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Jean-Paul Sartre , ???-???? ?????

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Jean-Paul Sartre's famous autobiography of his first ten years has been widely compared to Rousseau's Confessions. Written when he was fifty-nine years old, *The Words* is a masterpiece of self-analysis. Sartre the philosopher, novelist and playwright brings to his own childhood the same rigor of honesty and insight he applied so brilliantly to other authors. Born into a gentle, book-loving family and raised by a widowed mother and doting grandparents, he had a childhood which might be described as one long love affair with the printed word. Ultimately, this book explores and evaluates the whole use of books and language in human experience.

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Sartre's father died when he was two years old, and his mother moved with him into her parents' home. It was an upper-middleclass home steeped in education, impassioned politics, and family tension which would indelibly shape his psyche and self-esteem for the rest of his life. His relationship with his mother was much like brother and sister, even as an adult to a child at times, and he accustomed himself to calling her by her name "Anne Marie." The cause of this was his grandfather's contempt for Jean-Paul's father, who died very inconveniently, and the subsequent belittling treatment of Anne Marie by his grandfather who was irked to have his daughter again as his dependent-plus-one leveled, in Jean-Paul's mind, the roles of Jean-Paul and his mother. Anne Marie was treated as an importunate child, but Jean-Paul was coddled as his grandfather's alter-ego, and praised from a young age for his precocity. Actually, he was a spoiled brat, and he knew it, and it wasn't long before he despised himself for the pretentious, melodrama with which he stooped to please his grandfather and sustain his image as a child prodigy. Sartre developed a persona that existed solely to please others around him, and his authentic abilities and desires were hidden deep beneath a veneer that was for him hardly comfortable or satisfying. "Even in solitude I was putting on an act... I sank deeper and deeper into imposture. Condemned to please, I endowed myself with charms that withered on the spot." He developed many neuroses during his younger years, and may never have outgrown some of them. His feeling of superfluity and absolute insignificance apart from the attention of his doters, which was inconsistent at best and frankly demoralizing, hollowed-out his sense of security and worth, and he increasingly repressed and compartmentalized his less favorable habits, interests, and personality traits to survive socially. The result is that he loathed himself and all identity-pimps.

He fell in love with writing only superficially and theatrically at first, determined to impress his watchers. He then introverted so far that he couldn't find his way out for a long time, and he wrote himself into an self-awareness coma by creating fictions in which he was always a delivering hero and the world was celebrating him eternally. It was during this time he began to live 'posthumously', imputing meaning to his life by imagining how his ideas and fantastical exploits would be read by people after he was dead. Only then did he believe his life would be explained and his value to others would be etched in stone as a form of 'legacy' which has been a maelstrom for many heroes and celebrities who have unwittingly wasted their life in this denial of self. Much of this early tortuous introspection and self-loathing was because he had no friends—he wasn't permitted to attend schools which didn't 'recognize' his genius—and when he finally made friends at a school he was allowed to attend, he began the slow process of breaking out of what was quickly becoming a sociopathic escapism ("the human race became a small committee surrounded by affectionate animals"), though he would never completely overcome the desire to see his life as a book which would justify all of his actions in some future reader's mind.

In his later years, he began to be grieved about his early and late inauthenticity. He relates that while writing *Nausea* he was "fake to the marrow of my bones, and hoodwinked." And yet, as much as he tried to escape it, he resorted to the 'elitism' of criticizing everyone, but at the same time,

"I was I, the elect, chronicler of hell, a glass and steel microscope peering at my own protoplasmic juices...I doubted everything except that I was the elect of doubt."

In trying to get back to the beginning of his insincerity and objectified, artificial persona, he found an infinite regression of personas that was forever creating new masks for him to unmask. This was a foreshadowing of his theory of the spontaneous and transcendent ego which is beyond our reach, for it inspires and directs our reach. Any sense of self that we discover or delineate has become an artifice, a forgery of the real self which is impelling the discovering and objectifying a decoy 'self'. Trying to get to the back of the cogito probably kept him busy for a while, and this, along with a fear of death, inflamed his neuroticism. "I lived in a state of terror; it was a genuine neurosis." I'm truly saddened to think how many psychoses and suicides a little Zolof back in the day might have prevented.

