

ADLER AND SARTRE: COMMENT

HAZEL E. BARNES

University of Colorado

The article by Rom and Ansbacher (2) on Adler and Sartre is most enlightening and significant, both as an investigation of the relation between the two writers and as an example of the way in which the Adlerian approach continues to derive enrichment from literature.

I think Rom and Ansbacher are right in pointing out that Sartre worked largely independently, perhaps borrowing from Adler without fully realizing the extent of his indebtedness, but certainly not as one deeply influenced and molded by the earlier scholar's thought. I agree that where there are parallels, the conclusions tend to validate each man's work.

The way in which the article develops the case history of Sartre's fictional hero is fascinating. There is only one reservation which I would make. In criticizing the story of "Erostratus" myself (1, p. 261), I have remarked that it seems to represent the traditional Freudian outlook rather than Sartre's position as presented later in his "existential psychoanalysis." I admit now that I ought to have said "Adlerian." I still believe that Sartre in "Erostratus" (3) was working primarily with ideas he had learned from others and not yet expressing what was to become his own psychology of freedom. I think he was doing another thing too in this story. He was making satiric use of the concept of *l'acte gratuit* of which the Surrealists and André Gide both spoke so frequently. As a perfect example of this "gratuitous act," the Surrealists proposed the man who, without motive or conceivable gain, would fire a revolver at random in a crowd.

For these reasons, I think "Erostratus" is less important as documentation for the Adlerian point of view in Sartre's approach than a comparable example would be if it were found in his later fiction. But I actually don't think one could find so close a parallel in the works written closer to the date of the publication of *Being and Nothingness* (4) and afterwards.

REFERENCES

1. BARNES, HAZEL E. *The literature of possibility: a study in humanistic existentialism*. Lincoln: Univ. Nebraska Press, 1959.
2. ROM, P., & ANSBACHER, H. L. An Adlerian case or a character by Sartre? *J. Indiv. Psychol.*, 1965, 21, 32-40.
3. SARTRE, J.-P. Erostratus. In *Intimacy* (1939). Transl. of *Le mur*, by L. Alexander. New York: Berkley Publ. Corp., 1965. Pp. 41-58.
4. SARTRE, J.-P. *Being and nothingness* (1943). Transl. & introd. by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Phil. Libr., 1956.