of writing a novel, a fiction beyond the real. The diary is an attempt to make some sense of his existence in the present, through (if we recall the first chapter) trying to constitute a self – yet he soon finds that the reality of his existence in the present is that there is no sort of essence, no intrinsic meaning, to his existence, not even one denoted by his past – it is what it is, and nothing more. There is not even a structure of self that he can say is his, and every act of his – even his emotions – are under his control. The past is the refuge of those who try to hide from this realisation.

Ditching the rational and fact-based, as well as the past and present as a source of solace, Roquentin is left somewhat at sea; in the park, sitting near a chestnut tree with large roots sticking out of the ground, he begins to really understand what his nausea has been telling him. There is no reason for his existence, or the existence of anything else – the humanists are wrong, as he has known all along. He was wrong in thinking that a record of

everything that occurs could help him make sense of the nausea, and that a biography would be a good project to undertake to figure it out.

What is needed to justify his existence in the present is not a past action or event (since they cannot be responsible for his actions in the present) or something that already exists as objects in the present do ('an existent can never justify the existence of another existent'[261]), but a non-existent – this, he thinks, could be a novel.

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Part 3: The Novel's Implication as Artwork and Irreality for the Freedom of Consciousness

Qualms about the efficacy of the novel to achieve this should be considered. Art is also a way of making the absurd, indifferent universe palatable and the superfluity of our own existence fit some sort of order that is not intrinsic to it. Roquentin notes that it is not in the present, in which we are confronted with and must face the real in its overwhelming blunt existence, that he can succeed in his endeavour: the present will always bring with it the ramifications and constraints of the brute real.

It may work, given that it is an artwork, an imaginary act that is inherently a nothingness and a negation of the real, and thus an act of freedom, flying in the face of reality's constraints. It also contains the assertion of individual freedom, knowing that one exists brutally and bluntly, but transcending it in an act of freedom of consciousness. In short, Roquentin wonders whether he might be able to live what we saw Ames call the 'artistic life'.

Others may read it and find their own imagination fired, and come to some realisation of the fact of their own brute existence; Roquentin too may read his own novel which might, once written, give Roquentin's existence some meaning by which he can 'recall my life

[261] *Nausea*: 252.

without repugnance…And I might succeed – in the past, simply in the past – in accepting myself.'[262]

But as we have seen aesthetic contemplation, when it turns into an aesthetic attitude to life, is also a *denial* of the real; the writing of a novel could also be a running away from facticity and the irrationality of the world and our existence within it. It might be the case that like Roquentin, Sartre is not convinced that the novel can evoke the function that aesthetic contemplation is supposed to perform.

Given that existentialism can squarely be placed within the domain of the arts, we can turn our attention to *Nausea* and to the novel in general as a real-time, real-world example of the theory of the aesthetic imagination as relates to freedom. This novel is a tangible example of the theory of the imaginary aesthetic object and of the artwork as irreal and thus an act of freedom; in both reading and writing it we negate and transcend the real as it is, forming images of aesthetic objects.

The act is probably ultimately futile. We still exist, and there is no getting away from that. Roquentin realises this immediately after giving up the biography:

> *I exist*. It is I. The body lives all by itself, once it has started. But when it comes to thought, it is I who continue it…I exist. I think I exist…My thought is *me*: that is why I can't stop. I exist by what I think…and I can't prevent myself from thinking. At this very moment – this is terrible – if I exist, it is because I *hate* existing…hatred and disgust for existence are just so many ways of *making me* exist, of thrusting me into existence.[263]

To borrow a phrase from another work that is often considered existentialist, nothing to be done.

But this should not stop Roquentin – or anyone – from trying to engage their imagination in an existential project of their own. This is to live the artistic life, to assert the freedom that we have. The novel that we read when we read *Nausea* is an example of the kind

[262] Ibid.
[263] *Nausea* : 145.

of novel that Roquentin might write: a novel in which nothing relayed actually happened but with enough of the real to evoke an engagement with the existence of the present as relates to the individual reader, that provides both author and reader with some of the tools to prompt their own transcendence of the real.