Sartre was truly oppressed by the thought ingrained in him, mostly by his grandfather's behavior, that he was not needed anywhere, or had any importance to anyone. He felt completely superfluous. I think his psyche and nervous system was scarred by having to play-act for his grandfather so much. He literally did not feel significant or valuable, and was looking for ways to make himself feel 'real'.

"We were never in our own home... This caused me no suffering since everything was loaned to me, but I remained abstract. Worldly possessions reflect to their owner what he is; they taught me what I was not. I was not substantial or permanent, I was not the future continuer of my father's work, I was not necessary to the production of steel. In short, I had no soul."

At nine years old (c'mon!!) he was thinking about the existential 'holes' people leave behind when they aren't at a party or gathering and people notice that they are 'not there'. This spoke to Sartre of necessity, and he so badly wanted to feel necessary in a way that his absence would be palpable and would shake the world. It affected his whole outlook on his literary career, and Sartre admitted that it still affected him in his later years. His desire to write in such a way that he would be immortalized and 'missed' when he was dead consumed him. He later realized the flaw of living solely that you would be remembered, and labeled this "posthumous" thinking; and yet he couldn't shake the need to leave a profound impression with others about his past being, whether or not he was still 'being' or not. This probably illuminates his more matured ideas about intersubjectivity and our connection to others that is irreducible and fundamental to our consciousness and being. Could it be that Sartre so badly felt the need to be needed, that he invented a philosophy in which this need is proof of our ontological interconnectivity? Or, could Sartre have felt more intensely and consistently this need we all have, and rightly surmised a possible reason for it that better explains its appearance than any other theory? I think both.

Sartre gives an excellent analogy about how he began to feel which may communicate more to the reader in imagery than Sartre could explain in abstract philosophy.

"Since nobody laid claim to me seriously, I laid claim to being indispensable to the Universe. What could be haughtier? What could be sillier? The fact is that I had no choice... I had sneaked onto a train and fallen asleep, and when the ticket-collector shook me and asked for my ticket, I had to admit that I had none. Nor did I have the money with which to pay my fare on the spot. I began by pleading guilty. I had left my identity card at home, I no longer even remembered how I had gotten by the ticket-puncher, but I admitted that I had sneaked on to the train. Far from challenging the authority of the ticket-collector, I loudly proclaimed my respect for his functions and complied in advance with his decision. At that extreme degree of humility, the only way I could save myself was by reversing the situation: I therefore revealed that I had to be in Dijon for important and secret reasons, reason that concerned France and perhaps all mankind. If things were viewed in this new light, it would be apparent that no one in the entire train had as much right as I to occupy a seat. Of course, this involved a higher law which conflicted with the regulations, but if the ticket-collector took it upon himself to interrupt my journey, he would cause grave complications, the consequences of which would be his responsibility. I urged him to think it over; was it reasonable to doom the entire species to disorder under the pretext of maintaining order in a train? Such is pride: the plea of the wretched. Only passengers with tickets have the right to be modest. I never knew whether I won my case. The ticket-collector remained silent. I repeated my arguments. So long as I spoke, I was sure he wouldn't make me get off. We remained face to face, one mute and the other inexhaustible, in the train that was taking us to Dijon. The train, the ticket-collector, and the delinquent were myself. I was also a fourth character, the organizer, who had only one wish, to fool himself, if only for a minute, to forget that he had concocted everything."

Writing this book in his sixties, he was able to understand the genesis of his motives for writing, and he could see that he would never be fulfilled by writing in the way he originally thought he could be. "For the

last ten years or so I've been a man who's been waking up, cured of a long, bitter-sweet madness." He could see that his "eagerness to write involves a refusal to live" in that he would always be inclined to think of writing as a need to be loved and justified as a legend, a story, an object in the mind of some other existent.

