THE CHILD IS THE FATHER TO THE MAN:

A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S LES MOTS

by

Slobodan Stefanovich

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Slobodan Stefanovich

Department of Comparative Literature

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date 11 April 1975

ABSTRACT

The thesis itself consists of the claim that Jean-Paul Sartre's autobiography, Les mots - although a literary work par excellence - is basically a philosophical work wherein the author has applied to himself his proposed synthesis of Marxist and Existentialist/psychoanalytic thought, as elaborated in his earlier, philosophical work Critique de la raison dialectique.

The method we proposedtò employ in our analysis is a structural method, which in our opinion more than any other method, allows the critic to achieve a certain logical consistence and hence coherence, and whose result can always be validated by referring it back to, and comparing with, the work analyzed.

In an attempt to present a more detailed explanation and definition of our proposed method of analysis, in Chapter I we discuss the most important concepts of structuralism (sign, signification, value of sign, connotative and metalanguage systems), as well as relate these to literature and literary criticism.

Chapter II analyzes the structuration of the narrative of Sartre's work. In order to classify its signifiers, functions - as the smallest narrative, syntagmatic unities - are analyzed. These are grouped into two classes, which according to Critique de la raison dialectique represent the two most important aspects in studying history of an individual. The first class studies the family influence on the young Sartre, whereas the second one analyzes his reactions, in their various

forms, to the social and physical environment in which he lived.

After analyzing the syntagmatic unities of the narrative (Chapter II), in Chapter III the functions are grouped into larger, this time paradigmatic unities (the level of Actions), after which the highest level of Sartre's narrative, that of Narration, is analyzed. In other words, this chapter contains an analysis both of the main characters of Sartre's autobiography, and that of the narrative techniques employed by the author. The latter in fact represent the three main aspects of Sartre's analytico-synthetic progressive-regressive method on which the whole structure of Les mots is based.

In Chapter IV Sartre's autobiography is analyzed in its totality, by showing that the meaning is generated through the different levels of the narrative and their interrelatedness. The various levels of meaning of Les mots are analyzed by relating them to the main philosophical categories from Critique de la raison dialectique: alienation, project, progressive-regressive method, comprehension, etc., discussing the different forms in which these have been employed in the autobiography itself.

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CHAPTER I

1.1.0. Thesis. The thesis we are putting forward here is that Les mots is fundamentally a philosophical work, given in a literary form and dealing with basically the same philosophical concepts and postulates as the ones elaborated and developed in Sartre's Questions de méthode. This latter is in fact the introduction to his monumental philosophical work Critique de la raison dialectique, published in 1960; it is an introduction in the sense that it introduces theoretically Sartre's main philosophical concepts and categories, which are practically applied in the Critique de la raison dialectique proper. Questions de méthode thus contains the theoretical exposition of Sartre's later philosophy. Les mots, on the other hand, can be said to have been written on the basis of the same mode of perceiving and explaining human reality as was Questions de méthode. Put differently, this would mean that the former represents an attempt by Sartre to apply practically, and in a literary form, his perception of human reality and the method for studying it as elaborated in the latter work.

Therefore, we can now say that our thesis proposes to study Les mots in view of our claim that it is basically a philosophical work couched in a literary form, at the same time always keeping in mind the philosophical categories, postulates and the method from Questionsddemméthode, as well as showing how these are applied in Sartre's autobiography.

1.2.0. Method. The method we propose to use in our analysis of Les mots is a structural method. What was the intention, we can ask, the general

aim which has led to the particular choice of a structural method over other methods and "approaches"?

To begin with, we believe it is quite evident that all criticism of necessity involves presuppositions, that is to say, our beliefs and assumptions affect our interpretative processes, regardless of whether we are ready to admit it or not. Thus, although this may sound like a tautology in view of the above, the choice of structuralism as a method to be used in analyzing Les mots is a consequence of a certain concept of the world, a certain philosophy. However, the intention is, despite this seeming "relativism", to argue that not all critical interpretations have the same status vis-à-vis the works which they try to interpret. In other words, the intention is to deny the claim that differing interpretations of the same work can coexist without our being able either to confirm or disconfirm them. Structuralism as a method, in our opinion, allows a critic to show that a logically presented critical argument is superior to an intuitive, haphazard one. Structuralism is not to be taken as a method of literary criticism whereby the main intention is to "prove" a certain intuition of the critic. On the contrary, it is a method which allows the critic to achieve a certain logical consistency which can always be validated by referring it back to, and comparing with, the work analyzed.

Literary criticism is above all a reflexive act, and in order to interpret a literary work, criticism needs to create certain regulative principles, which would allow it to organize itself. Inoother words, criticism ought to be able to provide an objective method of validation, and this can be achieved through the application of a structural method.

The term validation, which implies a logical criterion, is not to be confused with verification, which is the empirical criterion. Therefore, when we speak of objective critical interpretation we refer to validity or invalidity of critical arguments in relation to the literary work analyzed.

The main aim in our analysis of Sartre's autobiography would ideally be to make it intelligible, and this we propose to try to do by creating a so-called model, by means of which our interpretation will transform the work itself, precisely in order to make it intelligible. In the structural model we will apply we will try to adhere to two basic principles: first, that the analysis ought to be coherent, by rigorously following the proposed rules of interpretation; and second, that it ought to be complete, by explaining all of the important elements of which the work consists. Consequently, we can conclude that our interpretation of Les mots using a structural method has two criteria: completeness and coherence. The main aim of our model is therefore to insure the validity of arguments, which can always be tested by comparing them with the work itself. If the arguments presented in the analysis are valid, then only could we claim that the interpretation (our model) can be said to have an objective relation to Les mots, could we speak of its being valid.

As we have said earlier, total objectivity in its absolute sense is of course impossible. Consequently, what we hope to achieve in our analysis of Sartre's autobiography is to create a structural model which would bear a valid relationship to the work analyzed. Our interpretation through creating a model should hopefully provide us with a new and better understanding of Sartre's work, which could not have been obtainable otherwise,

by mere reading.

The method itself needs a more detailed explanation and definition. We shall therefore first discuss the main concepts, such as: sign, signification, value of the sign, connotative and metalanguage systems, and relate these to literature and literary criticism. After that we will discuss the model of structural analysis, which we will use in our analysis of Les mots.

1.3.0. Sign. The literary text, as a specific type of signifying practice carried out through language but somehow always remaining irreducible to its categories, has always troubled literary criticism. The process of generating meaning, which can be conceived of as a process of signification, as a production which exceeds the sign, has been submitted to various attempts at recuperation into rationality, but has always resisted it, always carrying a surplus of signification. Thus the literary text may be defined as a concept, the specific domain of which is one of signifying practice in which signification, or meaning, is engendered through a double relation: firstly in relation to a seemingly infinite external reality (that is, external to the text itself), and secondly in relation to the text and its constituents in an activity of the generation of meaning.

If one accepts the premise that the organizing distinction of art - and in this art differs from other semiological structures - is that the direction toward which it aims is not that of content only, but rather that of meaning as produced by the relationship which exists between the so-called form and content - or, translating this into semiological terms,

we can say that its direction is not toward the signified but rather toward that of the sign itself - then it should only be logical to use semiological categories as a point of departure in literary analysis. However, its use is not as any kind of miraculous synthesis, but rather as a theory of knowledge, as an attempt at reformulation of intellection which starts with the concept which determines it: the sign. Hence we will first discuss the question of assigning notions such as sign, its components the signifiēr and the signified, and value of the sign to their, more or less, exact place in the working of the process of signification.

Ferdinand de Saussure in his Course in General Linguistics has set the foundations of "a science that studies the life of signs within society"[1] which he named semiology. The new science undertook to show what constitutes signs and what laws or rules govern them. Linguistics, according to Saussure, would only be a part of the general science of semiology; the laws which semiology would discover, he thought, would also be applicable to linguistics. For him, language, which is a social institution, is a system of signs expressing ideas.

The sign, as Saussure has postulated it, consists of two terms, both of which are psychological and are united in the human mind by an associative bond. The sign does not unite a thing and a name, he underlined, but a concept and a sound-image. This latter was not the material, physical sound, but a psychological sensation which it makes on our senses. He named the sound-image "signifier" and the concept "signified", which allowed him to indicate the opposition which exists between the two terms, and which separates them from the whole (that is, sign) of which they are parts.[2] He has established the fact that the signifier and the signified are always

in a very close relationship with each other, and that each recalls the other. Attempting to give a more precise analogy he says: "A better choice would be a chemical compound like water, combination of hydrogen and oxygen; taken separately, neither element has any of the properties of water."[3]

Saussure has clearly stated that the signified is of the mental nature by the very fact of calling it a concept. For Barthes, on the other hand, the signified is "one of the two relata of the sign; the only difference which opposes it to the signifier is that the latter is a mediator."[4] This is, of course, a functional definition only. There is a general consensus among linguists that the signified is not a "thing", a material object, but rather a mental concept, a mental representation of the object.

The signifier is also purely a relatum since its definition cannot be given separately from the signified. The main difference is that the signifier is a mediator, which is to say that some sort of matter is necessary for its existence. We can therefore conclude that in semiology the substance of the signifier is of necessity of material nature (that is, sounds, objects, images).[5] In his discussion of the signifier Saussure has postulated his second principle of semiology - his first postulate relating to the fact that the link which holds together the signifier and the signified is arbitrary - which starts from the premise that the signifier, being auditory, unfolds only in time. From this he concludes that, firstly, the signifier represents a span, and secondly, that the span can be measured in a single dimension (that is, it is a line). However, he makes an exception in this respect in regard to

visual signifiers (e.g. nautical signs, etc.) which can be structured in such a manner as to offer simultaneous groupings, whereas auditory signifiers have only the dimension in time. Their elements, being presented in succession, form a chain. Saussure holds this principle to be fundamental, and its consequences "incalculable". The importance of it, according to him, is easily observable and verifiable when the elements of a chain are represented in writing, where the spatial life of graphic works is substituted for temporal succession.[6]

1.4.0. Signification. We have mentioned earlier that the sign is composed of the signifier and the signified. The signification is conceived as a process, that is to say, it consists of the act which binds the signifier and the signified, the end result of which is the sign itself. But this distinction contains again, as in the case of the signifier and the signified, classifying value only, since the union which binds the signifier and the signified into a sign derives, to different degrees, its value from the social and cultural environment from which it stems (this we will discuss later on in relation to the value of the sign).

There have been various attempts at representing graphically the act which produces the sign and the signification. Saussure himself represented it in the form of $\frac{\text{concept}}{\text{sound-image}}$, that is $\frac{sr}{sd}$. For him, in order to reach the signified we had to go through the signifier, therefore the formula $\frac{sr}{sd}$ can be taken as the vertical extension of a situation in depth. We should also keep in mind that there is a dialectical relation between the signifier and the signified in Saussure, which is not

apparent from the formula. Lacan, on the other hand, starts off from the Saussurian formula, which he gives as $\frac{S}{s}$, i.e. the signifier over the signified, where "over" represents the line which separates the two levels of the sign. He places the signifier and signified as belonging to different orders, which are separated originally by a barrier resisting signification. He considers this to have allowed an exact study of the relations proper to the signifier, and of the relevance of their function as producing the signified.[7]

As we can see from this Lacan introduces a new dimension to the relationship between the signifier and the signified, which consists in giving its own value to the line which separates the relata of the sign. He does this in order to demonstrate that the signifier does not simply function as representing the signified. No meaning is sustained by reference to anything but another meaning, which invalidates the notion of the parallelism of the components of the sign, where each one would be taken in its globality. We will discuss the relevance of this claim to our proposed analysis later on in this chapter.

Another example of graphic representation of the signification has been done by Hjelmslev in a purely graphic manner: the signifier comprises the plane of expression (E), the signified the plane of content (C), and there is a simple relation (R) between them, hence - ERC. The advantage of Hjelmslev's representation, according to Barthes, is that it enables us to explain metalanguages, or derivative systems, in an economic manner and without metaphorical falsification.

1.5.0. The value of the sign. Thus far in our discussion of the various attempts at representing the sign as a unity of the signifier and the signified, verbally as well as graphically, the sign has been treated "in itself", and as an abstract entity, which although to some extent arbitrary has nevertheless been an inevitable abstraction. We have mentioned earlier that the bond which unites the signifier and the signified into a sign derives its value from the social and cultural environment which, after all, has produced and sustained the sign. This brings us to the problem of value of the sign, which plays a fundamental role in Saussure's linguistics. Discussingtthe interrelatedness and interdependence of the components of the sign, he says that neither thought (without language) nor phonic substance is either fixed or rigid in an by itself. He compares their relation with that of the air in contact with a surface of water; any change in the atmospheric pressure will cause the water to break up into a number of waves, and these can be compared with the bond or union which exists between thought and phonic substance. Language is the domain of articulations; thus each term is an articulus and member, whereby a sound becomessa sign only inasmuch as an idea is contained in a sound(8). Saussure gives an even better metaphor: language can be compared with a piece of paper whereby the thought and the sound are placed on the front and on the back of the paper respectively; by cutting the paper we could not divide the thought from the sound, nor vice versa. This, as we have already pointed out, can only be accomplished on an abstract level. Since the value which every sign has is derived from the social environment, therefore related to it, it would be, according

to Saussure, misleading to consider the sign as only the union of a certain sound with a certain concept. He first discusses the problem of value in relation to the signified, and defines a seeming paradox where the concept seems to have as its counterpart the sound-image, while the sign itself at the same time is also the counterpart of the other signs. He invokes his example of the sheet of paper in order to show that if we cut the paper into different pieces A, B, C, D, etc., it would be apparent that there definitely would be a different relation between the front pieces A. B, C, D, etc. among themselves, and the back pieces A', B', C', D', etc. He explains this phenomenon by claiming that all values, even outside linguistics, are "governed by the same paradoxical principle",[9] namely, a value, and therefore the sign also, is composed of a dissimilar thing which can be exchanged for another thing (e.g. the signifier and signified), and of a similar thing which can be compared with another thing. Thus a word can be exchanged for an idea (a dissimilar thing), as well as compared with another word (a similar thing); therefore the value of a word is not fixed because it can be "exchanged" for a certain concept (that is, it has a certain signification). In order to have its content fixed it has to be compared with other words; inasmuch as a word is a part of a certain system, it is endowed not only with a signification but with a value as well. Consequently, we can conclude from the above that values which words have emanate from the system to which they belong. Initially the concept (i.e. the signified) is nothing, and then becomes a value, which is determined by its relations with similar values of the same system, and the signification which the concept has would not exist without other similar values.[10]

Discussing value of the signifier Saussure says that "the conceptual side of value is made up solely of relations and differences with respect to the other terms of language, and the same can be said of its material side"[11] (i.e. the signifier). Differences produce signification, he claims, and therefore it is the acoustic differences which render it possible to distinguish any one word from all the others. Since Saussure believes that everything said about words applies equally to any term of language (e.g. grammatical entities), and if we reverse Saussure's claim that "linguistics is only a part of general science of semiology",[12] and conclude, along with Barthes, that "it is semiology which is a part of linguistics: to be precise, it is that part covering the great signifying unities of discourse",[13] it will logically follow that everything that has been said about the linguistic sign - its components, their interrelations, and signification - can be applied to any other system of signs. We shall return to this later on in our discussion of staggered systems.

1.6.0. Connotative-Metalanguage Systems. Thus far we have discussed only the denotative semiology, which is in Hjelmslevian linguistics described as a semiotics in which neither the signifier (the plane of expression) nor the signified (the plane of content) is a semiotic, i.e. neither of the two is comprised of a sign. There are also systems of signification whose plane of expression itself consists of a sign of another, lower system: these are connotative systems, in which we have one semiotic system (system of significations) imposed on the other. The individual relata of the denotative system (the signifier and the signified) and the

[illegible]

signification generated by their relation form the signifier of the connotative system. This signifier Hjelmslev calls connotator.[14] From this we can define a connotative system as a system whose plane of expression (connotator) itself consists of a signifying system. Barthes points out that these connotative systems very often consist of complex systems, the first system of which is formed by language, which is, for example, the case with literature. Several denotative signs, if grouped together in such a way as to produce a single signified of connotation, may form a single connotator. Regardless of the mode in which a connotative system is imposed on the top of a denotative system, connotation never really exhausts it because there always remains "something denoted". This is very important because if it were not the case, discourse would not be possible.[15]

A connotative system (and literature is one) is a system which is not a language, and one whose plane of expression is, as Hjelmslev says, "provided" by the plane of content and thepplane of expression of a denotative system (e.g. language). The plane of content (the signified) of a connotative system refers to things external to the system itself; it is related to different aspects of the social surrounding, such as history and culture for example.

The second group of these staggered or disjointed systems are systems whose plane of content (the signified) is itself comprised of another system; all metalanguages belong to this group, hence the name metalanguage systems. In Hjelmslev's terminology it stands for a semiotic whose plane of content is another semiotic. Linguistics, for example, would be one such system, literary criticism another; semiology in general would be yet another

example of metalanguage, because as a second-order system it takes over a first language (denotative system) which is the system studied. Although Barthes is basically reiterating what Hjelmslev has said elsewhere,[16] Barthes has nevertheless applied these basically linguistic categories to a semiological study of a definitely wider scope. The concept of metalanguage, for him, should not be limited to scientific languages only; whenever ordinary language, as a denotative system, takes over and incorporates a system of signifying objects, it itself becomes a metalanguage.[17] This would evidently be the case with literary criticism in relation to literature, for example, as we will see later on.

1.7.0. Literature - Literary Criticism. Literature, as we have said, is a connotative system and as such consists of the plane of expression (the signifier) which is itself comprised of a sign of another system (i.e. of the signifier and the signified of the denotative system) and a plane of content (the signified). Literary criticism, as a metalanguage, consists also of the plane of expression (the signifier), but its plane of content (the signified) is a semiotic, i.e. the content of which is a semiotic (this being literature). Literary criticism therefore must treat a literary work as a sign, that is, it must treat the signifier and the signified of the literary work, as well as the signification generated by the relationship which exists between them. Literary criticism itself consists of both relata of the sign, namely, of the signifier and the signified. The former uses language as its means, as its tool, whereas the latter deals with a literary work as a semiotic (i.e. as a connotative system). Thus literary criticism deals with, and its plane of content

consists of, firstly, the plane of expression (the signifier), and secondly, the plane of content (the signified) of the literary work under scrutiny.

The thrust of our argument thus far has been to show: first, that literature is a connotative system and that literary criticism has of necessity to include in its analysis both the plane of expression and the plane of content; second, that the relationship which exists between these two planes of the literary work analyzed is such that it is not meaningful, nor intelligible, to discuss either of the two separately. There have been arguments that structural analysis should concern itself only with the plane of expression (the signifier) of the work analyzed, but this, as we have seen, is impossible (I am referring to prose works only); if the plane of content and the plane of expression are relata of the same sign, it then becomes obvious that such an analysis would not be complete.

We have mentioned earlier Lacan's formulation of the problem of the sign and the relationship of its components. He argues that if his formula $\frac{S}{s}$ (with the line bearing its own value) is tenable - whereby the formula itself is only a function of the signifier - then it presents only the structure of a signifier in the transfer, and this structure is contained in its articulation. The nature of the signifier is such that it incessantly anticipates meaning by gradually revealing its dimension before it.[18] From this he concludes that "we can say that it is in the chain of the signifier that the meaning 'insists' but that none of its elements 'consists' in the meaning of which it is at the moment capable."[19] This is very important for the structuring of our model, and at the same time

it makes up the second point at which Lacan differs from the Saussurian formula in that it claims that the signifier itself is global and consists of a multilevelled chain. In other words, we can say that literary discourse aligns itself along several levels, and this is facilitated by Lacan's introduction of the notion of an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier, which coincide only at certain points.

1.8.0. Model. Now, if we accept the definition which describes literature as a system of signs, we can say that the narrative of a literary work (the signifier - the plane of expression) is itself global and consists of a multilevelled chain since all discourse aligns itself along several levels. Applied to our proposed model, this would mean that in order to analyze Sartre's work as a system of signs we ought first to analyze the narrative of Les mots as the structure of the narrative in the transfer, and this structure is its articulation. In other words, in order to arrive at the meaning of the work as a whole, we will have first to analyze the structure of the narrative of Sartre's autobiography. However, this structure is always in its articulation, and the articulation is to be understood as the generation, production of meaning of the work. From this we can conclude that Les mots as a literary work is posited as the object of our analysis as a system of production of signification, and not as a closed system with a given sense.