But we must be cautious in asserting this: we have seen throughout this thesis the inconsistency between modes of expression, and this is probably where they diverge most. There is a passage from Sartre's autobiography that we have not heretofore included: it follows directly from the quotation that begins 'I *was* Roquentin…' The rest of the quotation is:

> Later on, I cheerfully demonstrated that man is impossible; impossible myself, I differed from others in only this one mandate: I had to illustrate this impossibility which, suddenly, was transfigured and became my most intimate potentiality, the object of my mission and the springboard of my glory. I was prisoner of these edifices, but I did not see them: I saw the world through them. Mystified and a fraud to my very bones, I cheerfully wrote about our wretched lot. In my dogmatism, I doubted everything except that I had been chosen by doubt; I was restoring with one hand what I destroyed with the other and I took anxiety as the proof of my safety: I was happy.[264]

If *Les Mots*, which as well as an autobiography is the missive with which Sartre means to end his literary career, is anything to go by, Sartre wrote himself into his novels in many different ways, some of them quite explicit. Even if he had not had the exact same experiences as his characters he seems to have used his own experiences as a basis for theirs, as authors often do. We must however comment on the picture of himself that he paints at the end of *Words*, including the above quotation, It is one of a philosopher and author who, whilst not exactly unconvinced of what he has been proponent of all his life, doubts it enough to have to say something about that doubt in the end.

It is hardly to be expected that an author or a philosopher will go through his entire career without modifying the ideas he began with. The disparities between *Nausea* and the texts on the imagination does not allow us to come to a conclusion, solely based on them, as

[264] *Words*: 156.

to whether the novel as artwork, and in this case artworks themselves, can function in the way outlined in this chapter. The freedom of consciousness as relates to the artwork is still very much under development at this point: as is the development of freedom itself. Thomas R. Flynn argues that the conception of the ultimate freedom of consciousness pervading the early works is idealistic and possibly naïve and notes that Sartre himself criticises it in an essay written just a few years down the track, 'Materialism and Revolution' (1946).[265]

We recall Roquentin's conversation with the Autodidact. The inanities that sound like self-help-book clichés are precisely to do with this notion of freedom that Flynn says is overly idealistic, and are explicitly derided by Roquentin. Remember Roquentin's annoyance at the 'Meaning in life is what we make it' sentimentality of the Autodidact, and we have the idea that already, years before 'Materialism and Revolution', Sartre is discontented with the first, most basic, simplest conclusion of his own existentialism. It may be that Roquentin's irritation and his dislike of the idea that he will soon see are similar to his own realisations about the nature of existence when proposed by others have something to do with the fact that he recognises his own ideas, words and thoughts, and they do not sit easy. This too might be an indication that the essential, distilled idea of the theory is something that Sartre already doubts enough to write that doubt into his novel. So, in Roquentin's very tentative idea to write a novel and uncertainty about what it could allow him or another reader to do, it is not out of the realm of possibility that Sartre has written his own doubts about a novel's power to evoke a reaction in a reader, similar to a reaction to a real event, that would catalyse the realisation of the freedom of consciousness: or of the act of writing it to do so for the author himself.

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[265]Flynn 1984 : 14-15.

Concluding Remarks

We are left at the end of this discussion with something of a cliffhanger, and a tension between *Nausea* and the conclusion to *Imaginary*. We do not know, from these works, whether the author of the works was sure at this stage that the novel can actually evoke in the reader an act of freedom

We must note, though, that the disparity between the two as modes of expression for the same philosophical theory, and the ambiguity at the end of our concern, must be stressed as not a negative, but a strength of the work in terms of developing and outlining the theory. *Imaginary* is the last of Sartre's major texts before *Being and Nothingness*, where his existentialist ideas and concepts find their fullest theoretical expression. Written as it was as part of one text along with *Imagination* several years before, whilst Sartre was still writing *Nausea*, it stands to reason that the concepts of existentialism as conceived by Sartre would still be in progress here: and as we have seen the novel is the space in which ideas under development can be posited in the context of human experience of existence which is the beginning point of any phenomenological and existential theory. The kind of hesitancy Roquentin displays could not be written into a philosophical treatise like *Imaginary*, but since the ideas are still under development and the novel acts as a testing ground for those theories, for both author and reader, the importance of the novel cannot be understated.

Conclusion

This thesis has shown that the relationship between Sartre's novel *Nausea* and his early phenomenological and existential theory is a complex, interwoven, often ambiguous one. In showing this, it has also been demonstrated that the common impression of the relationship, that the novel is not equal to the theoretical works in terms of philosophical worth or input, is mistaken. The novel and the theoretical works are two different modes of expression of the concepts involved in Sartre's early phenomenological and existentialist theories.