"My individuality as a subject had no other interest for me than to prepare for the moment [death] that would change me into an object...I was charging my descendents to love me instead of doing so myself."

He does a wonderful job of sniping the false pride of 'legacy' in himself and his culture. A desire to leave a legacy is a loathing of the present moment for the sake of being a chapter in someone else's history, a drawing in some children's book, that no longer risks hunger, humiliation, or danger of any kind. It is an agreement for one to die if everyone will tell good stories about them. "I became my own obituary."

His loud, self-affirming declaration at the end of the book is as bold and clear as any man who has ever spoken a word in his own defense and fought for his own honor, or humbly but confidently surrendered himself to the gallows he would justly hang on. "What remains [of my work]? A whole man, composed of all men and as good as all of them and no better than any."

I love Sartre's writing. Absolutely love it. It's genius, meandering, spontaneous, anti-climactic, playful, enigmatic, and always, always honest. He reminds me of Wittgenstein. I often wonder if the two ever interacted. Both of their M.O. seemed to be anti-elitism ("Never in my life have I given an order without laughing, without making others laugh"), anti-institutionalism, spontaneity, and an emphasis on 'knowing the world through relation'. I love when he tells on himself for being disingenuous, then tells on himself for telling on himself ("I'm always ready to criticize myself, provided I'm not forced to"). He is a fountain of messy, sudden, and superlatively powerful ideas. From a young age he liked word puzzles, and I think he created cryptic messages for diligent readers to unlock, though I think the point is not memorization but assimilation—if you don't have to work for what you know, you don't really know it to your core. Sartre notices and says all the things we've been taught for so long not to notice or say, and having dumbfounded you, leaves without knowing what you made of it. It was enough for him that he said it...the rest of your life is up to you, as the rest of Sartre's own life and meanings are left to him. "Never have I thought that I was the happy possessor of a 'talent'; my sole concern has been to save myself."

His early childhood ideas and experiences were emotionally and cognitively overwrought and perhaps frantic by some people's standards, but his hyper-developed sensitivity to existential angst and boredom allowed him to help people realize with devastating accuracy the tradition-vacuum into which modern man and academia has fallen, and the way to climb out. Sounds like a rough road, experiencing such psychological torment before the age of ten and much to follow after, but I'm glad he wrote about it for the postmodern explorer. Thanks Sartre my brother.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

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Sách Chuy?n Tay says

Tôi mong ch? gì ? *Ngôn t?* c?a Jean-Paul Charles Aymard Sartre?

?ây (nên/ph?i) là m?t tác ph?m giải bày duyên dáng nh? trong “L?i h?a tr??c bình minh”, bi ph?n xót xa ngang ng?a v?i “Th? g?i b?” và n?u may m?n thì có n??c v?n ??p ?? có th? sánh v?i “Lolita” hay “Phía bên nhà Swann”. V?y thì rõ ràng là tôi s? không có th? mình mu?n v?i “Ngôn t?” c?a Satre, và may thay, tôi ?ã k?p v?t b? t?t c? nh?ng k? v?ng l?n lao trên t? sau ch?c trang ??u tiên.

Tác ph?m này là t? truy?n c?a m?t trong hai ng??i ?àn ông (ng??i còn l?i là Albert Camus – và nhân ti?n, tuy h?p nhau là th? nh?ng hai ngài ?ã ?o?n tuy?t nhau) có công ??u trong vi?c ??a “thuy?t hi?n sinh” lên thành m?t phong trào tri?t h?c và vi?t ra không ít tác ph?m v?n h?c “có tính hi?n sinh” mà cá nhân tôi c?c k? mê nh? *Th?n tho?i Sisyphus, D?ch h?ch, Ng??i xa l?, Bu?n nôn,...* Nói ch? cái h?i ??c “Thuy? hi?n sinh là m?t thuy?t nhân b?n” thì tôi th?y cách ??nh ngh?a “hi?n sinh” c?a Satre s? x? 99,99% các tác ph?m v?n h?c ???c vi?t v?i ngôi th? nh?t xu?ng đồng v?n h?c hi?n sinh @ @