Thus our proposed analysis will start with a classification of signifiers of Les mots, and this will in fact be the structuring of Sartre's narrative. The first step will consist in dividing the seemingly

infinite message of the narrative, which is composed of all the messages emitted at the level of the text, into smaller units. Thus in Chapter II we will analyze the functions as the smallest narrative unities of the narrative. This will mean grouping them into two groups representing the two most important aspects in studying individual history, which are always present in Les mots, and which Sartre elaborates explicitly in his Questions de méthode. These are first the family influence on the young child, and second the various reactions of the child to the environment in which he lived. Therefore, in this chapter we will analyze how young Jean-Paul grew up, that is, we will analyze not only the material conditions in which he grew up, but also the whole social, cultural and ideological spectrum of influences of a certain class, in a certain era. These are the categories and concepts from Questions de méthode, which Sartre has applied to studying his own history, and which we will discuss and relate to Les mots in Chapter IV.

The second step in analyzing the narrative of Sartre's work will consist in grouping the functions into larger paradigmatic unities (level of Actions), and analyzing the highest level of the narrative (level of Narration). Therefore, in Chapter III we will analyze the main characters in Sartre's autobiography, as well as the narrative technique used by the author. The latter represents in fact three different aspects of his regressive-progressive analytico-synthetic method on which the whole structure of Les mots is based. The characters will be analyzed employing the concepts of need, project and lived experience which, as Sartre argues in Questions de méthode, are the three most fundamental aspects of human

praxis and are hence necessary for studying individual history. Our analysis of the narrative technique used in Les mots will show the main forms of Sartre's regressive-progressive analytico-synthetic method by means of which he endeavours to study his own history, as an example of his proposed method for studying human history in general.

Whereas Chapters II and III of our model deal with the narrative (i.e. the plane of expression) of Les mots, in Chapter IV we will analyze Sartre's work in its totality, the meaning of which is generated through the different levels of the narrative and their interrelatedness. We will do this by relating the main philosophical categories and postulates from Questions de méthode to Les mots, inasmuch, of course, as they are present in the latter. We will therefore analyze each of the main philosophical categories, such as, for example: alienation, project, comprehension, regressive-progressive analytico-synthetic method, etc., always relating these to Sartre's autobiography, endeavouring to show the extent and the forms in which these have been employed in Les mots.

CHAPTER I: NOTES

[1] Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, trans. with an introduction and notes by Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 16.

[2] Ibid., pp. 65-67.

[3] Ibid., p. 68.

[4] Roland Barthes, Elements of Semiology, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith

[5] Saussure, p. 70.

[6] Ibid., p. 75.

[7] Jacques Lacan, "The insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious," The Structuralists from Marx to Lévi-Strauss, ed. Richard and Fernande De George (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1972), p. 291.

[8] Saussure, pp. 112-113.

[9] Ibid., p. 114.

[10] Ibid., pp. 115-117.

[11] Ibid., p. 118.

[12] Ibid., p. 16.

[13] Barthes, p. 11.

[14] LouissHjelmslev, Prolegomena to a Theory of Language, trans. Francis J. Whitfield (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), pp. 114-119.

[15] Barthes, p. 91.

[16] Hjelmslev, pp. 114-125.

[17] Barthes, p. 92.

[18] Lacan, pp. 291-296.

[19] Ibid., p. 297.

CHAPTER II

To state that the narrative of a literary text is not a simple sum of propositions, but rather a complex structured unity in which we can distinguish different levels of meaning, is not to state yet another commonplace of literary criticism but rather to pose a fundamental question which every analysis of the narrative of a literary text must take as its point of departure. In order to classify the enormous mass of elements which every literary text contains and presents to the reader, we have first of all to delineate the levels of the narrative of the text. These levels always stand in a hierarchical relationship to each other, which is made fairly obvious by the fact that none of them can by itself produce the meaning generated by the text.

Accepting Roland Barthes' basic division of description of the narrative in his "Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits",[1] I propose to analyze Les mots by Jean-Paul Sartre on three different levels: (1) that of functions, (2) that of actions, and (3) that of narration.

LEVEL ONE: FUNCTIONS

Barthes defines basic narrative unities of the text as functions in the sense that "c'est le caractère fonctionnel de certains segments de l'histoire qui en fait des unités: d'où le nom de 'fonctions'."[2] Every part of the story which presents itself as a term of the same correlation in the narrative (i.e. of the same causal, complementary or reciprocal

relationship in which there exists a functional, structural or qualitative correspondence between various comparable entities) forms a narrative unity. The essence of a function is, "si l'on peut dire, son germe, ce qui lui permet d'ensemencer le récit d'un élément qui mûrira plus tard, sur le même niveau, ou ailleurs, sur un autre niveau."[3]

From this we can conclude that a function is "une unité de contenu: c'est 'ce que veut dire' un énoncé qui le constitue en unité fonctionnelle, non la façon dont cela est dit."[4]

Every literary text contains in itself several different types of correlation, and since we have described functions (as narrative unities) as terms of the same correlation in the narrative, we can thus conclude that there are also several different types of function as well. These can be divided into two major groups: first, the family and second, the project functions. The group of the family functions contains all the narrative unities of the text dealing with the various crucial influences which the family, through its many forms of mediation, exerted on young Jean-Paul. The second group, that of the project functions, contains all the narrative unities which have as their subject the most important projects which Sartre undertook, consciously or unconsciously, in his reacting to the family influence and in order to fulfill his needs and desires as well as overcome his anxieties and frustrations.

1.0.0. Family. The family functions are at the very basis of the whole structure of functions in Les mots. The internal structuring of a function is complex; there are two main classes of functional structures or narrative unities: "certaines unités ont pour corrélats des unités de même niveau;

au contraire, pour saturer les autres, il faut passer à un autre niveau."[5] The first group is distributional - these are functions proper - and the second is integrative - these are indices.

What Barthes means is that each distributional narrative unity has as its correlative another unity of the same level of the narrative. An integrative unity, however, refers back not to an act or event complementary and consequent to the unity itself, as is the case with the distributional unities, but rather refers back to a concept more or less diffused, necessary to the meaning of the story. Here the relation of the unity and its correlate is not distributional any more, i.e. on the same level as the narrative, but integrative, i.e. on a different narrative level, thereby integrating, connecting different narrative levels.

1.1.0. Distributional Unities. Distributional unities themselves can be divided into two groups: one group is cardinal functions, or nuclei, and the second group is catalysts. Nuclei and catalysts are functional unities of unequal importance: the latter serve only to "fill in" the narrative spaces which separate the nuclei, whereas the former are the most important functional unities.

1.1.1. Nuclei. We shall therefore begin our analysis by tracing the nuclei of the family functions. But first we ought to define a nucleus and its functionality. This, again, is based on Barthes' proposed analysis of the narrative, although, I should add, with many changes as to the practical usage and the level of the application of his concepts.

The sanction of a nucleus, as well as that of a catalyst, is always further on in the text, that is, it is always a syntagmatic sanction. "Pour qu'une fonction soit cardinale," Barthes writes, "il suffit que l'action à laquelle elle se réfère ouvre (ou maintienne, ou ferme) une alternative conséquente pour la suite de l'histoire, bref qu'elle inaugure ou conclue une incertitude."[6] Nuclei thus can be defined as points of risk, or turning points, of the narrative: "Le lieu qui unit deux fonctions cardinales, s'investit une fonctionalité double," and what should be stressed here is that this double functionality is "à la fois chronologique et logique." Therefore, "les fonctions cardinales sont à la fois consécutives et conséquentes."[7] The relationship which exists between the nuclei in the narrative is consequently one of solidarity since there is a reciprocity between them. The consequence of this is that nuclei "ne peuvent être déterminées par leur 'importance', mais seulement par la nature (doublement implicative) de leurs relations."[8]

The first nucleus in the whole chain of the family functions is, indubitably, the death of Jean-Baptiste Sartre. This was a crucial event in the life of his son Jean-Paul; it sent his mother back to her parental chains and gave him freedom. Had his father lived, Sartre says, he would most likely have exerted such a strong influence on his son that it would have crushed him.[9] In the absence of a father Sartre grew up surrounded by his mother, his grandmother and his grandfather. The relationships of these people among themselves, and each one of them toward young Jean-Paul, had the most profound influence on what became Sartre's basic character as a child as well as on the very direction in which this development later

took place. The first nucleus of the family functions thus sets the stage as well as provides the actors for the formative drama in Sartre's life which took place in the period between his sixth and eleventh years.

Sartre's grandfather was a teacher of German, who taught at his own Modern Language Institute and was a co-author of the Deutsches Lesebuch: "J'ai commencé ma vie comme je la finirai sans doute: au milieu des livres. Dans le bureau de mon grand-père, il y en avait partout!" (p. 37). Long before he learned to read, young Sartre was made aware of the mystical importance of books. He was a witness to a ritual of handling and reading those revered, sacred cultural objects in which his grandparents daily participated, and the high priest of which was Charles Schweitzer. The atmosphere was thus reminiscent of "la messe", "la mort", "le sommeil"; Sartre would be filled with "silence sacré" (p. 38). The attitude toward and reverence for books, which Charles held, had the most profound and crucial influence on Sartre's development, and this comprises the second nucleus of the family functions. All this pointed in one direction: Sartre was "le petit-fils d'un artisan spécialisé dans la fabrication des objets saints, aussi respectable qu'un facteur d'orgues, qu'un tailleur pour ecclésiastiques" (p. 39). The consequence of this quasi-religious atmosphere of reverence for books was that the child, even before he knew how to read, was prepared "à traiter le professorat comme un sacerdoce et la littérature comme une passion" (p. 40).

The following nucleus deals with Sartre's initial comprehension of and relation to the world as was revealed to him in books in his very early stages of reading. The preceding nucleus has partially made it

possible (Charles' reverence for books and clerks who write them, the fact that the whole family's well-being depended on teaching and books, etc.) to see that Sartre's early acquired Platonic idealism in relation to the real world was in fact a logical consequence, given the intellectual atmosphere of a petit-bourgeois teacher dominant in the Schweitzer family:

> . . . j'allais du savoir à son objet; je trouvais à l'idée plus de réalité qu'à la chose, parce qu'elle se donnait à moi d'abord et parce qu'elle se donnait comme une chose. . . . j'ai confondu le désordre de mes expériences livresques avec le cours hasardeux des événements réels. (p. 46)

The force of this philosophical idealism was such that, according to Sartre himself, it took him thirty years to overcome. This belief of Sartre's, with which he was imbued through his family, was nevertheless only the initial, unconscious reaction of a child confronted with the imaginary of the books read by children in France in that era.

Sartre's first consciously asked question and more importantly the answer given to him by his grandfather comprise the next nucleus: "de quoi parlent les livers? Qui les écrit? Pourquoi?" (p. 51). The reasons which prompted Sartre to pose this question stem from the fact, that, as we have seen in the preceding nucleus, for him at the time the real world was contained in books: "Nos visiteurs prenaient congé, je restais seul, je m'évadais de ce banal cimetière, j'allais rejoindre la vie, la folie dans les livres." (p. 47). He lived in the "reality" of the books he read, he tried to understand them, to cope with a myriad questions raised in and by them. But, at the same time, he was afraid of falling headlong and getting lost in the universe of books, of not being able to return to 1, rue Le Goff, Karlémami and his mother: "Et, d'un autre côté, je devinais que

ces défilés de phrases offraient aux lecteurs adultes des significations qui se dérobaient à moi" (p. 50).

Charles' answer was machiavellian. Authors, he said, were the Saints and the Prophets. Genius was given to them by the Holy Ghost only as a loan: it must be deserved by suffering and accepted firmly and humbly. Authors wrote through the inspiration, at the dictation of the Holy Ghost. Charles' portrayal of writers as martyrs and sufferers who led uninteresting lives - although meant to disgust his grandson with writers, who after all were just mere intermediaries of the Holy Ghost - achieved in fact the opposite result: Sartre, in his own words merged talent with merit (p. 56).

Charles himself did not believe in God. Being a Protestant, he never missed a chance of ridiculing Catholicism and was utterly disgusted with saintliness. The stories he used to tell in the circle of his family show unequivocally what he thought of religion in general and the eccentricities of the Saints in particular. Sartre's grandmother Louise was a Catholic who apparently believed in nothing. It was her scepticism alone, Sartre tells us, which prevented her from being an atheist. Growing up between an anticlerical, de-Christianized grandfather and a sceptical, non-believing "Catholic" grandmother, Sartre was led to disbelief not, as he says, by the conflict of dogmas, but rather by the indifference of his grandparents (p. 87). This disbelief of Sartre's, which later developed into a very strongly felt atheism, comprises the fifth nucleus of the family functions.

The following nucleus deals with the episode in which Charles again was the instrumental factor. He was for a long time displeased

with his grandson's long, curly hair and did not want to have his "petit-fils devienne une poule mouillée!" (p. 89). One day he took the seven-year old Jean-Paul to a barber shop and had his lovely ringlets cut off. The consequences of this act were profound although Sartre himself was not consciously aware of them at the time; it was not any more possible for the family and their friends to ignore Sartre's "laideur". Anne-Marie concealed from her son her grief and disappointment with his shorn looks. Nevertheless, Sartre says: "Mais je me sentais mal dans mon peau. Les amis de ma famille me jetaient des regards soucieux ou perplexes que je surprenais souvent. Mon public devenait de jour en jour plus difficile; il fallut me dépenser; j'appuyai mes effets et j'en vins à jouer faux" (p. 91).

Jean-Paul started writing. Anne-Marie's little angel, shorn of his lovely ringlets, was now encouraged to write. This was, one feels, to compensate for his lost angelic appearance. She would bring visitors to show them the young creator who, writing at his desk, would pretend to be so preoccupied with his writing as not even to notice them. Everybody contributed in encouraging him: his uncle gave him a small typewriter, Mme. Picard brought him a globe, his mother copied out one of his novels; everybody, that is, except Charles, who disapproved not of the fact that Jean-Paul was writing, but of the choice of his grandson's topics. Charles was "outré de retrouver sous ma plume les 'bêtises' de mes journaux favoris. Par la suite, il se désintéressa de mon oeuvre" (p. 124), but the encouragement of the rest of his family as well as that of the family friends persisted. Mme. Picard was soon to declare that "ce petit écrira" (p. 131), becoming thereby the first person to discover the "sign"

which the future great writer and philosopher bore on his brow. His mother was secretly proud and overjoyed. Charles was, very cautiously of course, informed about the great prophecies, to which he reacted by merely nodding, only to be heard by Jean-Paul soon afterwards, on the occasion when his German students came to visit him, saying that his grandson had "la bosse de la littérature."

And thus he drove Sartre, even without intending to, into a new imposture which changed his grandson's life. Sartre tells us that Charles did not really believe in what he said, and apparently wanted his grandson to become a teacher of German. Jean-Paul, grandson of an Alsatian, who was at the same time a born Frenchman, was to be his grandfather's avenger. Charles, who had chosen France in 1870 when the province was occupied by the Germans was, in Sartre's words, caught between two nations, between two languages. Not completely belonging to either of the two and being discriminated against by the French, he, along with the other Alsatians who opted for France, as Sartre says: "avaient fait des études irrégulières et leur culture avait des trous" (p. 132). Consequently Charles had planned to help his grandson acquire "un savoir universel" and become that prince of men, a teacher of letters. Therefore the statement that his grandson would become a writer can only be taken into consideration in the light of the above. Thus when we discuss the whole psychological mechanism behind this crucial event in Sartre's life, and especially its effectiveness, we ought always to keep in mind that Charles' talk about his grandson's bump of literature was meant paradoxically to divert the latter from even considering literature as a future vocation.

One evening Charles had a man-to-man talk with Jean-Paul specifically in order to explain to his grandson that the vocation of writer was in fact very difficult, that the society in which the writer lived did not appreciate writers, that one could not support oneself by writing only. All this with the intention of pointing out to his grandson that he should choose another vocation, that of teacher, and thus combine one priestly function with the other. The picture of writers which Charles depicted was indeed a very gloomy and bleak one: "la littérature ne nourrissait pas," "des écrivains fameux étaient morts de faim," "d'autres, pour manger, s'étaient vendus" (p. 133). Writing thus appeared to young Jean-Paul so uninteresting and inconsequential an activity that he did not doubt, even for a moment, that it was in fact meant to be his profession. The reason, Sartre says, for his having listened to his grandfather's advice on that particular occasion - although he misunderstood Charles' "grandfatherly" persuasion - was that he took it for that of the dead father. Charles was Moses dictating Sartre's new law: "Il n'avait mentionné ma vocation que pour en souligner les désavantages: j'en conclus qu'il la tenait pour acquise. . . . Il me convainquit de ma vocation en me faisant comprendre que ces fastueux désordres ne m'étaient pas réservés" (pp. 134-135). This brings to a conclusion another nucleus of the family function: Sartre, in his own words, like all dreamers who confuse disenchantment with truth, accepted the ponderously serious, trifling vocation of a writer.

The eighth and last nucleus of the family functions was a direct, although unintentional, consequence of an attempt by Charles to awaken his grandson to the spirit of humanism. Charles who, as we have seen at the very beginning of the book, was supposed to become a priest, only to

change the priesthood of the Church into that of a man of letters, "avait gardé le Divin pour le verser dans la Culture" (p. 150). The world for him was too susceptible to Evil; the only way of salvation was to renounce the World and the worldly pleasures and to search for a salvation in the noble contemplation of the World and Ideas. This, of course, was possible only for a small number of a chosen body of specialists; these were writers and artists. They were assigned to rescue the whole world from its evil and bestiality; all that was needed was firstly "que l'on conservât dans des locaux surveillés les reliques - toiles, livres, statues des clercs morts," and secondly "qu'il restât au moins un clerc vivant pour continuer la besogne et fabriquer les reliques futures" (p. 151).

These ideas had taken root in Sartre's mind; they exerted a very profound influence on him by providing a rationale for assigning a new role to the writer, whom until then he had conceived of as a writer-hero, or writer-knight. Under the influence of Charles' ideas about culture Sartre now transformed his writer-hero into a writer-martyr, regarding works of art as metaphysical events the existence of which was of such a capital importance that it affected the universe, no less. Charles Schweitzer had, as we have seen, replaced the religion of Christian Church for that of a petit-bourgeois, nineteenth-century religion of Culture. Jean-Paul, a frustrated believer, found in Culture, and particularly in Writing, a religion and made it his in order, as he says, to gild his dull vocation (p. 151).

1.1.2. Catalysts. The second group of distributional unities of the narrative are catalysts. Their function consists in "filling in" the

narrative space which separates nuclei. The relationship which exists between nuclei and catalysts is one of simple implication: that is, a catalyst always necessarily implies the existence of a nucleus to which it is attached, but not vice versa. Whereas one can think of nuclei as comprising the armature of the narrative structure, catalysts remain functional to the extent that they enter into correlation with nuclei; but their functionality is lessened, unilateral, parasitic: it is a purely chronological functionality. We have seen that nuclei represent the points of alternative of a literary text; the role of catalysts, on the other hand, is to provide zones of security and rest. Although the functionality of a catalyst thus defined may seem to be purely redundant in relation to its nucleus, a catalyst does not participate in the economy of the message or the production of the meaning any the less. In fact, there is no redundancy; "une notation, en apparence expletive, a toujours une fonction discursive: elle accélère, retarde, relance le discours, elle résume, anticipe, parfois même déroute."[10] Hence, we can conclude that a catalyst "réveille sans cesse la tension sémantique du discours, dit sans cesse: il y a eu, il va y avoir du sens."[11]

Thus, once we have analyzed the nuclei it becomes easy to trace the catalysts: they exist in the spaces between the nuclei. Since, in a certain manner, catalysts exist by virtue of the existence of their nuclei it is not necessary to analyze extensively either the former or all their examples present in the text. We shall analyze one such example only with the intention of first showing its relation to the nucleus, and second its functionality, always keeping in mind that it

is only the former (i.e. the form of the relation) which is variable, whereas the functionality always remains the same. Another reason which would make an extensive analysis of catalytic functions of the text redundant is that by having traced and analyzed the nuclei we have already traced the catalysts themselves as those narrative spaces which exist between the former, and have thus given them in their negative definition. However, we must be cautious because this is not to imply that the whole of each one of these narrative spaces has a catalytic function.