This thesis' major argument is that the novel *Nausea* must be considered as a philosophical work in its own right, not as a simple illustration of philosophical theories developed and expressed in the theoretical texts. I have demonstrated that an understanding of *Nausea* as a philosophical work, as a different but not unequal mode of expression, is essential for a full, comprehensive understanding and account of Sartre's early phenomenological and existential philosophy.

In demonstrating this, the thesis took the form of a case study in which each chapter juxtaposed *Nausea* alongside one of Sartre's major early phenomenological and existential works: *The Transcendence of the Ego*, *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*, *The Imagination*, and *The Imaginary*. In each case, and with reference to the specific content of the theory, it was shown that the novel has the capacity not just to reflect or illustrate but to elucidate, fill out, and demonstrate potential applications of the concepts of each theory. This thesis had the concept of the freedom of consciousness as a central concern: it is central to all the theories in Sartre's early work, and each chapter considered the relationship between the novel and the theoretical text with particular reference to this concept.

The first chapter considered the relationship of *Nausea* to *The Transcendence of the Ego*. The theory that Sartre proposes broadly states that that there is no underlying structure or phenomenon *within* consciousness acting to unify or cohere conscious experience that could

be called a self: the self exists as an object *for* consciousness, and consciousness must therefore constitute it of its own volition. In this lies the freedom of consciousness. However, the realisation of the emptiness of consciousness, and hence its intentionality (as consciousness directed towards an object), leads to the realisation of consciousness' freedom: it must determine its own self, and all acts of consciousness including behaviours and actions are down to it alone. This realisation is very unsettling, and consciousness would prefer to remain under the pre-reflective illusion that it has a self, no matter how unpleasant, to avoid this realisation. This is why Howells says that in self-constitution, consciousness is 'most free but feel[s] it least'.[266]

I demonstrated in the first chapter that the necessity of the novel to this particular theory lies in the capacity it has to situate the concepts of the theory within a hypothetical fictional situation, and by doing so allow its readers to vicariously experience these ramifications of the theory through the experiences of the characters in those situations. The novel prompts the engagement of the reader with the concepts such that they can gain insight into, for example, the disorientation and sense of alienation that attends Roquentin upon the dissolution of his sense of self, and his approach towards the realisation of his ultimate freedom. Because of this, readers and writers of fiction can use the novel that they read or write as a hypothetical environment in which consciousness can posit possible selves, using it as a training ground for their own self-constitution. In doing this, reading and writing fiction can potentially evoke acts of the freedom of consciousness in readers and authors.

The second chapter was devoted to the relationship between *Nausea* and *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*, a relationship which Sartre intended as a 'pairing up',[267] and the chapter demonstrated what this pairing might entail. As outlined in the first chapter, the freedom of consciousness entails that all behaviours and actions of consciousness are solely its responsibility and emanate from it: this includes emotions which are pre-reflectively thought

[266] Howells 1988: 2.
[267] Caws 1992: 209.

to be caused by external objects and situations. Emotions are acts of consciousness, emanating from it, and performed upon the world as a whole, to modify or transform it when some circumstance in the world becomes unbearable, like when I become angry at someone for besting me in a game of chess. In this act consciousness deceives itself that it can escape from those circumstances. His increasing sense of alienation from the world, as shown in the novel by his sometimes alarming lack of emotional response to objects and events, serves to demonstrate to Roquentin that his emotions are not dependent on external objects as he realises in the Bouville café-bar. There he begins to see the 'revelation' of the nausea: precisely that he is always free to be the sole determinant of his own life and actions, towards some end that he himself must determine: this circumstance may be unbearable, but it is one he cannot escape.

