



"What is Literature?" and Other Essays

By Jean-Paul Sartre

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"*What is Literature?*" remains the most significant critical landmark of French literature since World War II. Neither abstract nor abstruse, it is a brilliant, provocative performance by a writer more inspired than cautious. "*What is Literature?*" challenges anyone who writes as if literature could be extricated from history or society. But Sartre does more than indict. He offers a definitive statement about the phenomenology of reading, and he goes on to provide a dashing example of how to write a history of literature that takes ideology and institutions into account. This new edition of "*What is Literature?*" also collects three other crucial essays of Sartre's for the first time in a volume of his. The essays presenting Sartre's monthly, *Les Temps modernes*, and on the peculiarly French manner of nationalizing literature do much to create a context for Sartre's treatise. "Black Orpheus" has been for many years a key text for the study of black and third-world literatures.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Although originally published in *Les Temps Modernes* in 1947 and translated into English in 1949, the essay "What Is Literature?" remains both fresh and provocative, especially in light of current debates on post-modernism and the political implications of deconstruction. Here Sartre offered his most lucid statement on his existential phenomenology of literature and literature engagement, a conception of the role of literature that still challenges both the Left and the Right. This reissue of the original translation is supplemented by four additional pieces, including "Introducing *Les Temps Modernes*," and "Black Orpheus," on French poetry by black writers. A useful introduction by Steven Unger completes the work. T.L. Cooksey, Armstrong State Coll., Savannah, Ga.

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Language Notes

Text: English, French (translation)

About the Author

Jean-Paul Sartre, the great figure of French literary and philosophical culture at mid-century, was the author of numerous works.

Steven Ungar is Professor of French and Chair of Comparative Literature at the University of Iowa and the author of *Roland Barthes: The Professor of Desire*.

Users Review

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The book "What is Literature?" and Other Essays has a lot info on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of benefit. The book was published by the very famous author. Tom makes some research prior to write this book. This book very easy to read you can find the point easily after perusing this book.

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