The catalyst I have chosen to discuss precedes the nucleus in which, as our analysis of it has shown, Sartre relates how he was led to disbelief in God not so much by the conflict of dogmas (Catholic and Protestant), which was constantly enacted in his family, but rather by the indifference of his grandparents. Sartre tells us, after just having talked about his fear of death which almost bordered on obsession, how, had he believed in God at the time, God would have managed things for him. He needed religion, longed for it and, at the very beginning, it was a remedy indeed. Although religion was not denied to Sartre, he later came to the realization that the fashionable God in whom he had been taught to believe was not the one whom his soul awaited (p. 84).

Still, this was not enough to divert the six-year old child from accepting religion, which would have provided answers for most of the questions and unconscious anxieties which young Jean-Paul had at the time. The catalyst continues with Sartre explaining that his family, just like the rest of the French society at the turn of the century, was affected by the slow movement of de-Christianization which had started with Voltaire, and without which his Catholic grandmother might not have

married a Lutheran. Thus the reader is slowly brought to the realization that the attitude of Sartre's family toward religion, was no more than a pretentious farce. "Naturellement," he says, "tout le monde croyait, chez nous: par discrétion" (p. 85).

Sartre then juxtaposes two images: that of an atheist, as a gentleman who had religious convictions, with that of a believer who had none; in his family, faith was just a high-sounding name for "la douce liberté française." Bourgeois "bonne société" needed God and believed in Him in order not to speak of Him. Charles Schweitzer, who played the leading role in the family play-acting, needed a Great Spectator, but thought about God only "dans les moments de pointe." Being certain of finding God at the moment of his death, he consequently made sure to keep Him out of his life (pp. 85-86). And from this introduction to the religious atmosphere of his family, Sartre proceeds to develop the nucleus of which we have spoken earlier.

Now we can follow the slow progression of the narrative from the point where Sartre tells how, when he was five, he saw death which lay in wait for him; then this fear of death develops, through different episodes, into a much larger existential problem of meaning of life ("la mort brillait par son absence"), to the concluding realization of his own profound uselessness ("Je me sentais de trop"), which produced a genuine neurosis of feeling superfluous. It is precisely at this point that Sartre introduces the catalyst which we have just discussed. It is evident from the above example that the catalytic function here is manifold: it serves to "fill in" the narrative space between the two

nuclei (the first of the project and the second of the family functions), as well as to introduce and prepare for its own nucleus of the family functions, thereby accelerating the discourse while at the same time anticipating the meaning of its nucleus.

1.2.0. Integrative Unities. The second group of functional unities in the structure of the narrative is integrative unities. Whereas a distributional unity has as its correlate another unity at the same level of narrative (thus being "horizontal"), in order to understand what the notation of an integrative unity serves in the structure of the narrative we have to pass on to another, higher level, namely that of actants and/or narration. In other words, it is precisely this "vertical" nature of integrative unities which makes them truly semantic; that is, these unities do not refer to an "operation" but rather to a signified. This means that - while the sanction of distributional unities is always further on in the text and thus on the same level (syntagmatic sanction) - the sanction of integrative unities is always higher, on a higher level and is thus a paradigmatic sanction.

What is very important to note is that in analyzing integrative unities we must always bear in mind that "les unités qui s'y trouvent ont en commun de ne pouvoir être saturées (complétées)," by being semantic, by referring to a signified - "qu'au niveau des personnages ou de la narration."[12]

Just as distributional unities have two levels, integrative unities can also be divided into two subgroups: that of indices and that of informants.

1.2.1. Indices. As their name implies indices as narrative unities only point to something, refer to it without directly, explicitly dealing with it. Being an integrative unity - that is, of "vertical", paradigmatic nature - an index does not refer or point to a signifier, but rather to a signified. Their signified is therefore always an implicit one and thus requires an activity of "deciphering" on the part of the reader. The consequence of their having an implicit signified only is that the functionality of these narrative unities can be only on the level of the story itself and not on that of the discourse.[13]

There are three kinds of indices: one refers to somebody's character, the second to an atmosphere and the third to a philosophy. Therefore, when we analyze indices we ought to keep in mind that although an index may seem to describe a character, or define an atmosphere or a philosophy explicitly and fully, we are still at the level of the signifier, because the signified and the signification of the index we are analyzing (despite its being seemingly quite explicit and comprehensive on the level of the story) can be comprehended fully only on a higher level of the narrative, that is on the level of actants and/or narration.

The progression of our analysis will be from the specific to the general, that is, we shall first discuss the indices referring to characters, then proceed to the ones referring to the atmosphere in which Jean-Paul grew up, to end our discussion of the indices of the family functions group by analyzing the most general of them - those referring to the philosophy prevalent at the time of Sartre's childhood.

Although the text contains very many references to different characters - and especially those of Charles, Louise and Anne-Marie -

these are usually of an auxiliary type; in other words, they are either a part of another narrative unity or are more of an anecdotal nature, and consequently cannot make up narrative unities of their own.

Indices which do comprise narrative unities are those referring to different kinds of atmosphere which pervade the text, although it could also be argued that there is actually only one prevalent atmosphere with its many varied forms in which we perceive it within the narrative. The most important aspect of the atmosphere in which Sartre grew up was the all-pervasive presence of books and the family's quasi-religious attitude towards them. His grandfather's library was a sanctuary in which ancient, heavy-set books were compared to monuments. Sartre's whole world in his early years was contained indeed in the apartment at One, rue Le Goff "au-dessous de Goethe et de Schiller, au-dessus de Molière, de Racine, de la Fontaine, face à Henri Heine, à Victor Hugo" (p. 138). His destiny was shaped there and he learned about the outside world through the books he found in his grandfather's library. Even before he learned to read, the permanence of those monuments guaranteed him a future as certain and as undisturbed by the external world as was the past. Sartre the child grew up surrounded by adults, was brought up as a miniature adult and was encouraged to read books written for adults. And yet he was nevertheless a child (p. 61). The tension produced by this dual role forced upon him exerted its pull in different directions.

He grew up in an atmosphere in which he was constantly made aware that he and his mother were not in their own home, neither then nor later when his mother remarried; he learned that possession of things can either reflect to their owner what he is or, as was the case with him, they may

contain a negative definition, in the sense that not having them one can learn what one is not. By living in an atmosphere where everything was only loaned to him, Sartre discovered that he was not substantial or permanent, that he was not the future continuer of his father's work, etc. (p. 77). However, we should point out here that his claim is only partially true: true in that he did not continue his father's work (how could he when he did not even remember his father?); nevertheless we shall see later to what extent Sartre did in fact continue his grandfather's work, extending it far beyond the limits which Charles had set up either for himself or the then still future profession of his grandson.

The tension of this double role imposed on Sartre by the family caused the deep-rooted feeling of being superfluous, which on the other hand produced the need to feel necessary in order to compensate for and counterbalance that very same feeling of superfluity. The family, and this again appears to have been a part of the play-acting, expressed the need for young Jean-Paul, which he in turn needed so badly. This illusion of being needed, of being a gift of Heaven, of being indispensable to his mother and to his grandfather (p. 141), was the predominant atmosphere in which Sartre grew up, taking different forms at different times. The family and the family friends thus created an atmosphere in which Sartre was always told that he was an exceptionally gifted child. At the same time we also see that he was prepared by Charles, as well as by his mother, for a career which directly or indirectly presumed an unusual gift for writing and teaching.

Indices referring to a philosophy are at least as important as the ones referring to the atmosphere. It is quite obvious that the two are

fairly closely related to each other and at times it is rather difficult to distinguish one from the other, especially when an atmosphere seems to be not only imbued with, but also caused by, a certain kind of the then prevalent philosophy. At other times there are less obvious or direct relationships between them, and yet the underlying philosophy which at first reading cannot be even detected, nevertheless upon a careful analysis emerges as more important than the atmosphere behind which it may be hidden.

We have had a few glimpses into the philosophy which was predominant at the time when Sartre was growing up, in our discussion of indices referring to the family atmosphere. This is understandable; we have grouped indices according to the generality ofttheir functions, that is, we have first mentioned the indices referring to a character, then proceeded to analyze the indices referring to an atmosphere, to end with the indices referring to a philosophy. The movement was thus from the most specific to the most general. So much so that we can, in a certain manner, subsume all of the previous indices under the indices referring to a philosophy in any narrative. Or, we can say that characters and atmosphere in the narrative are vehicles for pointing to a certain philosophy, or sometimes pointing to a number of different ideologies or philosophies. The philosophy (or ideology in the broadest sense of the word) which we encounter in Les mots is the late nineteenth-century version of the bourgeois mode of thinking. By "philosophy" in the sense we have been using it here, we do not mean philosophy in the technical, narrow sense of the word, that is, not a discipline of philosophy with all its implications, but rather a

mode of thinking pertaining to a certain class and a certain era.

In Les mots we see Sartre growing up in an atmosphere wherein life was thought of as a succession of ceremonies and where people were polite to each other: "tout le monde est bon puisque tout le monde est content. Je tiens la société pour une rigoureuse hiérarchie de mérites et de pouvoir" (p. 30). The bourgeois society of the turn of the century, in the mind of young Jean-Paul, was a just society. Justice was so overwhelming that the people who were at the top of the social scale, and who were moreover placed there because they deserved it, gave all they had to the less fortunate ones below. The smugness of the bourgeois thinking, as we see it in the pages of this book, is limitless. Sartre, the young boy, entertained only proper thoughts. He trusted people. The society was structured in the best possible way. Sartre's family consorted only with sedate people who based their certitudes on the Wisdom of Nations and who could be distinguished from the common herd only by a certain affectedness of soul. Naturally, coming from the same social class and being the grandson of the famous Charles Schweitzer, Sartre was quite accustomed to all this. The bourgeois scruples, always asserted with the inevitable self-satisfaction, were such that they could not fail to edify young Jean-Paul (p. 46). The bourgeois self-satisfaction was well justified: not only was their society just and well-ordered but it had also the sanction of Christianity through the all-powerful Catholicism. Although Sartre tells us that the bourgeois of the time was de-Christianized to a great extent, he had still the possibility of resorting to the religion which was now fashioned to be quite tolerant and, what is more important, comfortable.

He was not obliged to lead an exemplary life any more, nor to die in a state of despair (p. 85).

The bourgeois had yet another means of deluding himself: he believed in Progress. Young Jean-Paul's version was typical: it was a "long chemin ardu" which, in his case, led to him (p. 31). Thus having Divine protection, the bourgeois thinking posited that the works of God and the great achievements of man (bourgeois man, we presume) were shaped by the same impulse: it all led to and emanated from the Spirit. The Spirit spoke through Man. Charles, that petit-bourgeois intellectual, saw in Beauty the physical presence of Truth and the source of the noblest grandeur. This, according to him, could be achieved only through Humanities: they led directly to the Divine (pp. 52-53).

The Spirit, the Divine, the Humanities, Beauty, they all pointed to Man who had his self-contented, sedate gaze turned to future Progress. And, as we have just seen, the steep, long path of Progress, in Jean-Paul's mind, led to him. This is precisely what Sartre's family did: they acted in such a way as to make him feel that, as a gift of Heaven, he was the centre of the family universe.

The outside world, though well-ordered, was not perfect. There were poor people in this world. Sartre was made aware of them: they were put in the same category with freaks of nature (Siamese twins) and railway accidents. These were only anomalies and nothing more; thus nobody was to be blamed. And yet the poor, living in this well-ordered bourgeois world, had to have a function: theirs was to exercise the generosity of the bourgeois (p. 31). An inevitable parallel forces

itself upon the reader's mind; just as we have seen earlier when Jean-Paul provided a vehicle for Charles to exercise as well as worship his own generosity, so now we see the poor providing a vehicle by means of which the bourgeoisie could not only rationalize the existence of these "moutons à cinq pattes", but exercise its generosity as well.

Growing up immersed in the self-satisfaction and complacency of the bourgeois family in which he lived, young Jean-Paul could not help but note, as well as read in his magazines and books, that the return to order was always followed by progress. The heroes who helped the society maintain the order were inevitably always appropriately rewarded: they received honours and money.

From the above discussion of the indices referring to the philosophy as revealed in Les mots we see that there is indeed a connecting thread which weaves together all the indices referring to the philosophy from which, in his own words, he derived his most deep-seated phantasmagoria: bourgeois optimism (p. 66).

1.2.2. Informants. The second subgroup of integrative narrative unities is informants. Their function consists in that they "servent à identifier, à situer dans le temps et dans l'espace."[14] We have said earlier that indices have an implicit signified; informants (as their name suggests) are on the contrary "des données pures, immédiatement signifiantes." In other words, an informant always "sert à authentifier la réalité du référent, à enraciner la fiction dans le réel." Thus - whereas an index notation implies an activity of deciphering - an informant notation always carries an understanding, a knowledge completely given. Although their

functionality, just like that of catalysts, is thus relatively speaking weak, it is still indispensable for our understanding of the structure of the narrative. The fact that informants refer to a signified explicitly has as its consequence that their functionality cannot be on the level of the story itself, as was the case with indices, but rather can only be on the level of the discourse itself.

We know that the period of Sartre's childhood described in Les mots falls between the first Russian Revolution of 1905 and somewhere half-way through the First World War. During this period Charles, "un homme du XIX^{e} siècle imposait à son petit-fils les idées en cours sous Louis-Philippe" (p. 56), which is to say that Jean-Paul Sartre's upbringing, as administered by his grandfather, had as a consequence that Sartre started off with a handicap of eighty years, and this would indeed date back to thepperiod of Louis-Philippe. Charles was not to be blamed entirely, for he himself was a product as well as a victim of the bourgeois culture of his own time; and Sartre repeatedly tells the reader that he does not hold this against his grandfather. The parallel is obvious: Sartre was a product of a number of circumstances (material as well as cultural anddideological) in the same manner as Charles had been. While Charles was bringing up his grandson in "l'illusion rétrospective" (p. 168), the Western World was experiencing what at the time was known as "douceur de vivre". In reality, Western Europe was choking to death; the bourgeois Europe did not wish to face the reality of its fast-approaching apocalypse, and not having visible enemies (or not wanting to see them), the bourgeoisie of the period "prenait plaisir à s'effrayer de son ombre; elle troquait son

ennui contre une inquiétude dirigée" (p. 127). Spiritism, ectoplasm, laying on of hands, sessions of table turning: "douceur de vivre" indeed.

Nine-year old Jean-Paul, being an only child and without friends, did not even imagine that his alienation could ever end. He tells us that the family play-acting could have been an alternative. Since he was fatherless, he was his own cause and was at the same time filled with both pride and wretchedness. Maternal tenderness tended to feminize him and his grandfather's adoration puffed him with pride. Thus he was a pure object, doomed to masochism provided he could have believed in the play-acting of his family. However, he says, he could not (p. 97). Not always, that is. He occasionally accepted the act, but always demanded that he be the main character. Unfortunately he soon realized that his was a "faux-beau rôle", that although he had lines to speak and was on stage, all he did was to give the adults their cues. He was only the opportunity which facilitated their quarrels and reconciliations. As he says, the real causes lay elsewhere; they were contained in the past of the adults who surrounded him (p. 75). They were nevertheless responsible for imposing upon him his profession. He had not chosen it. Andyyet, Sartre hastens to add, in reality nothing had happened: "des mots en l'air, jetés par une vieille femme, et le machiavélisme de Charles" (p. 174). Charles, Anne-Marie, Louise, Mme. Picard were people in whom little Jean-Paul believed, and they claimed to believe in him. They all pointed to his star, which he did not see. All he saw were their fingers pointing at the star.

2.0.0. Project

2.1.0. Distributional Unities

2.1.1. Nuclei. In the family functions we have discussed the main influences which the social environment, through the family, exerted on the young Sartre. Therefore in our analysis of the nuclei of the family functions we have attempted to show the most important instances of the family influence in casting and shaping the character of young Jean-Paul. At the beginning of this chapter we have described nuclei as points of risk in the narrative, whose links contained a double functionality, which made them consecutive and consequent as narrative unities. This, of course, was not always apparent on the level of the nuclei of the family functions; the reason is that the family and the project functions (and therefore nuclei as well) stand in a dialectical relationship to each other. The doubly implicative relationship of the nuclei will become fully apparent on the level of the project functions.

The nuclei of the family functions have dealt with the most important examples of the family influence on Jean-Paul. In the project functions we will discuss how he reacted to the reality around him, and how these reactions led to his devising and setting up certain projects, by means of which he attempted to overcome his needs, which were created by a complex combination of the personal traits, inclinations and reactions with the external conditions under which he lived.

The first two nuclei of the family functions serve as an introduction to, as well as a condition for, the first nucleus of the project functions.

After his father's death, Jean-Paul and his mother went to live with his grandparents. Living in an atmosphere saturated with bookishness, where he was very early in his life prepared to regard teaching as a priesthood, it was only logical that his first project was to learn to read. His mother used to read stories to him and the characters in them would acquire life and destinies of their own; Sartre was at Mass, he witnessed the eternal recurrence of names and events (p. 43). He resolved to take his mother's role away and decided to learn to read. This is the first nucleus of the project functions. He was caught trying to read (or, as he implies, he saw to it that he was) and the family decided to teach him the alphabet. After having learned to read, Sartre tells us, he was wild with joy. The books in his grandfather's library were going to reveal their secrets to him, he was going to listen to those dried voices from the books, he would know everything. He was allowed to browse in the library and he took man's wisdom by storm. In his own account, that was what made him (p. 44).

The next two nuclei are from the family functions group. In the first of the two, Sartre tells us about his deep-seated Platonic idealism, which took him more than thirty years to overcome. In the following nucleus Sartre relates his doubts and anxieties as to the role of writers, what books talk about, why they are written, and the fated explanation given by Charles to his grandson, in which he equated writers with the Saints and Prophets. The consequence of this pseudo-religious revelation was that Sartre decided he resembled those great writers of whom the books wrote in that, when he behaved as expected by the adults, when he stoically endured his bumps and bruises, he too had the right to laurels, to a reward.

One of the events which had a very profound influence on Sartre's life was his early discovery: ". . . ma raison d'être, à moi, se dérobait, je découvrais tout à coup que je comptais pour du beurre. . . ." He only reflected back to the members of his own family, its own unity and its conflicts: ". . . ils usaient de ma divine enfance pour devenir ce qu'ils étaient" (pp. 75-76). He felt shame in the well-ordered world in which he lived. The feeling of being superfluous made him want to "manquer comme l'eau, comme la pain, comme l'air à tous les autres hommes dans tous les autres lieux" (p. 80). The need to be wanted, which this early existential anxiety of being superfluous produced, led Sartre to escape into the family play-acting, in which he fled from one imposture to another, and this comprises the second nucleus in the chain of thepproject functions. The poignancy of Sartre's flight is beautifully rendered: "Je fuyais mons corps injustifiable et ses veules confidences; que la toupie butât sur un obstacle et s'arrêtât, le petit comédien hagard retombait dans la stupeur animale" (p. 81).

The family play-acting had Providence assign to little Jean-Paul the role of a wonder-child; his appearance was consequently made to suit his role: his mother might have preferred to have had a girl instead of a boy: ". . . avec quel bonheur elle eût comblé de bienfaits sa triste enfance ressuscitée." As it was she had to make her own arrangments: Sartre "aurais le sexe des anges, indéterminé mais féminin sur les bords" (p. 89). This lasted until one day Charles took his curly grandson to a barber-shop and had the child's lovely ringlets cut off. As we remember, this nucleus of the family functions deals with Sartre's realization and subsequent feeling of his own ugliness.