When we conceived of the novel and the theoretical text as a pairing, and postulated what that pairing might entail, we found that the relationship between the two is not entirely straightforward, but is no less inextricable or important for that. As in the first chapter, the novel provides great worth to the theory via its capacity to engage the reader in the experience of the emotional situations presented in the novel and allows the reader to engage with whichever of the emotional situations presented resonates most with the individual reader. As the theoretical text provides only one account of emotional consciousness, the text works to present the theory to individuals, which is crucial to the theory as phenomenological and existential. The epistolary layout of the novel, the fact that it takes the form of a diary, is shown to be crucial to the expression of the theory in presenting an individual, first-hand (albeit fictional) experience of the emotional situations in the novel. But the relationship is not straightforward: there is no direct mapping of theoretical concepts onto the novel and some emotional experiences within it appear to be at odds with the theory. Yet I argue that this ambiguity is a strength of the work, and of the pairing. It appears Sartre intended the pairing

of these two texts from *before* their actual composition:[268] the somewhat divergent accounts of emotions in the novel and the theoretical text serve to show the efficacy of the novel in acting as a test environment for the theory and, since we recognize that *Emotions* is of course an outline of a theory as its title suggests (albeit an extremely comprehensive one), this is a perfect demonstration of the novel having just as much philosophical import from the outset as the theoretical text whose concepts it posits in fiction.

This account of emotional consciousness led us to the discussion of Sartre's theories of the imagination. We considered the two theoretical texts that contain these theories as a unity, as this is how they were originally intended,[269] and in doing so considered the novel alongside both in the one chapter. Broadly, Sartre's arguments in the first text, *Imagination*, are: we intuitively differentiate between perceptual objects and imaginary objects, but as yet there has been no clear explanation from either psychology or phenomenology of how this happens, or how exactly the perceptual object differs from the imaginary object. Sartre's theory of the imaging consciousness owes a great deal to Husserl, but Sartre argues that even Husserl's theory is incomplete and unsatisfactory.

Sartre's conception of the way in which the image is constituted is that consciousness aims at the object through the content, the hylē, of the object – the features of the object as they are presented to consciousness, such as colour and shape. It does this through an intentional animating act upon that hylē, such that in the act an object as-imaged appears to consciousness. Importantly, the image does not reside *within* consciousness, as previous theories have claimed: it is rather an object *for* consciousness and is thus constituted by it. Sartre argues that the mental image must have clearly different hylē to the image of the perceptual object: Husserl does not satisfactorily account for this and so Sartre does not find his theory of the mental image acceptable, although as we have noted Husserl informs Sartre's theory to a great extent.

[268] Caws 1992: 209.
[269] Contat & Rybalka 1970: 55.

Sartre's theory of the mental image is given in the second text, *Imaginary*. Sartre contends that the hylē of the mental image is an 'analogon', which fulfills the function of the perceptual object in the image. As imaging consciousness apprehends it the analogon assumes the sense of the object consciousness is aiming at so that imaging consciousness aims not at the analogon, but at its object *through* the analogon. Importantly, imaging consciousness constitutes the imaginary object and not the analogon. The analogon is present to consciousness, but the object of imaging consciousness is not.

The object of which imaging consciousness forms an image is not present to consciousness: it could be posited as absent, as non-existent, as existent but elsewhere, or not existentially posited at all. This necessitates that the imaginary object is always posited by consciousness as an *irreality*: not bound by the laws of space and time that govern real (perceptual) objects, nor bound by the properties of relationships with each other as perceptual objects are.

The irreality of the imaginary object has important consequences for the concept of freedom. Imagination is a transcendence of what is real, and a hypothetical conceiving of what is irreal. Intentional imaging consciousness, positing its objects as nothingness, spontaneously generates and posits the irreal and thereby negates the real and transcends all its boundaries. Therefore, imaging consciousness performs an act of the freedom of consciousness and therefore, it is because we as consciousness are able to imagine, that we are free.

The reality of objects is negated, and the object becomes irreal. Since imaginary objects are not given to consciousness with determined and fixed properties consciousness can imagine an imaginary objet however it likes: consciousness is able to project desires onto them and act upon them in the imaginary attitude, transforming them into irreal objects. Thus, I can construe the properties of the imaginary object to be as I desire. This depends on the

emotional attitude of consciousness: emotional consciousness has links to both image and object.

Emotional consciousness directs intentions for action (what it wants to do with the object) towards the object itself and the object as-imaged, in order to transform the object into an irreal image. There are degrees of emotion in Sartre's theory. Weak emotions are those in which the object's recalcitrance makes it difficult for consciousness to transform the object into the desired irreal object: the object that is judged in strong emotion to be unbearable is judged in weak emotion to be just unpleasant. The weak emotions do not transform the world.

In stronger emotions consciousness projects the emotion towards the image progressively, and the image assumes the sense of the perceptual object until the negation of the object is complete and it is replaced with the object as-imaged. The emotion's relative strength depends upon the motivation of consciousness to react to that object when it comes into its presence: and this in turn depends on the function consciousness wants the object to perform.

