Presented at the 10th DLSU Arts Congress De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines February 16, 2017



"From Praxis to Language Games" A Comparative Paper on Sartre and Wittgenstein

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Abstract: This paper synthesizes the ideas of J.P Sartre and Ludwig Wittgenstein. In an article put forward by Philip Dwyer, a similar project was pursued. It did give an explicit account between the thoughts of the early Sartre and Wittgenstein; however, it did not cover the strong resemblances that Sartre had with Wittgenstein's ideas even in the latter parts of Sartre's career. Sartre, as he progressed in molding his ideas through his lifetime, also thought about the role of an individual in his society-viz. his idea of Consciousness and Freedom. Coming from this point of Sartre's thought, I argued that Sartre's idea on the dynamic relations of the agent, his/her society, and his/her environment completes Wittgenstein's account on language. To substantiate this claim, I laid out both their views regrading Language; Sartre's idea regrading Totalizations and what he calls Praxis; and then Wittgenstein's Picture Theory of Propositions and his Language-games. From this, a critical evaluation of Wittgenstein account was done; this evaluation explained that Wittgenstein's idea renders an incomplete account regarding the role of the individual in finding meaning into one's language, thus proving the complementary nature of Sartre's later ideas to Wittgenstein's. After which, a synthesis of their ideas was put forward; how they -if viewed together - provide an account which addresses both agent's role in making sense of one's world viz. one's language and its relationship with external factors that surround one's existence.