Not only was Jean-Paul shorn of his beautiful ringlets but also, which is of far greater importance, of the role of the beautiful, unusually gifted child which he had played until then. Although the family continued to call him a gift of Heaven, he was aware of the fact that now it was family play-acting only. He wanted to "devenir un cadeau utile à la recherche de ses destinataires," but realized that being "fils de personne, je fus ma propre cause, comble d'orgueil et comble de misère" (pp. 96-97). He had but one escape: he fled into imagination, and this flight and its immediate consequences comprise yet another nucleus of the project functions. Being an imaginary child, his only means of defending himself was his imagination. He committed the mad blunder of taking life for an epic, assigning himself in his imagination the role of hero. Everything took place in his head. He adored Arsène Lupin, the Cyrano of the Underground, imagined himself in the role of a hero who existed only to be able to help people in distress. This was all, as he discovered later in his life, the consequence of the "déculottée" the French had taken in 1870. Sartre's epic idealism was the result of a shame which he himself had never suffered, a result of the loss of two provinces (Alsace and Lorraine) which the French got back a long time before (p. 101).

At the age of seven or eight he read Michaël Strogoff and its hero provided Sartre with the model life which he needed so much. Although he says that on the second reading he found the hero too "sage", he nevertheless envied the hero's destiny; he was, in a good protestant (i.e. Charles-ian) fashion, repelled by the saintliness, yet in Michael Strogoff it fascinated him precisely because it had donned the trappings of heroism

(pp. 112-113). He lived two lives: publicly, he was an impostor in the role of the famous grandson of the celebrated Charles Schweitzer; alone, he would flee into imagination, thus preparing for himself "la plus irrémédiable solitude bourgeoise: celle du créateur" (p. 97).

And this leads us to the next nucleus of the project functions: Sartre started writing. He began by writing versified replies to his grandfather which in turn led to his writing poetry. This was only yet another attempt at imitating the grown-ups. His career as a versifier ended with his unsuccessful undertaking of rewriting La Fontaine's Fables in Alexandrines, after which he shifted to prose. By now the habit was formed. Sartre went on writing. Naturally, this was "plagiat délibéré" which he loved out of pretentiousness and which he deliberately carried to an extreme. He wrote for his own pleasure. The year before he used to imagine himself as a hero, now the hero was still himself in that he projected his epic dreams upon the hero. However, there were two of them now, that is, the hero did not have Sartre's name any more and the author referred to him only in the third person (p. 125). He existed through writing; he existed only so he could write, so much so that when he said "I" he meant by it "I who write".[16] Through writing he was beginning to find himself. Despite the fact that he "n'était presque rien, tout au plus une activité sans contenu" (p. 130), writing nevertheless provided Sartre with all that he needed at the time, and that was precisely the means of escaping from the play-acting. He had by now stopped playing. It was reality he sought, and through writing he "trouvait sa vérité dans l'élaboration de ses mensonges" (p. 130). We can see how through

writing, which started as a pure imitation, Sartre was to discover the "inanity" of his dreams of the year before, when he was still the hero of his imaginary adventures. This important realization, brought about by and through writing, had as its most important consequence that Jean-Paul was "born of writing", the fact which closes this nucleus of the project functions group.

Sartre, as we have just seen, tried to compensate for the feeling of superfluousness by writing, thus attempting to replace the shame in the well-ordered world which he had previously felt, with the newly created meaning which writing gave to his life, and his mother welcomed this activity. The following nucleus is of the family function group: his mother encouraged him to write, and Mme. Picard soon afterwards prophesied that Jean-Paul would become a writer. As we have seen in our discussions of this particular nucleus, Charles was originally annoyed at his grandson's writing "nonsense" derived from his favourite magazines, then tried to dissuade him from the very thought of everybecoming a writer, only to have Sartre misinterpret his words and accept irrevocably the vocation of a writer.

The following nucleus shifts the narrative back to the project functions group. Here Sartre tells how he was convinced by "petites touches bien placées" of Charles that he was not a genius. What now remained to him as the only object of his passion was heroism; his realization of being gratuitous prevented him from renouncing it completely. He was not a child prodigy any more; as we have seen the feeling of gratuitousness in the world, coupled with the vaguely felt

contingency of life with its many different manifestations, produced in him a feeling that he was lost, and it was this deep feeling of terror which made him accept, in obedience to Karlé, the lucubratory and non-enviable career of a writer (p. 138). Sartre was, at the time, on the point of resigning himself to the fact that he was in no way an exceptional child when he came to a discovery which profoundly changed the course of his life.

We have seen how his flight into imagination, which was a result of his need to escape the family play-acting, led him to assign a role of hero to himself. This was obviously psychologically quite effective and led, in its next stage, to writing in which he again was the hero, although now there was a distancing between the author and the hero who was the author himself, except that he was now referred to in the third person singular. This new discovery consisted in Sartre's seeing that "les grands auteurs s'apparentent aux chevaliers errants en ceci que les uns et les autres suscitent des marques passionnées de gratitude" (p. 142); what he really did was to bestow upon the writer the sacred powers of the hero. Now we can see, in retrospect, that the whole process which started with Sartre's playing a hero in his imagination acquired a new element when he started writing, in that he was now the writer who wrote about imaginary heroes who, although they did not bear Sartre's name, were nevertheless the author himself. The process logically led towards its final solution: the writer himself acquired the characteristics of a hero. The psychological mechanism which had been set in motion by a number of realizations and feelings of Sartre (the feeling of being superfluous, shame in the well-ordered world, the need to overcome the

pure contingency of living, his epic mind, etc.) finally produced a rationale for his not only accepting the future vocation of a writer but even for making that vocation appealing, justifiable and heroic as well. First Sartre was the secret hero of his own imagination, then Sartre, the writer, became the hero of his writings, and finally Sartre joined the two in the writer-hero. What contributed to the finalizing of the investing of the powers of the hero upon the writer was that he discovered, at about the same time, that writers were needed, which brings to a close this nucleus of the project functions. In spite of "leurs tares physiques, . . . leur afféterie, . . . leur apparente féminité" writers "risquaient leur vie en francs-tireurs dans de mystérieux combats". (p. 143).

And yet the metamorphosis was not over yet. In the last nucleus of the family functions we have seen how Charles' notion of writers as high-priests of Culture provided Sartre with the rationale for transforming the writer-knight into the writer-martyr; and this brings us to the last nucleus of the project functions. One, Sartre says, can either write for one's neighbours of for God. Young Jean-Paul decided to write for God with the intention of saving his neighbours. Writing, for him, meant adding a pearl to the necklace of his Muse, leaving to posterity the memory of a model life, bringing down upon people the blessing of Heaven, defending men against themselves and their enemies (p. 152). The nucleus ends by Sartre accepting his mandate as a future writer-martyr.

Soon afterwards he reread himself for the first time. The embarrassment at the realization of the childishness of the fantasies in which he had indulged in writing did not last long; he had no doubts that he was

indeed dedicated to his future vocation. Writing had its secrets which it would reveal to him some day. He knew it. In the meantime, due to his youth, he had to be extremely reserved. His mandate had by now become his character: he stopped writing (p. 181).

2.2.0. Integrative Unities

2.2.1. Indices. We have seen that the indices of the family functions group referring to a character did not make narrative unities of their own. In the project functions grouputhere is only one index of this category worth noting, and it refers to Charles.

When Sartre started writing, he thought he was going to write in order to set down his dreams. Writing was to provide an escape from the family hypocrisy and play-acting. It was Charles who set his grandson straight on this point, explaining that in reality, Jean-Paul, like any other writer, dreamed only in order to be able to write. His anxieties and "passions imaginaires n'étaient que les ruses" of his talent; they served a very functional role in that they provided narrative themes suitable to his young age, while in the meantime he had to wait for "les grandes dictées de l'expérience et la maturité". While awaiting this experience and maturity, which would inevitably come to Jean-Paul with age, Charles instructed his grandson that in order to be able to write one also had to learn how to see, which, according to the former, was epitomized in the anecdote in which Flaubert sat the little boy de Maupassant in front of a tree and gave him three hours to describe it (p. 135). Not only did Sartre learn to see by incessantly verbalizing

his everyday experiences (we remember games in which he and his mother talked about things which happened to them, referring to themselves in the third person) but, as we have seen in the last nucleus of the project functions, he did in fact stop writing at the age of ten, "knowing" that he had to wait for writing to reveal its secrets to him some day.

Whereas we have said that there was only one index of the project functions referring to characters, indices referring to the atmosphere are, on the other hand, more numerous as well as more functionally important. As was the case with the indices of the family functions, so the indices of the project functions start with the reference to the family atmosphere by going back inevitably to the family library. Sartre's childhood did not consist of hunting for nests, gathering herbs or throwing stones at birds. The library provided a surrogate: books were his birds and nests. In it he undertook "incredible" adventures: "la bibliothèque, c'était le monde pris dans un miroir" (p. 44). In the books from his grandfather's library he met hideous insects, he was Magellan, Vasco da Gama, he undertook voyages through Fontenelle, Aristophanes, Rabelais.

This was the atmosphere of the home; the atmosphere of the Luxemburg Gardens, on the other hand, did not provide a surrogate. Little Jean-Paul never participated in the games of the children in the gardens. He went there with his mother regularly but, not knowing how to relate to his peers, nor being able to overcome his feelings of false pride and ask them to let him join in their games, all he did was watch them with the eyes of a beggar. How was he to reconcile his being a gift of Providence,

a wonder-child, a grandson of the famous Charles Schweitzer, with such a demeaning role in which he, the hero, would have to ask to be allowed to play? He waited for them to ask him to play with them. That unfortunately never happened. In Sartre's words, in the Luxemburg Gardens he had met his true judges. He discovered himself through them; after that it was difficult to go back to the role of wonder-child assigned to him by his family. Confronted with the strong and quick children whom he used to see in the Gardens, he realized for the first time the pretentiousness of his own imaginary heroes, of his "savoir universel", "musculature athlétique", "adresse spadassine" (pp. 115-116).

A compensation for the feeling of rejection by his peers was provided by Sartre's mother who encouraged him to write. Their relationship was more one between friends than a relationship between a mother and her son. She called him her knight attendant, her little man. She encouraged him to talk about everything; as Sartre says himself, his repressed writing emerged from his mouth in the form of prattle. Thinking of himself as a future writer he used to describe everything he saw. He ended up by assuming feelings in order to feel the pleasure of telling Anne-Marie about them. The world, he says, used him to become speech (pp. 182-183). And so we are back to Charles' notion of the writer as a mouthpiece of the Divine and Sublime. The Christian notion of the writer being a Scriba Dei was modified by his de-Christianized grandfather; hence it was not God who spoke through the writer, it was the Divine, or the Sublime. In Sartre's own case the process of secularization went a step further: now the world spoke through the writer (Scriba Mundi).

Another mode of compensation, which is very closely related to the preceding index, consisted in making the profession of a writer socially necessary. We have already seen what forms these rationalizations, derived from the ideas expounded by Charles, took in order to facilitate Sartre's metamorphoses which ended by his circuitous joining together of the characteristics of a hero, a martyr and a writer all in one. This index deals with the episode in which Sartre relates how he was deeply influenced by a certain drawing which depicted a crowd of people on the pier in New York awaiting the arrival of the famous novelist Charles Dickens. A thousand caps waving, the crowd is dense to the point of children almost suffocating. Everything seems to be there and yet someone is missing. Missing is Dickens, the famous writer, whom the crowd of people is welcoming today and who is the only one who will be able to help them to alleviate their sufferings (p. 143). What actually appealed to young Jean-Paul was the fact that a writer seemed to be needed, seemed to have a definite place of his own in this well-ordered world in which Sartre was desperately searching for a means to overcome his own feeling of alienation and its concomitant anxieties.

Sartre, of course, was not isolated in his deepest attempts at escaping from, or somehow rendering less powerful, the unbearable reality of his ontological situation, as some of the following indices referring to the social philosophy prevalent at the time reveal. Michel Zévaco was a popular writer who invented the republican cloak-and-dagger novel. It was not Michel Strogoff, nor anybody else, in the service of the kinging any more; Zévaco's heroes represented the people. The bourgeois part of the people, no doubt. The new republican heroes made and unmade

empires, they protected the defenceless and the powerless. All of this out of pure altruism and kindheartedness (p. 114).

Another index relating to the philosophy of the time deals with the error of the historical perspective on which, Sartre says, the clerks of the era fed their idealism. Although they never defined it as such, they nevertheless insinuated that there was a secret and inverse order of cause and effect relationships in man's natural, as well as social, environment. Zévaco's heroes were thus able to predict, in the fourteenth century, the French Revolution and, instead of being in the service of the king, they could now, in retrospect, afford to be in the service of the people. On the other hand, when a great idea wished to be born, it would itself choose the great man, who would carry it through, while he still was in his mother's womb. All the moral and physical trials, all the anxieties that would befall such a man, had been planned by the great idea so as to prepare the fortunate, future great man to give birth to the idea itself. This index thus gives us a very viable explanation for the reason which may have made Sartre believe that he was indeed a future great writer, and provided him with a very convenient and powerful set of beliefs, which must have made his anxieties about the present and uncertainties about the future less acute and easier to bear.

Another index worth noting refers to Charles' very strong contempt for professional writers as revealed in the anecdotal account of his only encounter with Verlaine. Although apparently appreciating Verlaine's poetry, he thought he had seen him drunk; the cause and effect chain is reversed again: this encounter confirmed Charles' contempt for writers in general and Verlaine in particular. Writers were miracle-mongers who

demanded a gold-piece in order to show us the moon and ended up showing their behind for five francs (p. 132). Professional writers were of a subhuman species and the only decent bourgeois profession related to letters was that of teacher. Not only Charles, but Anne-Marie also, used to depict to Jean-Paul the joys of his future vocation. The picture depicted appealed to him: he was a young teacher, not yet married; everybody loved him because he was courteous and well-bred. In the daytime he taught at the lycée while at night he lucubriously wrote his books, one after another. His whole reason for being was there: at nighttime, while mankind was asleep, he would be on the watchtower of humanity (p. 156). This seems to have been a very fortunate combination: primarily a teacher (respect, loved by others, as well as a decent amount of success), somewhat of a martyr-like bent (his lucubrations at nighttime, oblique references of sacrifice for mankind), and a writer, although this last only to the extent which the bourgeois mentality deemed acceptable (only at nighttime when "Good Society" was asleep).

The last index referring to the philosophy which was instrumental in forming the character of young Sartre tells that the sources from which he derived his conviction that writers in fact were respected, even by the bourgeoisie, were the encyclopaedias and obituaries he read in the newspapers. The social status of a writer had obviously changed from the times of Louis-Philippe, and the bourgeois writer was now accepted by that same "Good Society" (pp. 142-143).

2.2.2. Informants. The informants of the project functions group are numerous and their functionality is extremely important. We have seen that the family and the projectffunctions not only stand in a dialectical relationship to each other, but in a hierarchical one as well, in which the project functions stand on a higher level. We have discussed the manner in which the nuclei of the two groups of functions are related to each other, which is one of a double functionality: their relationship is chronological as well as logical thus making nuclei consecutive as well as consequent as narrative unities. Hence, the meaning of the nuclei of the family functions is rendered fully intelligible only in their conjunction with the nuclei of the project group. There appears to be a similarity of function between the nuclei and the informants in that the latter, being vertical unities, refer to and explain the nuclei which, as the most important distributional narrative unities, comprise the armature of the narrative. Put differently, this would mean that since the nuclei can be understood fully only in their totality, and since the informants refer to and explain the nuclei, this would lead us to conclude that the function of the informants can be understood fully only in their totality. The nuclei have their functionality on the level of the story and are thus necessarily consecutive, whereas the functionality of theiinformants is on the level of the discourse, and hence they may be analyzed as a group. Therefore we do not need to relate each one of the informants of the family functions to every one of the project functions, as was the case with the nuclei. But, it should be stressed again, the full meaning emerges only as a result of the relationship which exists between the

two groups of functions.

There is a whole myriad of informants interspersed throughout Les mots. We shall discuss only the most important ones. In the most fundamental one among these Sartre tells us how his truth and his character depended on the adults with whom he was surrounded. Moreover he was essentially their product. Sartre was conscious of the fact that, always putting on an act, he was an impostor, and yet he had to resort to playing the role assigned to him by the adults primarily because of the everpresent lack of being which he felt. It was a vicious circle: the adults were supposed to guarantee his merits, which pushed him only deeper into the imposture. Condemned to please, he would strike a pose, which in turn would reveal to him the hollowness from which he wanted to escape (pp. 72-73).

The following informant deals with the fact that being a fake child Sartre was deprived of knowing either the world or the people in it, because, in his own words, all he could see were roles and props. There was no genuineness in his actions and feelings: his acts gradually changed into gestures. The first is that, as he says, serving the activities of the grown-ups in a spirit of buffoonery he could not have taken their problems and anxieties seriously; and the second, that by adapting himself to the intentions of the adults, who for him were his audience, he could not share their purposes. The monster child produced by the adults was thus separated from his audience by the footlights of the stage on which he was put by them to begin with. Thus his role turned into an exile which then turned into an anguish (pp. 73-74).

We have discussed the feeling of superfluousness which haunted Jean-Paul almost to the point of obsession. This feeling of not being needed,

which had the most profound influence on Sartre's development as a child, was indeed well-founded. In the following informant Sartre points out that as a spoiled child and because of the seeming necessity of the family play-acting, his profound feeling of uselessness was all the more accentuated. Feeling unjustified and unwanted, he felt he had to disappear (p. 84). The strength and the acuteness of this feeling can best be seen from the fact that although he later did not believe any more that one had first to be needed by someone in order to feel necessary, he nevertheless continued to feel that unless one was in the world in order to fulfil a certain expectation, one inevitably felt superfluous. There were only extremes: he wished that he were either dead or needed by the whole world (p. 141).

How was he to resolve this tension? This informant tells us that being "idolâtré"par tous" and "débouté de chacun" the only recourse of the seven-year old child was within himself who, as we have just seen above, was at the same time aware of his own lack of being. People did not seem to need him; therefore he would make himself indispensable to the Universe. Hence his rationale was that he had been born in order to fill the great need he had of himself (p. 95). His rule consequently became one against all; Sartre says that the source of "cette rêverie morne et grandiose" lay in the puritan, bourgeois individualism prevalent in his social milieu (p. 126). The recourse lay within himself: first he was the hero of his imaginary exploits, then became the hero of his own writings, to accept finally the future profession of the writer-martyr and the writer-hero.

He ended up by accepting the myth of the writer-saint, whose social role was necessary and who brought salvation to the populace because the

populace was himself. When he realized the contingency of his ontological position he resorted to creating a need for himself by rationalizing that he was indeed needed by the Universe. In accepting the role of a budding writer the rationale was the same as in the preceding stage: the contingency of being is counteracted again by his own pronouncing himself a "sauveteur patenté" of the populace with a view to winning his own salvation (p. 153). Sartre's questioning his right to exist thus led to his accepting the role of a writer as his future vocation, which now meant that existence was made justifiable by equating it with having "une appellation contrôlée, quelque part sur les Tables infinies du Verbe." This was again a partial consequence of Sartre's early Platonism; writing meant not only engraving new beings (since language was equated with the world), but through an ingenious combination of words (i.e. signs) it meant catching living things in the trap of the language (p. 154).

What does Sartre the mature writer think of this at the time of writing Les mots? He admits that in spite of rationalizing and self-deception "l'entreprise folle d'écrire" with the intention of justifying his own existence had unquestionably a certain reality, the proof of which is that now, fifty years later, he is still writing. The origins contained "une fuite en avant, un suicide à la Gribonille." We remember his fear of death when he was a child. Death was his obsession because he had no desire to live; by identifying it with glory he made it his destination. If we remember that writing was his justification for living, and the ultimate goal of which was glory, then we can see that, including the previous equation, it was death which he sought. The fact

that his birth brought him within the contingency of life, by which he was so profoundly disturbed, produced in him a fear that he might end as he had begun anywhere, in any way, but it was his vocation which caused a most fundamental change: "les coups d'épée s'envolent, les écrits restent" (p. 163).

And so we arrive at the last informant:

> Je m'étais pris pour un prince, ma folie fut de l'être. Névrose caractérielle, dit un analyste de mes amis. Il a raison: entre l'été 14 et l'automne de 1916 mon mandat est devenu mon caractère; mon délire a quitté ma tête pour se couler dans mes os.
>
> Il ne m'arrivait rien de neuf: je retrouvais intact ce que j'avais joué, prophétisé. Une seule différence: sans connaissance, sans mots, en aveugle je réalisai tout. (p. 193)

CHAPTER II: NOTES

[1] Roland Barthes, "Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits," Communications, 1966 (8), pp. 1-27.