We have seen that emotional transformation involves transforming the world: it transforms it into the magical world of emotional consciousness in order to have the illusion of escaping intolerable circumstances. Transforming the world from real to magical is not what *all* emotion does, but it is what weak emotion attempts (and what strong emotion does) in trying to escape the unbearable, and is noticeable in the account of emotion given in *Nausea*. Emotion as Sartre describes it in the theoretical text occurs when objects are judged to have significant ramifications for the aims of consciousness.

Anny, Roquentin's ex-girlfriend, tries to make 'perfect moments' out of 'privileged situations' by projecting emotion onto them and trying to transform them. But her affective intentions are not strong enough: she never attains a perfect moment and ends by concluding that privileged situations, those situations that would motivate her enough by being significant

to her goal of the perfect moment, do not exist: nor do perfect moments. But what Anny does not realise is that emotions are not caused by objects, or by situations, but emanate from *consciousness itself*. The situation she imagines is never forthcoming – but it is Anny, not the situation or object, who is the reason for this.

Yet Sartre's view is somewhat at odds with his characters' experiences of some emotional situations presented within the novel, and of his theoretical conception of how imagination and reality do not have any intersection between them. If there is no interplay or interaction whatsoever between perception and imagination – that is, if mental images do not impact upon the world in any way - how it is that the relationships between perceptual objects that are, at least partly, conceptualised in imagination (such as an architect contemplating a building he is designing) can be constituted or worked out is unclear. As readers we imagine ourselves in, say, the place of Roquentin when he has an emotional experience (or a lack of emotion in an experience) and from that wonder how we would act in that situation, and thereby our reactions to emotional situations in reality are potentially altered. This discord between the novel's function and the theory of Sartre is shown to be a strength of the novel, since the novel and the imagery within can prompt readers to change the way they experience reality. Sartre's claim also does not quite sit with the fact that Sartre felt the need to write both novels and theoretical texts to carry his theories: the imagery provoked by the novel and its intersection with the theories expounded in the theoretical texts clearly intersect.

This led us to the discussion of fiction as art, and in the last chapter I showed that the chief importance of the novel as an artwork and a specific form of art lies in the intricacies and implications of the relationship between art and imagination for the concept of the freedom of consciousness. The conclusion of *Imaginary* contains two parts, and this chapter was concerned with the second part to the conclusion in which Sartre discusses the 'existential type of the work of art' as an irreality. Though art often has links to the real, such as an irreal piece of music being performed by real musicians upon real instruments or an

irreal story being written on real paper with real ink, those physical objects are only physical manifestations of the irreal artwork. Due to its ontological status as an irreality, beyond the bounds of factical reality, the artwork takes its place as an act of freedom. Fiction is also an act of freedom, as both reading and writing fiction involve positing imaginary irrealities.

Those who live what Ames describes as an 'artistic life'[270] are engaged constantly in the rebellion against the constraints imposed upon them by the real, attempting to transcend the physical and the tangible and their unalterable fixed relationships with each other. By this argument it stands to reason that the creation and the viewing of art and artworks becomes an act of the artistic life, which by its inherent rebellion against facticity and its constraints posits irreality and imaginary, unreal objects, is an act of the freedom of consciousness, asserting that freedom against the solid brick wall of the real.

However, we must consider whether the novel bears out this argument. Considering Roquentin's decision to write a novel at the end of *Nausea*, it seems initially that this is the case and that Sartre's explicit opinion would be much the same. Yet, importantly, this decision is a tentative one: Roquentin is hesitant to claim that writing a novel would 'justify' his existence, or help him to transcend by an act of freedom in the way we describe. Sartre's view on the matter is ambiguous, especially when considering his autobiography, *Les Mots*, and the way he describes his thoughts at the time of writing *Nausea*. He says in this work that he 'doubted everything but except that [he] had been chosen by doubt'. We see the recurrent ambiguity and disparity between the theoretical texts and the novel: and we argue that the ambivalence that Sartre felt recalls the doubt that Roquentin feels at the end of the novel. The fact that Sartre does not make the link between freedom and the artwork explicit in the conclusion to *Imaginary* bears this out: the idea remained under development for all of Sartre's life, possibly one reason for the fact that he continued to write fiction, in both novel and play form, well after his work had ceased to be explicitly devoted to existentialism. Once

[270] Ames 1951: 1.

again the ambiguity is shown to be a strength of the work, in that the novel allows for this kind of development when the theoretical text is not as well suited to expressing this kind of doubt: a doubt and a scepticism that emanates from individual experience, and that must be posited as such as opposed to a concept generalizable to everyone (by this we mean understanding that individuals' experiences will be unique) in order to be understood by another individual. Possibly the greatest strength of the novel lies here: when the ideas are ones that are developed over and resonate throughout the whole of an individual's life, such as freedom and transcendence of the factical and real, and the constitution of one's own reason for and manner of living, as well as the unsettling realisation that each and every experience of an individual's life is under that individual's control.

Throughout the case study, there are several important arguments made for the necessity of the relationship between the two texts and the need for the novel to be conceived of as inherently and absolutely a philosophical work. Let us describe them clearly.

I have argued that one reason for the necessity of these two modes of expression to Sartre's early career is that so many of the concepts involved in the theories Sartre develops in the early theoretical works are by nature abstract and somewhat opaque in the sense that they are not readily or fully understood when expressed in technical, formal language and an academic style. The theories and concepts thus require a mode of expression that allows for ambiguity and indistinctness: this is not appropriate to a theoretical work.

Relatedly, I have argued that, due to its capability to express the nature of the concepts as indistinct, this mode of expression is also essential to the development of ideas that are not yet fully formulated, and at this early stage of Sartre's career, we have seen that his formulation of some theoretical concepts was in fact imprecise. I have demonstrated in this thesis how the novel contributes to further development of these concepts by applying them to hypothetical, possible situations and circumstances and thus acting as a testing-ground for the

theories and concepts, enabling the theorist to develop them with reference to a posited situation.

I have shown that because of this the novel is invaluable when developing concepts that directly involve human experience. As the nature and genesis of Sartre's early theories and the concepts within them is phenomenological (or phenomenologically-based in the case of existentialist theories and concepts), there is a requirement that the theories and their concepts be understood in terms of individual human experience: human experience is placed at the epicentre of phenomenological investigation. The novel can situate concepts of the theory, and the theory itself, in the fictional experiences and circumstances of fictional human characters whose experiences of and interactions with their fictional 'world' are complex and inconstant, as human experiences are. This allows readers to react to and engage with the theories and attendant concepts in ways that involve their own experiences, through acts such as imagining themselves experiencing the events, situations and circumstances that the fictional character does: theoretical works cannot readily allow for this.

This is not to devalue the theoretical text's importance to the theories this thesis has canvassed, nor does this thesis contend that the novel is a superior mode of expression of Sartre's early concepts and theories (or *vice versa*). This thesis showed that another reason for the necessity of the two modes of expression to delineate the same concepts is that the theoretical works are able to present the concepts and arguments of the theories in a precise, detailed manner that enables and facilitates strong defence of arguments, meticulous and articulate responses to philosophical criticisms of the theories within, and divulge clear directions for further research or argument. This is crucial when developing and explicating a philosophical system or series of theories. Although the novel's capacity to allow for haziness and incomplete thought makes it an ideal mode of expression for the abstruse nature of many of the concepts involved in Sartre's early theories, especially when they are under development; in order to formally conceptualise them into cogent and comprehensive

philosophical systems, the theories also need to be expressed in a manner that will allow for rigorous argument and technical detail that the novel is not intended to accommodate.

However, I also demonstrated that the relationship between the two modes of expression is not such that there is a direct mapping or superimposition of concepts from one to the other: in fact the expression of some concepts in the theoretical texts appeared to be different to or even at odds with the expression of that same concept in the novel. This is shown to actually be a strength of the work, allowing engagement by individuals and a facilitation of the individual's fashioning of their own responses to, opinions about and experiences of real situations. This is exactly the aim of phenomenology, and of existentialism: to put human experience at the centre and forefront of philosophical inquiry, and to do so with regards to individual experience especially. That is the great value of *Nausea* to Sartre's early phenomenological theory.