[2] Ibid., p. 6.

[3] Ibid., p. 7.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., p. 8.

[6] Ibid., p. 9.

[7] Ibid., p. 10.

[8] Ibid., p. 13.

[9] Jean-Paul Sartre, Les mots (Paris: Gallimard, Collection Folio, 1972), p. 19. All future references by page number in the text refer to this edition.

[10] Barthes, p. 10.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., pp. 8-11.

[14] Ibid., p. 10.

[15] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

CHAPTER III

LEVEL TWO: ACTIONS

We have said that the functions as the smallest narrative unities comprising the first and lowest level of the narrative structure of Sartre's autobiography cannot be understood fully without passing on to a higher level of structuration. This higher level is that of Actions. Why Actions? and in what respect do they represent a higher level vis-à-vis that of Functions? Or, in other words, how does the level of Actions reintegrate the multiplicity of narrative unities which we have discussed in the previous chapter?

Being an autobiography Sartre's work deals with and is centred around people (i.e. characters) and events. The narrative unities in Functions were always either products or consequences of somebody's action (verbal, physical or as moral attitudes, etc.), or they were end results or interactions of the first, combined with (as we have discussed in indices and informants, for example) a certain mode of thinking, a certain moral code, etc. All of these were again products of human, societal actions and events, which took place because of human intervention in all these various forms and areas.

Therefore, we can now see that the characters in Les mots represent a higher level than Functions, in that they reintegrate all of the narrative unities from Functions on to a qualitatively different level, that of characters, or as we have termed it, Actions. In other words, the

interdependence of Functions and Actions seems to be mutual: on the one hand, Functions as the smallest narrative unities, cannot be fully understood without passing on to a higher level, that of Actions or characters, precisely because they are always, directly or indirectly, attributable to one of the characters in Sartre's autobiography, or a consequence of the social structure, morality, etc., which are always mediated through the characters of Sartre's work; on the otherhand, the characters themselves cannot be fully understood without first discussing and analyzing the smallest narrative unities which explain in many respects, and point to, the main characters of Les mots.

The first question posed here consists of finding a mode of analyzing characters without falling into the trap of committing either the mistake of entirely submitting characters to the notion of action (Aristotelian notion), or that of completely neglecting action by creating individuals, "real" persons, out of characters in Sartre's narrative.

1.1.0. Characters as Actants

The above question has long troubled structural analysis. It has, with justification, been observed that - whereas the character had previously been considered an agent of action only by literary theory and criticism, thereby giving the priority to action - in most recent criticism "l'agent d'une action, a pris une consistance psychologique, il est devenu un individu, une 'personne', bref un 'être' pleinement constitué, alors même qu'il ne farait rien, et bien entendu, avant même d'agir, le personnage a cessé d'être subordonné à l'action, il a incarné d'emblée une essence

psychologique."[1] This new concept tends to create almost a human being of the character of the narrative, the ultimate referent of which would then be in the real world, instead of being in the narrative itself.

In order to escape the trappings of this misplaced over-emphasis on the ontological world in analyzing characters in the narrative of a literary work, structural analysis "s'est efforcée jusqu'à présent . . . de définir le personnage non comme un 'être', mais comme un 'participant' . . . Enfin, A.J. Greimas a proposé de décrire et de classer les personnages du récit, non selon ce qu'ils sont, mais selon ce qu'ils font (d'où leur nom d'actants). . . ."[2]

The main aim seems to be "de définir le personnage par sa participation à une sphère d'actions . . . ce mot ne doit donc pas s'entendre ici au sens des menus actes qui forment le tissu du premier niveau, mais au sens des grandes articulations de la praxis".[3] The main articulations of praxis which play such a crucial role in analyzing the level of Actions are need, project and lived experience.

The characters in Les mots play a role of primary importance and we can say that it is through them that the first level of the narrative is organized. At first look the relationships of the characters may appear very diverse, in spite of the fact that the text does not contain a large number of characters who play prominent roles. After a careful reading we notice that it is in fact possible to reduce meaningfully all the relationships to only three: based on need, project and lived experience. We shall start with need which is evidently present in all characters. Need is to be understood here as physical as well as psychological,

emotional or intellectual need which any one of the characters may have at one time or another. The second articulation of praxis, which may occasionally be less obvious but is nevertheless as important, is the one of project. By project we mean conscious or unconscious attitudes or reactions which characters may have as a response to different kinds of need, and by means of which the characters intend, or hope, to change and alleviate their situation in order to fulfil their most important, fundamental existential needs. The third articulation defining the characters is one of lived experience, which represents the synthesis of needs and projects as lived by the characters. Thus lived experience is the end result of thepprojects of the characters.

These three articulations of praxis are of a great generality but they nonetheless allow us to analyze the characters in Sartre's autobiography as actants in regard to their needs, projects and lived experiences. We cannot describe, even less analyze, the actants without these three notions. On the one hand we have the articulations of praxis (functional notions as need, project and lived experience); on the other we have the characters: Louise, Anne-Marie, Karl, Sartre himself. These can have two functions: that of being subjects, and that of being objects defined by the articulations. We can therefore employ a generic term actant (Greimas' suggestion) in order to designate at the same time the subject and the object of an action, which has one of the articulations of praxis at its basis.

In our analysis of characters as writers of actions we will start with Louise, the character whose influence on Jean-Paul, and thus the

role played in Les mots as well, was minor in regard to the importance played by the characters in Sartre's autobiography in general. The analysis will proceed with discussion of the character of Sartre's mother, then will go on to analyze the character of Karl, whose influence on Jean-Paul was crucial, to end the analysis of the level of Actions by discussinggthe main protagonist of the work, Jean-Paul himself.

1.1.1. Louise. Sartre's grandmother Louise plays a minor role, and although she is always present she was of marginal importance for the formation of Sartre's beliefs, attitudes and his whole character in general. Sartre does not devote much space to his grandmother, and when he does she is usually seen as a part of the events which included other characters (Karl and very often Anne-Marie). In other words she is present only in conjunction with her role of a grandmother, or Karl's wife, or Anne-Marie's mother. Consequently, we know very little of her needs and possible projects. Most often we see her in situations forming actions which come under the rubric of lived experience. We can attempt to recreate her possible needs and projects, but these are almost never spoken of directly; the recreation thus has to be done from her actions, which were very seldom aimed at directly fulfilling her own needs.

Louise disliked the whole theatrical, noisy, rough atmosphere of the Schweitzers. Her need for more peaceful and somehow subtler ways of life was partially fulfilled by her obtaining a certificate from an obliging doctor who provided a medical (and thus, one presumes, unquestionable) reason for giving her more freedom from the different forms of imposition of her husband. The extent to which she had to go

in order to obtain some form of independence in her married life from her overbearing husband is a strong indication that the need for privacy, for a kind of emotional and intellectual independence, must have been sufficiently strong for her to have done it.

Another consequence of living with a man like Charles was that she developed an aversion for the family play-acting and Charles' flaunting of bourgeois virtue. The need to preserve her intellectual independence led her to devise a means of overcoming and fulfilling this need by becoming "Voltaireian in spirit" and the epitome of "pure negation". This she could never have done openly; thus the project took subtler forms which she could carry out without directly contradicting Charles: a raising of eyebrows, an imperceptible smile, understatements, etc. Her fondness for telling gruesome stories about wedding nights seems to have been another form of fulfilling her need for expressing not only her bitter disappointment with her own wedding night, which obviously carried over into her married life, but also her disappointment with her whole life. The needs for overcoming her predicament took different forms. One of them consisted in making believers of her children, although she herself was a non-believer; she brought them up as Catholics as a result of what appears to have been her disgust with the Protestantism of her husband.

Not having any recognizable social ordintellectual status of her own vis-à-vis her husband, Louise's need to establish herself as an independent and useful entity found its fulfillment (or illusion of it) in her role at home, in the circle of her family. This had indeed provided an outlet for some of her needs until the time when her daughter came, with her son, to live with them. The illusion of being needed, of being indispensable - even

though in the family circle only - disappeared when Anne-Marie took over most of the boring and tiresome obligations of house-keeping. The illusion was taken away without Louise's being able to fulfil the need of being indispensable elsewhere. The result was that Louise grew jealous of her own daughter. Yet it would be unfair to claim that Louise contradicted her husband only out of pure defiance or for the sake of rebelling against the tyranny of his laboured histrionics. It was Louise who rarely tolerated little Jean-Paul's buffoonery and pretentiousness. One feels that this was not done simply out of defiance of Charles and his ideas of raising Jean-Paul, but rather out of a real, honest disapproval of the play-acting and hamming of her little grandson.

However, Louise's attitude (as well as that of her husband) toward Anne-Marie was far from generous, or even considerate. Accepting her daughter and grandson and giving them a home amounted to nothing more than obtaining services from a domestic servant whom she treated as an adolescent and exploited heartlessly.

1.1.2. Anne-Marie. In the case of Anne-Marie it is considerably easier to trace the needs, projects and the lived experience. Anne-Marie's problem of having neither money nor a profession chained her to her parents by the very fact that she had no means of supporting herself and her child. Thus her most obvious need was an economic one; her project consisted in going back to her parents' house, thereby losing that precious freedom, as well as the status of an independent adult, which she had during her brief, tragic marriage. Anne-Marie, charming and loving as she was in

regard to Jean-Paul, found herself between her egotistical, theatrical father and selfish, withdrawn, ungrateful mother. In order to deserve the help she was given by her parents she set out on the project which consisted in her becoming "gouvernante, infirmière, majordome, dame de compagnie, servante" (p. 17) in her parents' home. She wanted to repay her parents inasmuch as she could; the reward was that her mother became jealous, suspecting her of wanting to take over the role of the first woman of the house. The lived experience of Anne-Marie's predicament required all her courage to avoid accusation of being a burden to her parents, on one hand, and all her humility to remove her mother's suspicion of wanting to take over the household, on the other. Anne-Marie was treated as a child by her parents; the needs of the grown-up woman, with the child on her hands, to be treated as an adult, equal in rights and expectations with her parents, were never fulfilled.

In order to be able to live under these conditions Anne-Marie's project consisted in accepting the role of an adolescent imposed upon her anew. She never contradicted her father and mother, nor could she afford to do so. She was caught between her own needs for self-respect and the needs of her child on one hand, and accommodating as well as mediating various whims of her parents and their power games on the other. In order to have done all this, Anne-Marie had to obliterate her own needs, expectations and hopes. When Jean-Paul annoyed his grandmother it was Anne-Marie who would, speaking humbly and in a low voice, try to appease the old woman without at the same time offending Charles, who inevitably sided with the child, seizing the opportunity to put down his wife.

We are never told whether she was really religious or not; she never displayed it publicly. The only hint we might have is Sartre's statement that his mother had "'son Dieu à elle' et ne lui demandait guère que de la consoler en secret" (p. 87). Her only solace could have been, and was, her son. Thus her project became that of raising and preparing her son for becoming a teacher and a writer. We have seen that she was instrumental in encouraging her son to continue writing after Charles at first voiced a very strong disapproval. She never tired of depicting the joys of her son's future profession as a teacher. Everything she lacked, and was denied by the reality of her existential, social position she put in the stories describing the advantages, social as well as financial, which the vocation of a high-school teacher entailed. Compared with her own unfulfilled needs and expectations which she must have had at the time, her son's future profession was indeed an unreachable dream for her, and one cannot but empathize with her. The relationship between Jean-Paul and his mother was more one between two friends, or between a sister and a brother, than a strict, stifling relationship of a bourgeois woman of the turn of the century and her son. Anne-Marie had no friends and her son became one. Theirs was a happy relationship: as Sartre says, they had their myths, their oddities of language, their ritual jokes (p. 183). Theirs was a relationship of equals: they were shy and afraid together, and little Jean-Paul was proud of his power of being able to convey his thoughts and feelings to his mother just by a look (p. 184).

Jean-Paul's father's death did in fact play the crucial role in the lives of both the mother and the son; because the father was dead, his mother was thrown again into the condition of being a child of her parents

with whom she and her son lived, his grandfather was precipitated into the role of father who was not a father, and his grandmother into the condition of the first woman of the house, now sharing this with her daughter.

1.1.3. Charles. Karl Schweitzer is the central figure in Sartre's autobiography. Consequently most of the actions in it are directly or indirectly related to him. We have seen him as being instrumental in every one of the actions comprising the nuclei of the family functions, as well as playing the pivotal role in a great number of the most important nuclei of the project functions. We have also seen Charles in the light of the indices referring to characters in both the family and the project groups. Thus we have touched upon some of his needs, projects and lived experiences, and consequently there is no need to discuss them at length again.

Charles' histrionics did not succeed in masking the real motivations behind his actions. Although he always pretended to have acted from the noblest motives the text invariably points to the conclusion that his actions, his attitudes and his whole behaviour were nevertheless inspired by more egotistical considerations. His most fundamental need, at the time when Jean-Paul and his mother lived in his house, was to overcome, to beguile the terror he felt at his approaching death. The very existence of Jean-Paul seemed to his grandfather God-sent; Sartre's presence thus served a double function: firstly, it seemed a gift of Heaven and, secondly, it provided a rationale for a "guarantee" against the anguish

of the inevitable death. Bourgeois ethics had a very elaborate mythology, its own system and vocabulary to explain away the problems of contingency of life and inevitable death through different forms of religion; it produced systems which were meant to present the universe as well-designed, and therefore well-ordered, where man had his a priori designated place. Man's role was thus made to be one in which all he had to do was recognize the truths which the system contained, and integrate himself into this process as created by a friendly God. The only sensible thing an individual could do was to accept the already existing world, which was created benevolently and explained rationally. Charles Schweitzer's projects always emanated from his having fully accepted this powerfully anaesthetic ideology. He fed his grandson the bourgeois platitudes: all men were equal; the system of free, universal education of bourgeois France was the ideal method by which social inequalities would be remedied, etc. Not that Charles really believed in social equality, and the petit-bourgeois notion of Progress. He needed his grandson's acceptance of these ideas in order to be able to continue his play-acting, designed to cover up the anguish in the face of life, on one hand, and the complacency in the face of misery of other less fortunate human beings, on the other. Charles had acceded, long before Jean-Paul arrived in his house, to the great wisdom of his class, and by doing so had forsaken his freedom in order to associate with the bourgeois solidity offered to him by the values and social structures of his class. In order to preserve his illusions, designed to neutralize the disquiet when confronted with the direct experience of life, and replace that experience with a systematic description of man's

position in the universe, Charles demanded that his grandson accept, among other things, bourgeois complacency instead of challenge and privileges instead of freedom: this is to say the very same postulates of bourgeois ideology which he had made his own; the ideology whose main aim consisted in channelling man's inquisitiveness and philosophical curiosity away from the ever-present terror he felt before the universe. Charles encouraged his grandson to live within the system by doing so himself, the most important advantage of which consisted in its being able to solace men, although it might not have always absorbed all of their terror.

Jean-Paul was indoctrinated because the interest of his class demanded total allegiance to its beliefs in order to prevent emergence of disturbers and rebels who might try to destroy the carefully built social structure. But he was indoctrinated also because Charles Schweitzer, as a member of that class, needed his grandson's acceptance of the beliefs of their class in order to enable himself to continue the play-acting safely, without fear of the child's even puncturing the carefully made soap-bubble of the bourgeois. All Charles' projects were indeed based on this ideology and all of his lived experiences may ultimately be explained by it.

His using Jean-Paul as a means, as a vehicle for his own self-delusion in the face of approaching death, was consistent with his entire life. We have seen earlier the parallel between the manner in which the bourgeoisie used the poor as a vehicle for displaying its own generosity, and the manner in which Charles used his grandson for the same purpose. Thus we can say that Charles' projects, just like those of his class, consisted in his treating others - including his wife, all his children and

Jean-Paul - as objects. Although the bourgeois class tempted man to become an object by offering rewards for adhering to its beliefs and threatening with punishment against rebellion, man could not become an object. Consequently Charles' lived experiences were inevitably different from what his projects were meant to produce. Charles' optimism with which he imbued his grandson (which in turn reassured Charles himself as well as rendered possible his avoiding honestly questioning the world order and its accepted interpretation) was an optimism of a false world.

Charles exhibited noble sentiments and used language unsparingly to discuss those sentiments. Instead of using language to search for and speak the truth, he modified this basic function of language and used it to express his own truth, the truth of his own class. The real function of the language which Charles used, and with which he imbued his grandson, consisted in enveloping the real world in a bourgeois notion of optimism. It, in turn, offered him a comfort in presenting descriptions of human reality, not using language as a means by which man would try to understand, but rather using it in such a way that the resulting descriptions were, at best, not adequate and, at worst, intentionally dishonest.

1.1.4. Jean-Paul. In our analysis of the distributional unities of both the family and the project group we have extensively discussed Sartre's needs and projects respectively. Therefore in analyzing Sartre as the main actant in Les mots all that there is left to be discussed are his lived experiences. Since lived experience, on the other hand, cannot be effectively separated from either needs or projects (because both are to different

degrees part of what we here consider as lived experience), it was inevitable to have mentioned them in our discussion of Functions, and consequently our discussion will only present summarily Sartre's most important lived experiences.

Although religion might have provided a temporary cure for Sartre's feeling of superfluousness, his family's indifference to it deprived him of that possible consolation. He then had to devise some means of making himself indispensable to the universe, and this, he thought, would be provided by words; the power of words would compensate for the failure of actions. His Platonism led him to decide to become a creator; he set out to create a world by using words, a world in which he would create a place for himself. This newly created universe was supposed to prove to the creator that he did have a soul, that he was justified. The imposition did not last sufficiently long, because Sartre realized that imposing himself on to the literarily created universe, which he found in other people's books, he could not possibly have been the creator, since the universe of books was anterior to his plagiarism. We remember that Sartre's first imposture was in the universe of his family, where it consisted of constant play-acting. Now he discovered that he was an impostor in the universe of books. What both impostures had in common was that, in order to overcome his feeling of ontological superfluousness, Sartre had to resort to using lies. In attempting to create a universe in his writing in which he would be justified and needed, he used literature as a means of escape. Thus Sartre's aim in writing contained a very definite dichotomy: on one hand it was meant to provide a refuge from life in which

he felt superfluous; on the other, it was designed (if he were read he would annihilate his superfluousness and would thus carve a place for himself in the world) to secure a means by which he could live. Sartre's choosing the profession of a writer for himself was therefore an extension of his disappointment, firstly, with the ontological world in which he lived, and, secondly, with the world of books he read, and in which he was deeply steeped. He consequently set out to create his own world.

It is clear that the universe he created in his writings was at least at three removes from the real world he found unsatisfactory; the second of these being that of the books he had read in his grandfather's library. Here we have two, although seemingly different, basically similar forms of passivity. The first one consisted of Sartre's reading and his imaginary exploits, and the second one of his writing. Both entail a certain amount of withdrawal, and thus passivity, from the real world. The play-acting, the smart sayings, the writing, the posing, the superfluousness and the resulting loneliness of Sartre the child had their roots in the projects he devised in reacting to his own needs and, more importantly, to the role assigned to him by his family, which in turn mediated the ideology of the class it belonged to. Sartre's character and his lived experiences were thus the synthesized result of his projects.

Towards the end of the book Sartre tells us that by the time of writing Les mots, the discoveries he encountered during his life-long attempts at overcoming his alienation inherited in his childhood finally freed him from many of the above-mentioned illusions and prejudices. The

most important one concerns his new and more realistic belief as to the importance and the value of writing. The bourgeois notion of imposing himself on the universe by means of writing has been replaced by the realization that literature does not hold a privileged place among man's activities and is thus unable to change the world through its power. On the other hand the reading of literature, Sartre now realizes, is not a passive process; intelligent and honest reading presupposes a dialectical process, in which reading is seen as an active communication between the writer and the reader, whereby each has as a referent the real world, which literature, moreover, can never depict totally. The aim of the writer, therefore Sartre's own, consists in attempting to define a perspective, an understanding of the ontological world which the reader, being an active participant in the dialectics of reading, ought to evaluate before rejecting, accepting or modifying it. This must not be based on the reader's tastes and affinities, but rather on a more rational attitude of whether the world as depicted by the writer corresponds to that as perceived by the reader.

At the beginning of this chapter we have argued that the characters within the narrative of Sartre's autobiography represent the unities of actions. The main point is that the connection between the first level of the narrative, that of Functions, and the second, higher level, that of Actions, consists in the following: the level of Functions is comprised of a great number of narrative unities, which are always, either directly or indirectly, products and consequences of human actions. The

actants, who by reintegrating those actions into various characters of the narrative, thus render those actions meaningful, at the same time reintegrate the whole level of narrative unities into the higher level, that of characters as actants. It was therefore in this sense that we have considered and analyzed the main characters in Les mots. However, there is yet another, higher level of the narrative, which in turn provides the means for reintegrating both Functions and Actions on to the highest level of the narrative. This is the level of Narration, which as we will see, holds together the whole structure of the narrative.

LEVEL THREE: NARRATION

We have already mentioned that different categories of actants can fully define themselves only by their relation to the discourse itself, and not by their relation to an ontological reality outside the narrative. Characters as unities of the level of Actions do not obtain their meaning and their intelligibility until they are integrated on the third level of the narrative, that of Narration. How is this integration achieved? In what way does the narrational level represent a higher level than the level of Actions?

In the introduction to our analysis of the characters we have seen how the multiplicity of small narrative unities of the level of Functions gets reintegrated and is given its full meaning on the level of Actions. We have argued that functions are always products of human actions, either directly and through individual actions of different characters, or indirectly, on the level of such abstracted levels of human actions as modes of thinking, ethical codes, etc. On the other hand, we have said that Narration represents the last and the highest level of the narrative of Les mots. That is to say, that the narrative as a structured system cannot extend beyond the level of Narration, since our analysis of the narrative of Sartre's work ends here precisely because on the other side of this last level we are confronted with other systems, such as political, economic, social, ideological, etc. The terms of these systems are not

narrative any more, and thus cannot be meaningfully discussed except outside the limits of an analysis of a narrative.

The level of Narration is thus situated between the level of Actions (which it has to reintegrate somehow in a higher level), and the outside, non-narrative world in which we live. Now, to rephrase the question we posed earlier, we can ask, how does the narrational level reintegrate the first two levels of our structural model, and at the same time how does it represent all of these levels, that is, the whole of the narrative, to the reader?

The somewhat simplified answer is that Narration is the method, the technique, used by the author to hold the first two levels together, to represent the ideas expounded in and through Functions and Actions. The technique is the means of holding the whole narrative of Les mots together, that is, without its means it would literally be impossible to write a literary work. The author has to use a certain form (in this case prose-autobiography), by the usage of certain techniques (in the case of Sartre's autobiography, as we will see, the points of view, time order, etc.). The level of Narration is thus the glue by which the text is at the same time held together, and made possible.

The narrative techniques used by Sartre in Les mots are in many respects very traditional and conventional. We will best see this in our discussion of the point of view and the time order. However, as our main interest consists in analyzing, comprehensively and exhaustively, the workings of the narrational level, and not only either some of the aspects of Sartre's narration which may fall outside the traditional or

conventional techniques, or a few aspects of his technique, which may appear to be more "relevant" to whatever the critic is trying to prove or substantiate. Therefore, we will analyze the level of narration in what we consider here a comprehensive and exhaustive manner, that is, by analyzing all of the most important aspects of Sartre's narrational technique.

In analyzing the problem of narration, Barthes says:

> De même qu'il y a, à l'intérieur du récit, une grande fonction d'échange (répartie entre un donateur et un bénéficiaire), de même, homologiquement, le récit, comme objet, est l'enjeu d'une communication: il y a un donateur du récit, il y a un destinataire du récit.[4]

Therefore the primary concern of our discussion of the narrational level of Les mots will be "de décrire le code à travers lequel narrateur et lecteur sont signifiés le long du récit lui-même".[5]

2.1.0. Autobiography. However, before embarking on our discussion of the above-mentioned code, we ought to point out some of the differences between autobiography as a literary genre and fiction in general. The problems posed here are numerous, but we will consider only the few which are relevant to our analysis of the narrational level.

Autobiography, first of all, cannot be considered a genre in the sense that poetry, fiction and drama are. It rather belongs to a subclass of the whole range of writing which we can place under the rubric of nonfictional prose. The simplest way of defining autobiography is by stating that it is a narrative of a person's life written by himself. And in this sense it is the story of Sartre's life, or more precisely, it is not the story but the history of his life, because it purports

to be history and not fiction. Although both fiction and history are fundamentally narratives, it is clear that the first is based on imagination, on invention, whereas the latter is based on facts. This defines our problem, namely, that we cannot fully apply the categories of the poetics of fiction in our analysis of Sartre's autobiography. The autobiographical narrative stands between historical and fictional narrative, in that, on the one hand, the historical narrative has of necessity an arbitrary beginning and ending, considering that history has neither beginning nor ending; while, on the other, the fictional writing has to have both a beginning and an ending, since fiction is after all invention. Every autobiography has a beginning: the birth of its subject, although, as is the case with Les mots, the author can deviate in this respect, beginning with a short history of his maternal and paternal grandparents, and then his parents, as if he were a biographer. This is precisely the way Sartre begins his autobiography, after which he arrives at the moment of his birth, which he chronicles again from hearsay.

In any case we can say that Les mots, being an autobiography, is fictional in nature inasmuch as it has a beginning. On the other hand it cannot have a definite ending since the author cannot write about his own death. Thus the ending of Sartre's autobiography is an arbitrary one, although he does establish a certain pattern of his life, which is meant to enable the reader to treat this arbitrary cutting off of the narration of his life (or more precisely, a certain period of his life)

as if it were ended. Consequently, we can conclude that, inasmuch as it has an arbitrary ending, the narrative of Les mots is also historical in its narrative.

There is yet another double relation of Sartre's autobiography to both historical and fictional narrative. On one hand, the autobiography describes Sartre's life, and hence the subject matter likens it to fiction, which is dependent on characters, that is, representations of persons. On the other, these characters are not purely fictional, in that they are Sartre's representation of the real people, with whom he lived and whom he knew. Consequently we ought to keep in mind always that the work analyzed here represents a mixture of fiction and history (non-fiction), and hence the methods applied will be mixtures of narrative and expository ones.

2.2.0. Giver of the Narrative. The first step in analyzing the code through which the narrator/author and the reader are signified consists in answering the question of who the giver of the narrative is. There have been different answers to this question:

> La première considère que le récit est émis par une personne (au sens pleinement psychologique du terme); cette personne a un nom, c'est l'auteur, en qui s'échangent sans arrêt la "personnalité" et l'art d'un individu parfaitement identifié, qui prend périodiquement la plume pour écrire une histoire. . . .

Another one "fait du narrateur une sorte de conscience totale, apparemment impersonnelle, qui émet l'histoire d'un point de vue supérieur, celui de Dieu". The third notion "édicte que le narrateur doit limiter son récit

à ce que peuvent observer ou savoir les personnages: tout se passe comme si chaque personnage était tour à tour l'émetteur du récit."[6] These three concepts make a common mistake in that they tend to see real people, "living", in the narrator and the characters in the narrative, as if the narrative itself were originally determined on its referential level. This is, in fact, crucial. As we have seen, the actants (characters) can be said to be the primary vehicles for meaning in the narrative of Les mots, in the sense that they integrate the narrative unities on their higher level. The actants themselves can be seen as unities of actions. But these unities are not static; one consequence is that by being dynamic, performing actions, they integrate the lower level of functions, and thus render them fully intelligible. The other consequence is that by being dynamic the actants themselves have to be integrated on a higher level; this is necessary because as the actants move in the narrative plot, their meanings change in relation to different contexts. This is where the level of narration comes in. To repeat again, the actants on the level of the analysis of the narrative of Les mots should not be, and cannot be, analyzed as replicas of the real human beings who existed somewhere outside the narrative. Therefore, on this level, they cannot be defined by their dispositions, intentions or traits outside the narrative, but only by their coded place in the structure of the discourse of Sartre's work. This means that although Les mots is an autobiography, on the level of the narrative and its structures there is no real difference between what we usually call fiction and an autobiography. That is, we can

talk about relevant differences only when analyzing the whole work and its meanings, as related to the world in which we live, and which is external to our analysis of the narrative and its structuration. The latter we will discuss in our analysis of what we have termed the plane of content of Sartre's work.

The above is also true of the narrator of Les mots. The narrator and the actants are essentially, as Barthes has put it, "êtres de papier'; l'auteur (matériel) d'un récit ne peut se confondre en rien avec le narrateur de ce récit".[7] The one who speaks in the narrative (the narrator) is not the one who writes in life (the author), and the one who writes is not the one who is.

Thus we can say now that in order to describe the code by which the narrator/author and the reader are signified throughout the narrative of Les mots we have to analyze the problem of the narrator as well as that of the signs of narrativity. In other words, by analyzing the code of the signs of narrativity, which inevitably includes in itself the narrator as one of the narrational means of the author, we will discover and define the code through which the reader and the narrator/author are signified in the narrative of Sartre's autobiography. What are the signs of narrativity, and what is their function on the level of Narration? In Barthesian terms:

> Le niveau narrationnel est donc occupé par les signes de la narrativité, l'ensemble des opérateurs qui réintègrent fonctions et actions dans la communication narrative, articulée sur son donateur et son destinataire.[8]

These signs of narrativity are in fact different forms of discourse:

firstly - different "points of view", secondly - the time relation between the narrative itself and the events which are being recounted, and thirdly - the relations between the narrating agency itself and the narrator (narrative voice). These three elements constitute the narrational level of Sartre's narrative. As wellwill see in the next chapter, all three elements are very closely related to Sartre's regressive-progressive analytico-synthetic method applied in Les mots. The point of view, the time order and the narrative voice represent three different aspects of this method. None of these signs of narrativity can be separated from the other two; that is, Sartre needs all three forms of discourse in order, at the same time, to apply his method to studying his own history, as well as to hold together the whole structure of the narrative of his autobiography.

2.3.0. Point of View. Although, being an autobiography Les mots is a first-person narrative, the problem nevertheless arises in attempting to distinguish between the narrator on one hand, and the character whose point of view directs the narrative perspective, on the other. While at first the question may appear to be deceptively easy to answer, the narrative of Lesmots is riddled with problems in this respect. Sometimes we can say, even with certainty, that the narrator and the character whose point of view is being presented coincide, but, more often, the narrator and the character orienting theppoint of view of the narrative perspective are different personalities. Here we should make a qualification, namely, that both Sartre the child (the hero, protagonist of the

narrative) and Sartre the narrator have a common denominator in Sartre the author. It is nevertheless clear that throughout the narration there is, in general, a differentiation between the narrator and the protagonist. But, of course, there are exceptions because the point of view is not always constant during the whole narration, and it shifts between the hero, the narrator and the author, that is, between Sartre the child, Sartre the narrator and Sartre the author.

On the other hand, it is clear from the text that the distinction between differing points of view of the protagonist, the narrator and sometimes even the author himself (all of them being Sartre) can never reàlly be absolutely neat or clearly delineated. Therefore the general delineation between the narrator and the person whose point of view orients the narrative perspective holds true as a very general formula on the level of the whole narrative as such, whereas on the level of segments of the narrative it constantly shifts back and forth.

We can take any paragraph at random in order to verify the constant shifting of the point of view. In the passage where Sartre reveals the episode in which Karl took him to the barber-shop and had his curly hair cut off, the opening sentence, "Il y eut des cris mais pas d'embrassements et ma mère s'enferma dans sa chambre pour pleurer", is quite clearly seen through the point of view of the hero. The continuation:

> . . . on avait troqué sa fillette contre un garçonnet. Il y avait pis: tant qu'elles voltigeaient autour de mes oreilles, mes belles anglaises lui avaient permis de refuser l'évidence de ma laideur. Déjà, pourtant, mon oeil droit entrait dans le crépuscule. Il fallut qu'elle s'avouât la vérité . . .

is, as clearly, given from the point of view of the narrator since the hero was not aware of any of the above-mentioned facts at the time. Then: "Mon grand-père semblait lui-même tout interdit" can be safely taken for the point of view of the hero, after which the narration shifts back to the narrator's point of view: ".... on lui avait confié sa petite merveille, il avait rendu un crapaud". A few sentences later the narration shifts again to the point of view of the hero: "Mamie le regardait, amusée. Elle dit simplement: 'Karl n'est pas fier; il fait le dos rond" (p. 90).

This example is representative of the whole narrative of Les mots. Since we are analyzing the narration of an autobiography we ought to be very careful not to allow the identity of the character (that is, Sartre the child and Sartre the narrator) deceive us as to the very important difference of information and function in regard to the hero and the narrator. Sartre the narrator obviously knows more than Sartre the child, in spite of the fact that the hero is the narrator himself. The consequence of this is that the point of view of the hero always represents a restriction of the narrative possibilities open to the narrator. Therefore in spite of this seeming coinciding of the hero and the narrator there is always a tangible difference regarding the representations of different points of view. So, as we can see, the narrational technique with regard to different points of view is rather conventional. There is nothing new nor really innovative in its application. Nor does Sartre seem to need anything over and above this technique.

Another interesting problem in relation to the shifting of the point of view in Sartre's autobiography - which is always, of necessity, one between the hero (who is the narrator in the past) and the narrator - concerns the fact that the only restriction which Sartre the narrator does respect is nearly always limited only by his relation to the information which he, the narrator, has and not by his relation to the past information of Sartre the child. This allows him to shift the point of view constantly from that of the narrator to that of the hero. The narrator constantly interpolates in the seeming recounting by the hero of the different episodes, the information which can only be accessible to the narrator himself, as we have seen in the above-quoted episode. This is true of the whole narration of Les mots. The changing of the point of view occurs on different levels: it can be that of a whole segment of the narrative, or that of a sentence, or even within a sentence there can be a changing of the points of view. These changes may be seen as representing the autobiographical part of Sartre the narrator in the presentation of facts which were either not available to Sartre the child at the time of the recounted episode, and which he will learn about later, or the facts which Sartre the child could not have known or understood.

In conclusion we can say that there are in fact two concurrently running codes, one of the hero and the other of the narrator. These two coexisting codes function on two levels of thennarrational reality. This double point of view can be said to be the emblem of the narrational level of Sartre's autobiography. The constant simultaneous play on two

different kinds of point of view, shifting incessantly from Sartre the child to Sartre the narrator, only ceases at almost the very end of the book, where the two become fused into that of the narrator (p. 193).

In reality, both Sartre the child and Sartre the narrator are the narrational means of Sartre the author. Thus the information of the narrator is situated between the information of the hero and the omniscience of Sartre the author, wherein the narrator, as an intermediary, can dispose of his information as the narration requires, and retain it when the expediency of the same narration warrants it.

2.4.0. Time Order. The existence of the two concurrent codes of the narrational level in Les mots is facilitated by the fact that the order of time in the narrative is doubly temporal. The decisive time determination in Sartre's work is the relative position of the narration in relation to the story narrated. In other words, in order to study the order of time (temporal order) of the narrative itself we ought to juxtapose the order in which the events in the narrative discourse are arranged with the order of succession of the same events in the story (i.e. in the history of Sartre's life). This can be done either through the explicit indication of it in the narrative itself, or by inference. Thus we can define the double temporality of the narrative in Les mots as the relationship between the time of the history narrated and the time of the narration.

As was the case with the point of view, here also we can see that the technique which Sartre uses is very conventional. There were two points of view: that of Sartre the narrator and that of Sartre the child.

The time order has thus to be that of narration (corresponding to the narrator), and that of the history of Jean-Paul's childhood (corresponding to the child). Despite this conventionality the implications of the double temporality for the narrative are extremely important. Firstly, this temporal duality allows Sartre to make a number of temporal distortions in the narrative, which are employed in using the constantly shifting emphasis from the point of view of the narrator (the temporal order of the narration) to that of the hero (the temporal order of the history narrated), and back. Secondly, the importance of the double temporality of the narrative of Les mots appears to be so great that we can conclude that it is precisely this characteristic of being able to intertwine the two sequences, in order to produce a fugal effect, which may be thought of as one of the most fundamental functions of the narration. This importance will become quite apparent in our analysis of Sartre's regressive-progressive method. At this point it should suffice to say that the double temporality of the narrative is absolutely necessary for Sartre in order to apply his method, first regressively (the time order of the story narrated), and then progressively (the time order of the narration).

2.5.0. Narrative Voice. In our discussion of "points of view" we have analyzed the different perspectives of the narrative in relation to the [hi]story of Sartre's life. We have just seen that in fact there exists a double temporal relation between the narrative and events in the history of Sartre's life. Now we have to analyze the relations existing between

the narrative and what we may call the narrating agency itself. The problem posed here is one of analyzing, and delineating, the narrative voice in the narrative of Les mots.

The narration is most often in the past, although there are exceptions, as we will see later. The predominance of the past is used in such a manner that it allows Sartre to fragment the narration very often, in order to interpolate it between different moments of the story which is being told. This gives the impression of the story being somehow more immediate. The insertion of the narration between the moments of the actions is very complex, because it creates narration on two levels and this in turn leads to the intertwining of the story and the narration. The means through which this is usually achieved is the narrator. He, as an intermediary, is at the same time Sartre the child and somebody else. For example, the passage where he writes how Karl tried to flatter his grandson in order to dissuade him from wanting to become a writer: ". . . la voix qui tremblait d'amour en m'appelant 'cadeau du Ciel', je feignais encore de l'écouter mais j'avais fini par ne plus l'entendre." Here the story is interrupted and the narrator continues:

> Pourquoi lui ai-je prêté l'oreille ce jour-là, au moment qu'elle mentait le plus délibérément? Par quel malentendu lui ai-je fait dire le contraire de ce qu'elle prétendait m'apprendre?

And so on, to return to recounting the story almost immediately:

> Charles avait deux visages: quand il jouait au grand-père, je le tenais pour un bouffon de mon espèce et ne le respectais pas. Mais s'il parlait à M. Simonnot, à ses fils, s'il se faisait servir par ses femmes à table, en désignant du doigt, sans un mot, l'huilier ou la corbeille à pain, j'admirais son autorité. (p. 134)

The events about which Sartre writes clearly belong to the past; the point of view is that of the narrator in both cases, implying that the point of view of the child was later changed into that of the narrator, as it is presented in the above passage. Thus the feelings and attitudes of the future, which is yet to come, are already present and in this sense we can state that one of the consequences of the intertwining of the narration and the story is that the first acts back on the latter and consequently somewhat modifies it. What we have here is the Jean-Paul of the past, at the same time all here and already far away, spoken about by the Jean-Paul of the time of writing his autobiography. There are in fact successive heroes, but only the second one is also the narrator, who imposes his own point of view on the child.

The narration of past events is sometimes in the present, but these are more exceptions than regularities, and the relations between the narration and the story are not altered in any way. The relation between the discourse of Sartre the child and Sartre the narrator is constant throughout the narrative. There are generally two discourses (that of the child and that of the narrator), and these are juxtaposed one with another, and although they interweave, they never completely mix. We can always distinguish the voice of the narrator from the voice of Sartre the child: the narrator not only knows what will happen to the child, but also he possesses all the knowledge, understanding and wisdom acquired by Sartre throughout his life, which facilitate our distinguishing it from the voice of the hero.

The hero ("I narrated") and the narrator ("I narrating") are thus separated in Les mots by a difference of experience and age which allows the narrator to treat the hero with the kind of irony which is always visibly present throughout the whole narrative. But the irony works on yet another level, that is, it is very effectively used by the distance which at times exists between the narrator himself and the author. Firstly, the distance can be established by the fact that the narrator is, after all, situated within the work itself, whereas it is the author who wrote and structured the work. Secondly, one of the central problems of Les mots is that of the writer and his relation to the world in which he lives. Consequently, it is more efficacious to deal with the bourgeois myth of the writer obliquely, and this is where Sartre uses irony. Often the narrator makes a comment which cannot be taken at its face value, either because it contradicts the just preceding passage, or it is obvious from the context that it is used ironically. Another way by means of which the above distancing is achieved is by using either rather simplified statements about, and explanations of, reality or by using burlesque examples when pretending to speak seriously. The end result is that the narrative in the treatment of its subject achieves a certain distance from it, by treating the subject ironically, sometimes even ridiculing what it purports, at its face value, to be dealing with seriously. The distancing thus has a very definite function in allowing the author to make various statements and explanations knowing that what he is supposedly saying seriously will not be taken literally.