This points to further work that could be done specifically on Sartre's literary works and his theoretical works. The trilogy *Les chemins de la liberté* is also an existentialist work, and although it was not covered here for the reasons laid out in the introduction, thought along the lines of this thesis would be an interesting area of further study, to see if the arguments presented herein continue to hold when looking at Sartre's later work. The period of Sartre's career that we have covered enables us to see clear reasons for and expressions of the intertwined relationship between theoretical concepts and their fictive expression. But this is only a beginning and later on, the question of the relationship between Sartre's literature and philosophy becomes increasingly complex. To apply the arguments about fiction and the novel made herein to the plays and other literary works of Sartre to see if the arguments presented in this thesis would still apply when Sartre's work ceases to be wholly devoted to existentialist literature but is also concerned with political thought would be extremely thought-productive. Existentialist thought was never entirely abandoned by Sartre, and it

follows that the importance of literature, shown here to be so great, is a continuing and central issue.

Of especial interest would be to juxtapose the ideas made in this thesis with the ideas Sartre lays out in *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (*What Is Literature?*) (1947), especially the idea of '*littérature engagée*', 'committed literature', which contains Sartre's argument that literature and fictional authors must take a socio-political stand if their work is to be worthwhile, and thus that if literature is to be worthwhile, it should not be written or read purely for entertainment: a view that is not explicitly contradicted by but is quite ambiguous when considered alongside the arguments herein about the value of works of literature being rooted in their ability to engender or facilitate individual acts of freedom that do not need to, but have the capability to, stimulate acts of freedom in others.

Occasionally implicit in the discussion presented here is the idea that the existentialist should write fiction, regardless of whether or not it will achieve the end that someone like Roquentin wants it to. Roquentin's realisation of the nausea's implications does not foster any evangelical spirit in him in the sense that he does not try to make others come to the realisations that he has. As yet his is still very much an individualistic conclusion. Yet he does consider when thinking of writing his novel that others will read it, and perhaps think about his life and thoughts: fiction might be his attempt to engage others in his way of thinking, as we have shown fiction is able to do with concepts as abstract as the nausea. The genesis of the idea in *What Is Literature?* might be here. Yet this remains ambiguous, as shown by Roquentin's hesitance, and remains so given Sartre's declaration above, in *Les Mots*. This would be a particularly stimulating discussion to go on with.

Further work could also be done on the more recent works of existentialist literature, even if those works are not to be specifically designated existentialist but canvas the same kinds of concepts and deal with the same sorts of issues as existentialist literature. One of the reasons for reviving interest in relating literature to existentialist philosophy, is that in the

literary world at least, interest and preoccupation with ideas about existence, alienation, authenticity, introspection, overcoming the rigidity of circumstance and other related concepts has never truly waned. It would be thought-provoking to look at the work of recent authors that deals with specifically existentialist ideas, the novels of Alexander Maksik and Cees Nooteboom, for example. It would be interesting to consider their works alongside the work of, for example, Simon Critchley, whose work is greatly involved with the literary and artistic dimensions of existentialism, especially evident in his book from 1997.[271] This is echoed in the work of Thomas E. Wartenberg, especially in his introductory guide to existentialism,[272] published in 2008 and indicating a reappearance of interest amongst students and others who wish to know more. In this book Wartenberg notes the extraordinary cultural pervasiveness of existentialism, demonstrating its ties to political and social theory as well as clearly showing the strong ties that existentialist theory has to artistic modes of expression like film, theatre, and fiction.

This thesis began with the observation that much of the philosophical literature devoted to the relationship between Sartre's novel *Nausea* and his non-fictional theoretical works is focused upon the relationship between *Nausea* and *Being and Nothingness*. Whilst the relationship between the novel and the earlier texts has not been quite neglected in the literature, there is relatively little specific focus on it: that is what this thesis has attempted to rectify.

I have shown that the relationship between Sartre's early phenomenological and existentialist works is such that the novel must be considered as a philosophical work in its own right and that for the fullest understanding possible of Sartre's early theories, the novel must be read as such. In his early career Sartre 'does' philosophy through literature: *Nausea* is not a simple illustration or vessel of the concepts of Sartre's early phenomenological and

[271] Wartenberg 2008.
[272] Critchley: 1997.

existentialist thought, but is another mode of expression of them, as crucial to the theories as the theoretical texts, and must be considered alongside them.

At the end of this thesis, I might wonder: what implication do my arguments have for *me*? As a philosopher, I have existentialist concepts as a central concern: and, like so many people who like to write, I have a few diary-type ramblings and ideas, and a bottom drawer full of incomplete, random beginnings of short stories, poems, and novels that I have never thought of as having much worth. Perhaps I should open it.

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