Yet all these effects are achieved through Sartre the narrator, and this comprises one of the functions of the narrator's discourse. Another one is achieved through its relation with the text itself, to which Sartre the narrator can refer in his (the narrator's) discourse in order to indicate various articulations, links and inter-relations in the text, that is, in order to indicate its internal organization. The interventions of Sartre the narrator, whether they be direct or indirect, inrrelation to the history of his own life which is being narrated, have very often a more didactic function: this we may call the expository function of the narrator. It consists of various addresses to the reader, attestations of memory, organization of the narrative through the direct authorial voice of announcements and, most importantly, of the exegetical comments and explanations with the intention of making the life story of the hero fully intelligible and meaningful. The expository function of the narrator is facilitated by the double temporality of the narration, as we have seen earlier. The mode in which it is done is very similar to the one in which the point of view shifts constantly from the hero to the narrator and back. Namely, the expository part of the narrative, which is the most important aspect of the narration in Sartre's autobiography, is always interwoven with the rest of the narrative in such a manner that it serves as the backbone of the whole narration, connects and explains the events from the history of Sartre the child as well as the comments and judgments (direct or ironic) passed by the narrator in his other narrational functions.

The examples are limitless; they are present on every single page of the book, and are thus quite obvious. They are inserted in various passages, paragraphs and even sentences. This is one level on which the narrator's expository function works. Another level is that of the whole narrative itself where we can perceive whole passages being of a predominantly expository nature. What is interesting to note is the fact that as the narrative progresses the frequency of the expository comments increases until they completely take over the whole narrative, at precisely the same point where the fusion occurs of the two points of view into that of the narrator (p. 193).

The narrator of Les mots is an autobiographical one. The narrative leads its hero to the point where Sartre the narrator waits for Sartre the child, when the hero becomes the narrator. From this point on, the voice of the narrator and that of the hero blend and mix together, and are given in the same discourse. The two discourses become integrated in the mind, i.e. in the words, because there is now only one truth and understanding, only one point of view.

In fact Sartre the child never does, nor could, fully join Sartre the narrator; the synthesis is one of asymptotical nature, whereby the separating distance can only tend toward zero, without ever being able to annihilate itself. In spite of this, the temporal and spatial distance is reduced sufficiently for the author to enable him to bring the narrative to the conclusion, thus bringing it to the here and now, where the story joins the narration at last. The narrator's expository function plays the crucial role in the whole process of bringing together the two points

of view, the double temporality of the narrative and the two discourses, and subsuming them into the narrator. Yet of all the functions of the narrator, this one is the only one which does not, at the end, lead back to Sartre the narrator but points instead to Sartre the author.

We have seen earlier that the expository part of the narration comprises the backbone of the whole level of Narration, in that by being the most important aspect, it connects and explains both the events which took place in Sartre's childhood, and the various judgments and comments made by the narrator in his other narrational functions. We have also just shown that through the narrator's expository function the double temporality, the different points of view and the two discourses (that of the hero and that of the narrator), all become subsumed into the narrator. However, the expository function of the narrator is the only one of his functions which in the last analysis leads to the author himself. This is quite understandable. After all, all the signs of narrativity, including the narrator as well, are only the narrational means of the author. Sartre's regressive-progressive analytico-synthetic method thus uses the signs of narrativity and their various aspects as its necessary tools by means of which Sartre the author analyzes and more importantly synthesizes the study of his own personal history, as an example of individual history. Put differently, this means that the signs of narrativity, as we have discussed them here, represent the three different aspects of the method of analyzing the individual history (in this case his own) as applied by Sartre in Les mots.

In our discussion of the level of Narration we have analyzed the signs of narrativity which, in Barthes' words, as the set of operators

reintegrate the level of Functions and the level of Actants into what we have called the narrative communication. The narration itself, as the highest synthesizing level of the narrative, is made fully meaningful only through its relation to the world in which the reader and the author live. To quote Barthes once again:

> La narration ne peut en effet recevoir son sense que du monde qui en use: au-delà du niveau narrationnel, commence le monde, c'est-à-dire d'autres systèmes (sociaux, économiques, idéologiques), dont les termes ne sont plus seulement les récits, mais des éléments d'une autre substance. . . .[9]

CHAPTER III: NOTES

[1] Roland Barthes, "Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits," Communications, 1966 (8), p. 16.

[2] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[3] Ibid., p. 17.

[4] Ibid., p. 18.

[5] Ibid., p. 19.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., p. 21.

[9] Ibid., p. 22.

CHAPTER IV

1.1.0. Aim. In the preface to the Russian translation of Les mots Sartre states some of the reasons which prompted him to write his autobiography:

> Without troubles, in happiness and boredom I lived through the ten difficult years, which led us to the War of 1914. Why, you ask, talk about that empty and mendacious dream? I have two answers. Here I wanted to talk about the childhood from which we emerged, becoming what we have become. For every man the early years are the most important ones: we are gradually hatched from their shell, but without ever being able to throw it off completely. My second intention has not always been interpreted correctly. Critics have reproached me for having been too harsh toward the little boy I was. People like it when recollections are full of indulgence toward oneself, when the author, trying to move himself, moves the reader. I am neither harsh nor tender, I hold guilty not the little boy, but the environment and epoch which moulded him. Most importantly, I detest the myth of childhood made by adults. I ask you to take this book for what, in essence, it is: an attempt to debunk the myth.[1]

In an interview given to the New Left Review, answering as to whether he plans to write a sequel to Les mots, he says:

> No, I do not think that a sequel to Les mots would be of much interest. The reason why I produced Les mots is the reason why I have studied Genet or Flaubert: how does a man become someone who writes, who wants to speak of the imaginary? This is what I sought to answer in my own case, as I sought it in that of others.[2]

In another interview, given to Encounter, he says:

> The characteristic of every neurosis is to represent itself as natural. I considered calmly that I was born to write. I needed to justify my existence, and I had made an absolute of literature . . . In Les mots I explain the origin of my madness, of my neurosis.[3]

Les mots is the life story of the child Jean-Paul as recounted by the Jean-Paul of fifty years later. The claim that man's early years are

the decisive, formative ones is consistently elaborated throughout the book and therefore maintained by the work as a whole.

As we have seen in our analysis of the structures of the narrative of Les mots, Sartre succeeds in making a very strong, logical argument for claiming that his "madness", his "neurosis", which consisted in having chosen the profession of writer in his childhood years, was in fact mainly, although not entirely, due to his particular experiences of a petit-bourgeois child, growing up in a fairly typical bourgeois family, in a certain epoch. We have analyzed Sartre's growing up by dividing the level of Functions into two groups: first, the group which we have named the "Family", and second, the group named the "Project". The reason for this is that Sartre, in order to study and explain how he himself became "someone who writes, who wants to speak of the imaginary", in explaining his own development throughout Les mots, constantly emphasizes the dialectical relationship existing between the cultural and ideological influence of the class to which his own family belonged, on one hand, and the manner in which he reacted to these, on the other.

Before we embark upon our discussion of Les mots in the light of Sartre's method for studying history (including history of an individual), which he expounds in Questions de méthode, I ought to point out that I believe that - from the treatment of his own history in his autobiography - Sartre can be said to be primarily a philosophical writer who has given his philosophical arguments in a literary form, rather than a man of letters who happens to philosophize. Consequently, our principal aim in this chapter will consist in attempting to relate Les mots to the main philosophical

categories and postulates from Questions de méthode, in order, first, to explicate the general meaning of the former, and second, to trace the main philosophical postulates and categories from the latter, by showing their presence in Sartre's autobiography.

1.2.0. Method. Although Sartre's main concern in Questions de méthode is directed to the larger scale of interpretation of dialectics in historical materialism, he nevertheless attempts at the same time to provide a foundation for an analysis of individual historical life. He explores a method which ought to enable us to understand the genesis of a person in conjunction with the structures of society and the movement of history. This means that Sartre accepts Marx's insistence on placing the concrete man at the centre of research:

> . . . homme qui se définit à la fois par ses besoins, par les conditions matérielles de son existence et par la nature de son travail, c'est-à-dire de sa lutte contre les choses et contre les hommes.[4]

Thus, according to Sartre, Marxism provides for the specificity of human existence and is, at the same time, concerned with the concrete man in his objective reality. In his general orientation toward social relations Sartre accepts Marx's fundamental principle that the mode of production of material life in general determines the development of social, political and intellectual life. However, he states that, while the historical materialism remains the only valid interpretation of history, existentialism provides the only concrete approach to reality. Thus the combination of the two would produce what Sartre calls critical dialectic, which studies human history and human actions in terms of a dialectical process of reciprocal

interaction between man and man, man and the group, and man and the world. Although human existence is affected by the material conditions of life, we cannot say that man is merely a passive product of an impersonal dialectical process. If this were the case, Sartre argues, it would not make sense to speak of a human history. Social phenomena are characterized by dialectical processes, by action and reaction, opposition, conflict, a dynamic interaction of individual and collective social forces. Consequently, if we want to study a human history, Sartre insists that "on doit déchiffrer dans sa particularité et d'abord à partir du groupe concret dont il est issu".[5] Thus, having established the fundamental philosophical basis for his method, Sartre proceeds to discuss the establishing of the method itself. The pivotal question here is one of bringing the man back into history. In order to do so we must search out his specific qualities by trying to discover the mediations through which the man is related to others and to his historical environment. Sartre proposes a hierarchy of mediations which would enable us to grasp the process by which a man and his product are produced inside the class from which he comes, and in the interior of a given society at a given historical moment.

Marxism has not developed means for such a hierarchy of mediations, and Sartre contends that Existentialism provides the means for bringing into relief the individual concrete against the background of the general contradictions of productive forces and relations of production. He repeats over and again that in studying individual history we cannot account for it only by examining economic forces of the period.

1.3.0. Childhood. There are other formative influences, the most important among them being those of childhood and growth. Discussing Flaubert's life, Sartre says that what made Flaubert belong to the bourgeois class was the fact that he was born into a family which was already bourgeois. He was made a bourgeois, he accepted the roles imposed upon him by his family, at a time when he could not comprehend their meaning.

Likewise, young Jean-Paul, as we have seen in Les mots, was also born into a bourgeois family, the head of which was a petit-bourgeois intellectual, well-known Charles Schweitzer. The latter stubbornly clung to the "ideals" of his class, thereby mediating the whole set of class values to his grandson. But, as we have seen, Sartre's family, although a bourgeois one, was a particular family, and if we apply Sartre's explanation of Flaubert's childhood to himself, it was inside the particularity of his own history, through the peculiar contradictions of his own family, that Sartre unwittingly served his class apprenticeship. Sartre the child became this particular Sartre (adult, writer, philosopher) because he lived the universal as particular. He lived, in particular, the conflicts between the decomposition of, in many respects, the typical bourgeois values, which were being replaced by a new set of attitudes towards life in the early twentieth century, and the set of the bourgeois values of the time of Louis-Philippe, which his grandfather imposed on Jean-Paul. Some other statements regarding the childhood of Flaubert can also be applied to Sartre himself. He says that the young Flaubert lived his childhood

> . . . dans les ténèbres, c'est-à-dire sans prise de conscience réelle, dans l'affolement, la fuite, l'incompréhension et à travers sa condition matérielle

> d'enfant bourgeois, bien nourri, bien soigné, mais impuissant et séparé du monde. C'est comme enfant qu'il a vécu sa condition future à travers les professions qui s'offriront à lui. . . .[6]

This is precisely what Sartre tells us about his own childhood in Les mots.

Two things should be emphasized here. First, that Sartre the child was imbued with the values of his class and of that period, or, to use Sartre's own terminology, he interiorized the exterior without of course having any real awareness of what was happening to him. Second, Sartre, too, lived his childhood as a bourgeois child well nourished but helpless and separated from the world. We remember his early Platonism, whereby words "contained" reality, and his consequent alienation from the world in which he lived, which was at two removes from the reality of his ontological situation. Consequently Sartre's later "choice" of the profession of writer ought to be considered in the light of the above.

Flaubert, Sartre tells us, lived "la mort bourgeoise, cette solitude qui nous accompagne dès la naissance, mais il la vécut à travers les structures familiales".[7] Sartre's own childhood, as described in Les mots, consisted in his living the bourgeois solitude within the structures of the Schweitzer family. The apartment on the fifth floor of One, rue le Goff, visits to the Luxembourg Gardens with his mother, the absence of any friends of his own age, the hypocrisy and pretentiousness, the fact that he was surrounded by the "great dead" in the books in his grandfather's library; they all pointed in one direction: that of "la plus irrémédiable solitude bourgeoise: celle du createur."[8]

Emphasizing the extreme importance which childhood plays in man's life, Sartre categorically states that childhood is that which "façonne

des préjugés indépassables, c'est elle qui fait resentir, dans les violences du dressage et l'égarement de la bête dressée, l'appartenance au milieu comme un événement singulier."[9]

1.4.0. Psychoanalysis. How are we to study the history of an individual? By what means are we to discover the dialectical relationship - between the material conditions in which he lived and his childhood - which has produced the individual as he is? What disciplines provide us with the tools necessary for explaining it? Sartre believes that psychoanalysis has to be used in order to understand the genesis of an individual, because psychoanalysis of all disciplines is alone capable of studying the process whereby a child, without really understanding it, tries to play the social role imposed upon him by his parents. Only by applying psychoanalysis are we able to discover whether the child evades the role, assimilates it entirely, or whether the role destroys him. The second point regarding pschyoanalysis is that Sartre considers it a method the primary concern of which is to establish the manner in which the child lives his family relations within a given society. Thirdly, psychoanalysis reveals the point of insertion of a man in his class; in other words, it reveals the particular family as mediation between universal class and the individual. And lastly, psychoanalysis "à l'intérieur d'une totalisation dialectique, renvoie d'un côté aux structures objectives, aux conditions matérielles et, de l'autre, à l'action de notre indépassable enfance sur notre vie d'adulte."[10]

From all this we can conclude that Sartre's proposed incorporation of existentialism and psychoanalysis into Marxism reveals that he does not

intend to deny the relationship between the infrastructure and superstructure, i.e. between material conditions of life and culture, but rather to make that relationship more profound by showing that both are mediated through the individual, whose work is the concrete, objectified accomplishment of various elements.

However, the psychoanalysis which Sartre considers absolutely necessary in any comprehensive study of an individual history is not psychoanalysis as it is usually understood. It is very important to clarify this because the psychoanalytical theory applied by Sartre to himself in Les mots is of a dialectical kind. In discussing shortcomings of Freudian psychoanalytic theory, Sartre says that he "would reproach psychoanalytic theory with being a syncretic and not a dialectical thought."[11] He adds that since psychoanalytic theory is not structured, anything can be derived from it. What he finds missing in conventional psychoanalytic interpretations is the notion (which is for a dialectical thinker of crucial importance) of dialectical irreducibility. He gives the example of historical materialism where, as in a true dialectic theory, phenomena derive from each other dialectically. What he means by this is that there are various configurations of dialectical reality, and every one of them is strictly conditioned by the preceding one, while at the same time preserving and superseding it. The supersession is always irreducible, in the sense that while one configuration may preserve its predecessor, it can never be simply reduced to it. And Sartre ends: "It is the idea of this autonomy that is lacking in psychoanalytic theory."[12] Consequently it was essential for our analysis of the characters in Les mots to get away

from the so-called pure psychologizing, because it was evident that each one of them was given as a dialectic unity, or synthesis, of many diverse influences, traits and conditions. It was thus necessary to analyze them as actants, which we have defined as designating at the same time the subjects and the objects of an action. The actions were, on the other hand, defined as articulations of praxis, namely of need, project and lived experience.

Lived experience is an important concept in Sartre's proposed method of studying individual history. It is, in fact, the lived process by which each person effects his own totalization by perpetually projecting himself out of the past toward his chosen future, as we have seen in the cases of Charles, Anne-Marie, Louise and Jean-Paul himself. Dialectical movement itself was manifested in and through the totalizing activity of the main characters of Sartre's autobiography. Totalization is the process by which parts are synthesized into wholes or rational totalities. The concept, if applied to the main characters again, would mean that their intentional, totalizing activity within the dialectic of experience tends toward action or praxis. Sartre sees society as such a totalization-in-process, a phenomenon produced by the multiplicity of practical relationships (the basis of which is action or praxis: thus the articulations of praxis) with others who are engaged in the totalization of their own experience. Totalization is an intentional synthetic act of an individual directed towards actual or possible action. The process of totalization never stops: at every moment the individual is in the process of adding new experience and thus incessantly totalizes itself.

1.5.0. Alienation. Therefore in order to study individual history we ought to apply existentialism aided by psychoanalysis of dialectical nature. This of course has to be done only within the basic Marxian principles, as we have seen earlier. Under the present circumstances in a capitalist society, Sartre claims, we can only study those situations "où l'homme s'est perdu lui-même dès l'enfance car il n'y en a pas d'autres dans une société fondée sur l'exploitation."[13] Thus the ontological situation of contemporary man is one of alienation. The concept of alienation is very important in both Questions de méthode, because it is the general fundamental predicament of our lives in this historical epoch, and in Les mots, where it takes the forms of Jean-Paul's superfluousness, his feeling of not being justified, his death-wish neurosis, and his many anxieties and fears.

Although man is alienated, Sartre says, he is not a thing. Despite the fact that man may be alienated or reified he nevertheless still remains man, and Sartre's interpretation of Marx's concept of reification holds that reification of man means that man is condemned to live humanly the condition of material things.

If man's alienation and its concomitant reification are for Sartre the general condition of modern man, then it is logical to conclude that it must be present in Sartre's account of his own childhood. The anxieties, fears, neuroses, the feeling of not being wanted, etc., which we have discussed, are only the visible, surface consequences of Sartre's own alienation. It is not enough that Jean-Paul felt estranged from life and reality as he knew them and lived them in his childhood years. We

must analyze the roots of the problem and try to show how those feelings developed and what caused them.

In industrial capitalist society, as France was in Sartre's youth, the most characteristic form of alienation was massive, institutionalized reification. By this I mean that the characteristic of thing-hood became the standard of objective reality. In other words, in order to conceive of something as real it had to have the character of a thing. To understand this statement we have first to try to define alienation, which is a more general concept and which subsumes reification as one of its moments. For the sake of brevity we can say that alienation is the state in which man is not aware of the fact that the world in which he lived has been produced by himself. Man's everyday actions produce in the world certain events or concepts, and these can be said to be his products. For example, little Jean-Paul's attempts at realizing his projects (reading, becoming a hero in his imagination, writing) had as their end result production of certain events in his own life, as well as in the lives of the members of his own family, while at the same time changing some of his previous concepts of reality and forming new ones. This is on the level of particular actions; on the other hand, we can say that these same actions were producing Jean-Paul himself. Therefore, on the level of the totality of these actions, i.e. on the level of Jean-Paul's life as such, he was incessantly defining himself as an always slightly modified totality. In Sartre's philosophical jargon, Jean-Paul was always producing a new totalization-in-process. In other words, he was his own product (keeping in mind, of course, that this was done within the material conditions and

the epoch in which he lived). Now, going back to the concept of alienation we can say that it represents a process, or state, whereby the dialectical unity of Jean-Paul and the products (results) of his actions were severed. The results of his actions appeared to him as alien; he could not recognize his own actions in their results.

Reification, as one of the forms of alienation, exists when society bestows characteristics of a thing upon human relations, constructs, and actions in order to give them an appearance of being real. In general terms reification as a form of alienation in Les mots is evidenced through the attitudes which French society of that time had regarding its own social roles and institutions. This seems to be a rather typical form of reification, and consists in giving ontological status to social roles and institutions. Play-acting, which figures so prominently in Sartre's autobiography, is one of the forms of reification. Charles Schweitzer accepted the roles of a well-respected bourgeois intellectual, righteous and "loving" grandfather of a wonder-child, French nationalist from Alsace who felt slighted by both the French and the Germans, etc. Louise had the role of a housewife, Anne-Marie was put into the role of a child of her parents despite having a child of her own. Jean-Paul's roles kept changing their forms, but it was mainly, as we have analyzed in detail in both the project and the family functions, the role of an exceptional child, obedient, "well nourished and bored". The reification of all these roles consisted in separating them from real intentions and expectations of their bearers and changing them into an inevitable destiny for all of them: Jean-Paul, Anne-Marie, Louise, Charles. Even Charles,

although he seems to have nurtured and developed his roles more than the others, because his main aim was, as Sartre says, "amadouer sa mort"; but the roles at which he played so hard could never have fulfilled his need because they were only that - roles. The reification of roles provided a delusion for people who accepted them - and this was the case with Jean-Paul - namely, that they acted in false consciousness of not having a choice, mainly because they had accepted one role or another. Sartre's "madness" and "neurosis" in accepting the role of a future writer provided him with an excuse for never really questioning the role at all. His other roles (wonder-child, talented grandson of famous Charles Schweitzer) provided the false feeling of security, of being needed, of having his own place in the Universe. They were always presented as inevitable. Jean-Paul's concrete actions thus became only mimetic repetitions of the typical actions, which were proscribed by his class, and which were embodied in the various roles he played. But his cumulative role - that of wonder-child, gift of Heaven, future teacher and writer - because of its dehumanizing effect intrinsic in every role, was felt by Sartre to be a "false role". The play-acting in the Schweitzer family, as a form of reification, presented to Sartre instead of aenèalhhumanwworld a quasi-sacramental one, wherein actions of the members of his family, including himself, did not express human intentions and meanings. What they presented were different abstractions, e.g. grandfather, wonder-child, bourgeois writer, etc., which they were supposed to embody. And all of this was orchestrated by the High Priest, Charles Schweitzer himself. The dehumanization of the world in which Jean-Paul lived was not only

reinforced by the religious views and the bourgeois moral system but it was represented as "natural" and legitimate as well.

Not only were the roles reified but the family as a social institution underwent the same change. The Schweitzer family as a bourgeois family was not a human enterprise concerned with the human needs, hopes and sentiments of its members, but it consisted of constant play-acting, i.e. re-enactment of actionsoof a prototypical nature which were presented as having been based on "natural laws" and "human nature". It was the abstract idea of bourgeois family, founded on "natural laws" and "nature of things" which was responsible for the inhuman treatment accorded to Sartre's mother by her parents. It was quite normal for Charles to treat his own daughter as an adolescent again, despite her having been married and having a child. Living with her parents, unable to support herself, she was forced into the role of her parents' child. It was natural for Charles to expect women to wait on him at the dinner table. Examples abound.

The phenomenon of reification, as presented in Les mots, served a manifold purpose: first - it provided an excuse minimizing the range of the possibility of reflection and choice, second - it facilitated behaviour of the characters in a socially acceptable manner and, third - precluded any questioning of the bourgeois perception of the world. We can, therefore, conclude that reified social processes, as revealed through the mediation of the family and role reification, were in themselves alienating and dehumanizing.

1.6.0. Project. Thus far we have discussed the problem of mediation, as expounded by Sartre in Questions de méthode and as applied in Les mots.

We have seen that his proposed method is based on historical materialism as the only valid interpretation of history, while at the same time using existentialism and psychoanalytic theory as auxiliary disciplines providing the concrete approach to reality. This means that existentialism, aided by a psychoanalysis of a dialectical nature, ought to be used only within the general framework of historical materialism. We have analyzed Sartre's notion of the primacy of material conditions of man's life; however, man is not their passive product:

> . ... les hommes font leur histoire sur la base de conditions réelles antérieures (au nombre desquelles il faut compter les caractères acquis, les déformations imposées par le mode de travail et de vie, l'aliénation, etc.) mais ce sont eux qui la font et non les conditions antérieures.[14]

Inoother words, the existence of prior conditions provides a direction and a material reality for the changes which occur, but the movement of human praxis goes beyond these conditions while at the same time preserving them. Sartre claims that man is characterized primarily by going beyond a situation thereby making himself in the way he surpasses the given. Therefore in studying the history of an individual we ought to determine his actions in relation to objective, present factors on one hand, and in relation to a certain future object which he attempts to realize, on the other. This Sartre calls the project, and it represents the most fundamental notion in our understanding of the history of an individual. In relation to the material conditions in which young Jean-Paul lived, praxis (which refers to any purposeful human activity) was negativity, i.e. it involved the negation of a negation; in relation to the objects at which he aimed,

praxis was positivity, i.e. it always opened up on to the non-existent, that which did not yet exist. Thus the project is at the same time negation and realization: negation in the sense that Sartre's actions negated the already existing situations, feelings, needs, projects; realization, because it always realized a new, however slightly modified, situation. The double simultaneous relation contained in the project is dialectical: it preserves and reveals the surpassed which it has negated in the very movement of surpassing. What Jean-Paul tried to surpass was the objective point of departure which was defined for him by the structures of the French society of his time. Yet this surpassing can only be conceived of as a relation of the existing conditions in which he was growing up and the possibilities he had for realizing his plans and fulfilling his needs. The material conditions of Jean-Paul's early life circumscribed the field of his possibilities. This we have discussed in detail in our analysis of the first group of functions titled the "Family". We have analyzed not only the conditions which delineated the field of possibles for young Sartre, but also how these conditions shaped and influenced his whole perception of the world in which he lived. The number of possibilities open to him represented the goal toward which he aimed in attempting to go beyond his objective situation. This goal comprised the various projects he undertook in an attempt to overcome, as we remember, his feeling of superfluousness, his utter isolation from children of his own age, his feeling of not being substantial, etc. In turn his projects were dependent on the social and historical reality. Thus social possibilities were lived as both positive and negative schematic

determinants of his future: "le possible le plus individuel n'est que l'intériorisation et l'enrichissement d'un possible social."[15] In going beyond the given reality in every one of his projects and in realizing one possibility out of all the possibilities open to him, young Jean-Paul kept justifying himself and in this way kept creating himself, contributing to the making of his own history. This aspect of Sartre's childhood we have discussed, in great detail also, in the second group of functions, titled the "Project". Human praxis, or what we have called the lived experience, is thus this incessant process of going from one objective through interiorization to another objective. Sartre's projects were therefore subjective surpassing of objectivity towards another objectivity, all carried out within the limits imposed by the objective conditions of the environment (which were mediated to him by his family) and the objective possibilities for changing them and thus going beyond them.

Jean-Paul's projects can be analyzed on two levels. One is that of a number of smaller projects, as we have analyzed them: a slow progression of the whole chain of projects which ended up by his accepting the profession of writer as his future vocation. The other level, the one of Sartre's autobiography as a whole, consists of one principal project, that of choosing the writer's vocation as his own, while all the other, lesser projects are in fact only preparation for the main project. On this second level we can say that the first part of his autobiography, titled "Lire", describes the conditions in which Jean-Paul lived and which in turn delineated the field of possibilities open to him. That is, it gives the reader the totality of the particular circumstances

in which Sartre lived, thereby facilitating the interpretation of his principal project. The second part, titled "Écrire", describes the project itself, i.e. Jean-Paul's choices and actions, given his situation. The importance of the concept of the project is emphasized by Sartre's statement that "Seul, le projet comme médiation entre deux moment de l'objectivité peut rendre compte de l'histoire."[16] The fundamental project of Sartre's life, described in Les mots, was assumed by him as a role assigned to him by his family. His most important aspirations, in all their childhood transformations, had their roots in the role of wonder-child, future genius author, the role again assigned to him by his family.

We have already said that Sartre holds that man is characterized primarily by his ability to go beyond the given. However, the given which we surpass cannot be reduced to the material conditions in which we live only. We also surpass our own childhood:

> Celle-ci, qui fut à la fois une appréhension obscure de notre class, de notre conditionnement social à travers le groupe familial et un dépassement aveugle, un effort maladroit pour nous en arracher, finit par s'inscrire en nous sous forme de caractère.[17]

Sartre goes on to say that it is at this level that we discover learned gestures (bourgeois gestures in his own case), and the contradictory roles of which we are made and which tear us apart. Here come to mind the different roles little Jean-Paul adopted: impostor, tyrant, wonder-child, gift of Heaven, etc. At the same time we find at this level the first, conscious or unconscious, revolts and attempts at surpassing the reality in which the child lives, with all the distortions and deviations

resulting from it.

1.7.0. Regressive-progressive analytico-synthetic method. The methodological approach which Sartre proposes for studying the history of an individual he defines as a regressive-progressive and analytico-synthetic method. At the centre of it stands Sartre's claim that

> Donc l'homme se définit par son projet. Cet être matériel dépasse perpétuellement la condition qui lui est faite; il dévoile et détermine sa situation en la transcendant pour s'objectiver, par le travail, l'action ou le geste.[18]

Project implies that all our needs, thoughts and feelings participate in it, and are always in a state of outside-of-themselves-towards. This striving towards an always new objectification, which Sartre calls existence, is always in a state of perpetual disequilibrium. The impulse towards objectification takes different forms in different people, and because in projecting the individual through a field of possibilities it influences him to realize some of them excluding others, Sartre also calls it choice or freedom.

But if we can never really completely overcome the influence our childhood has had on us, if that childhood was lived in a set of material conditions over which we had no control, does it really make sense to speak of freedom in our adult years? In other words, how much freedom does Sartre allow man, within the notion of biological, material and social determinism? In the interview with the New Left Review, cited earlier, Sartre says:

> I believe that a man can always make something out of what is made of him. This is the limit I would today

> accord to freedom: the small movement which makes of a totally conditioned social being someone who does not render back completely what his conditioning has given him.[19]

How much has Sartre the famous writer changed? To what extent has he been successful in not rendering back completely his own conditioning about which he speaks so poignantly, with so much tenderness, bitterness, nostalgia, accusation? "J'ai changé," he says. "L'illusion rétrospective est en miettes; martyre, salut, immortalité, tout se délabre . . . Depuis a peu près dix ans je suis un homme qui s'éveille, guéri d'une longue, amère et douce folie."[20]

In his attempts at going beyond the material conditions and the influence which childhood has had on him man also preserves them. He thinks with those early deviations, he acts with those learned gestures, despite the fact that he wants to overcome their influence. The purpose of man's projects is in the future, which commands his fundamental choices and direction of his life. Thus the aim of Sartre's regressive-progressive analytico-synthetic method is to discover the project which passes from one objectivity to another. Inoother words, to reinvent the movement by, first, establishing the beginnings of the project - regressively, second, by studying the project as it develops - progressively, and third, by discovering the results (ends), both intended and alienated, of the project.

The regressive movement will reveal to us what we have just analyzed above: the given which we surpass every moment that we live, must include not only the material conditions, but our childhood as well. We ought to keep always in mind that we live our childhood as our future. The roles

and gestures are of necessity learned in view of that which is to come, i.e. they cannot be separated from the project which will transform them. Therefore the project will simultaneously surpass the learned gestures and roles, while at the same time preserving them, that is, the project will synthesize both the intentions and the given in its dialectical movement. Sartre concludes that this is the reason why man's life always unrolls itself in spirals. It passes incessantly by the same points, but on a different level of integration and complexity:

> Je suis redevenu le voyageur sans billet que j'étais à sept ans: le contrôleur est entré dans mon compartiment . . . que je lui donne une excuse valable, n'importe laquelle, il s'en contentera. Malheureusement je n'en trouve aucuneeet, d'ailleurs, je n'ai même pas l'envie d'en chercher . . . J'ai désinvesti mais je n'ai pas défroqué: j'écris toujours. Que faire d'autre?[21]

The regressive facts reveal the traces of a dialectical movement: the analysis has revealed Sartre's project as a flight towards future. However the project is more than that because of necessity it has a meaning. This comes from the fact that man aims at creating himself in the world as an objective reality. Therefore, what we have to do is discover the totalizing movement which engenders each moment of man's life in terms of the preceding moment, whereby man passes from the lived experiences of a child to the final objectification of himself. Thus at this stage we must study man's project in its progression; in other words we have to invent, to re-create its movement. Our hypothesis should be immediately verifiable; in order to be valid it must realize, in a creative movement, the transverse unity of all the heterogeneous structures. Now it

is possible to define the regressive-progressive analytico-synthetic method as "en même temps un va-et-vient enrichissant entre l'objet (qui contient toute l'époque comme significations hiérarchisées) et l'époque (qui contient l'objet dans sa totalisation)."[22]

Therefore under this aspect Les mots can be seen as the application of Sartre's regressive-progressive method to his own life; besides illustrating the facts of his own life in childhood, more importantly, it analyzes the historical reasons for those facts as discerned in Jean-Paul's original project carried out in the particular circumstances of his particular family. This would be the use of the regressive-progressive method on the level of the whole book. There is yet another level of employment of this method in Sartre's autobiography. In our analysis of the narrational level of the narrative of Les mots we have seen, first, that there are two constantly interchanging points of view; second, that there are two narrative voices (Sartre the child and Sartre the narrator). All three characteristics of the narrational level are very closely related to Sartre's use of the regressive-progressive method.

The constant shifting of the point of view between Sartre the child and Sartre the narrator is the consequence of the author's going back (regressively) into the past of the child in order to discover his projects and the material reality in which the projects took place, and the author's following the development of those projects (progressively) to the point of their final results, namely to the author (narrator) himself. Thus the changes in the points of view facilitate Sartre's analysis of the hero's projects in the particularity of his material conditions and consequent

explanations and interpretations as perceived and understood by the author.

The regressive-progressive method is also employed in the double temporality of the narration: the time order of the story narrated (i.e. the history of Sartre's life) represents the regressive movement of discovering the past of the hero and his projects, whereas the time order of the narration itself contains the re-creation of the projects in their moving totality, as done by the author. Therefore the double temporality is in fact necessary in order to allow Sartre to make temporal distortions in the narrative, which in turn make it possible for him to describe his own past and his own past projects and lived experiences (regression), and then to show their developments as well as explain them (progression).

Our discussion of the problem of the narrative voice has shown most clearly Sartre's use of the regressive-progressive method. We remember that the narrator's point of viewoften reveals the feelings and attitudes of the future, which Sartre the child could not have known at the time of the event recounted. The obvious purpose in doing this is to show what little Jean-Paul aimed at with his projects as well as to reveal their future results in order to explain the project itself. The narrative voice of Sartre the child relates his feelings and experiences inasmuch as he was aware of them, whereas the narrative voice of Sartre the narrator has a double function: first, to relate some of the aspects of various experiences of which little Jean-Paul was not aware or which he could not understand (this is all the regressive movement), and second, to follow the development and various modifications of the projects, showing their results and explaining them (the progressive movement).

Consequently, we can conclude that these three forms of discourse have been used by Sartre to facilitate the application of his regressive-progressive method. The point of view, the time order and the narrative voice are in fact three different aspects of the above method. Neither of them can be effectively separated from the other two. Or, put differently, this means that Sartre needs all three forms of discourse in order to analyze his own history using the regressive-progressive movement. The narrantional level - which as we have seen consists of narrative techniques and the aim of which is to hold together the whole structure of the narrative - Sartre has used as the technique by means of which he succeeds in the practical application of the method he proposes in Questions de méthode.

Thus far we have seen the relation of all three levels of the narrative with the regressive-progressive analytico-synthetic method for studying individual history, which Sartre proposes on the premise of accepting the historical materialism aided by existentialism and psychoanalytic theory as the only valid interpretation of history at the present time. We have also discussed Les mots in the light of the most important premises and categories from Questions de méthode, such as the project, alienation, reification and the lived experience.

1.8.0. Comprehension. Here the problem poses itself of to what extent we can really understand man's history by analyzing his basic projects, the material conditions in which these were carried out, and their results. Can we re-create man's whole life in such a manner as to understand it fully and rationally? To understand the meaning of any human behaviour,

[illegible] use what Germa[illegible]

Sartre claims, we have to use what German psychiatrists and historians called "comprehension". Man is a signifying being, and the reason for this claim consists in that we can never understand any of his gestures without going beyond the mere present and explicating it by the future. Comprehension as knowing is therefore "simplement le mouvement dialectique qui explique l'acte par sa signification terminale à partir de ses conditions de départ. Elle est originellement progressive."[23] Therefore the movement of comprehension is first progressive, since it ascends toward the objectification of man's projects (Jean-Paul's, for example), while the attitude by which we grasp his original condition at the same time is regressive. Applied to Sartre's autobiography this means that to comprehend implies returning (by a regressive method) to the genesis of Jean-Paul's acts and feelings to discover that in the depth of his various acts he has conceived his future and then carried out the acts with the intention of bringing about that desired future. Young Jean-Paul's projects were this drive toward future, and as we analyze the movement of his projects (progressive act), we can discover the author himself and the complex world of his early life.

Comprehension, therefore, emphasizes the fact that the ends of man's activity are not irrational entities added to the act itself: they represent the going beyond and maintaining of the given in an act which progresses from the present towards the future. The concept of comprehension is of the utmost importance in studying man's history, and it plays a very important role in Sartre's autobiography. He underlines that human reality eludes direct knowledge precisely to the extent that

it makes itself. In other words we cannot have a conceptual definition of man because his reality is always in the process of becoming, rather than a static entity. However, man's reality can be understood through his project within the framework of the society in which he lives. Comprehension can be said to be themmovement of human consciousness by which it reproduces the project of the other. At the source of man's objectifying himself lies the constant growth of existence itself; this growth can never be fully grasped by the intellect only, but it can be comprehended. Consequently, Sartre asserts, in order to understand human reality we must add to intellectual knowledge a comprehensive non-knowledge.

And so, after having described and analyzed his childhood in a very rational and intellectual manner, Sartre ends his autobiography with the favourite proverb of his grandmother Louise, who would say with a delicate air: "Glissez, mortels, n'appuyez pas."[24]

Sartre tells us at the end of Les mots that he has relegated impossible Salvation to the proproom, and what remains is "toute un homme, fait de tous les hommes et qui les vaut tous et que vaut n'importe qui."[25] The idea of Salvation through literature has finally been abandoned. Has Sartre abandoned the notion of salvation through literature only? Can man be saved by anything? The answer is negative:

> There is no salvation anywhere. The idea of salvation implies the idea of an absolute. For forty years I was conscripted by the absolute, neurosis. The absolute is gone. There remain countless tasks among which literature is in no way privileged.[26]

The myths stemming from Jean-Paul's childhood have been debunked. What can Sartre the writer, the author of Les mots, do in his new situation

vis-à-vis literature and the world? The writer still has a mission, one in which he has "to pose problems in the most radical and intransigent manner."[27] However, the expectation of rewards and the recognition have disappeared. The writer's task is to place his pen at the service of the oppressed: "If he fulfills it as he should, he acquires no merit from it. Heroism is not to be won at the point of a pen. What I ask of him is not to ignore the reality and the fundamental problems that exist."[28]

CHAPTER IV: NOTES

[1] "Ot Avtora," (Slova), Novyi Mir, 10 (1964), 60-108, p. 60 [my translation].

[2] "Itinerary of a Thought," Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre, New Left Review, 1969, No. 58, 43-66 (p. 65).

[3] "A Long, Bitter, Sweet Madness," Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre, Encounter, June 1969, pp. 61-63 (p. 61).

[4] Jean-Paul Sartre, Questions de méthode (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1960), p. 22.

[5] Ibid., pp. 79-80.

[6] Ibid., p. 84.

[7] Ibid., pp. 84-85.

[8] Les mots, p. 97.

[9] Questions de méthode, p. 85.

[10] Ibid., p. 90.

[11] "Itinerary of a Thought," p. 47.

[12] Ibid., p. 48.

[13] Questions de méthode, p. 92.

[14] Ibid., p. 122.

[15] Ibid., p. 133.

[16] Ibid., pp. 137-138.

[17] Ibid., p. 141.

[18] Ibid., p. 209.

[19] "Itinerary of a Thought," p. 45.

[20] Les mots, pp. 211-212.

[21] Ibid., p. 212.

[22] Questions de méthode, p. 206.

[23] Ibid., p. 212.

[24] Les mots, p. 213.

[25] Ibid., p. 214.

[26] "A Long, Bitter, Sweet Madness," p. 61.

[27] Ibid., p. 62.

[28] Ibid.

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