V?y, tr??c khi là m?t chàng lính tr? b?nh ch?e hay m?t ông già ng?m t?u l?y le, Satre ?ã t?ng là m?t c?u bé xinh x?o tóc vàng, s?m m?t b?, s?ng ? nhà ông bà ngo?i, là thiên th?n bé b?ng c?a m? và “c?c c?ng b?n th?u” c?a ông ngo?i. Tr??c khi là m?t ti?u thuy?t gia - k?ch gia – tri?t gia, Satre là m?t ng??i ??c, ng??i vi?t và ông ?ã tr?n tr? v? s? ??c tr??c khi bi?t ch?, tr?n tr? v? s? vi?t sau khi ?ã bi?t ??c. ?ó là lí do b?n s? th?y cu?n sách chia làm hai ph?n: ??c (tr??c - do Thu?n d?ch), Vi?t (sau - do Lê Ng?c Mai d?ch). Cá nhân tôi v?n thích d?ch gi? Lê Ng?c Mai nên m?c k? thiên h?, tôi ??c ph?n Vi?t tr??c. Lê Ng?c Mai có gi?ng d?ch nh? nhàng, n? tính, không b? ám ?nh r?ng ph?i ?ánh v?t cùng ti?ng Vi?t ?? cho ra nh?ng ch? “??c” nên d? ?n r? v?i gi?ng ?i?u tâm s? c?a m?t ng??i ?àn ông k? l?i th?i th? ?u c?a mình. Ngh?a là tôi nghe ???c trong câu ch? c?a cô ?y có ?i?u chi trong tr?o, ?áng yêu c?a tr? nh?. Gi?ng d?ch c?a b?n Thu?n l?i d? gây ?n t??ng r?ng c?u bé Sartre c?a chúng ta h?i vênh váo và x?u tính nh?ng d?o này có c? m?t ??ng ng??i c? b?o r?ng tôi “x?u tính không ch?u n?i” nên ?âm ra tôi l?i th?y có thi?n c?m v?i ng??i x?u tính :”>

V? n?i dung c?a *Ngôn T?*, n?u b?n yêu m?n tác gi? Sartre (gi?ng tôi) thì có l? b?n s? thích tác ph?m ? khía c?nh t? tình, t?c là Sartre ?ã ch?u khó vi?t ra m?t tác ph?m ?? ?ám h?u sinh và fan hâm m? ???c g?p g? ông trên ph??ng di?n cá nhân, c? th? là gia ?ình, tu?i th? và quan ?i?m c?a ông trong th?i k? này. Còn ? khía c?nh ngôn ng? thì tôi không ?ánh giá cao v? ??p c?a *Ngôn t?* l?m (1/4* mà tôi ch?m cho tác ph?m này thu?c v? d?ch gi?). Ph?i ch?ng, khi vi?t v? mình và nh?ng ng??i t?ng t?n t?i quanh mình thì ngồi bút c?a Satre b? ?c ch? b?i th?c t?, v?n là th? ch?t li?u ch? d? khai thác ? ? sâu ch? khó lòng m? ra ? chi?u r?ng, cao và chi?u kích th? 4 nh? v?i v?n ch??ng h? c?u. Cu?n sách này d? th??ng, d? ??c, có ?ôi ba ch?c ch? có th? trích d?n, th? th?i. Tôi tin ch? Mai t?i m?c tôi cho là n?u l?i v?n hay cách k? c?a cu?n này không ?? quy?n r? ng??i ??c thì v?n ?? ch?c ch?n không n?m ? d?ch gi?. Cái s? ??c và Vi?t ???c nêu ? ?ây, nó là s? ??c và vi?t ? c?p s? kh?i (tr? em/thi?u niên), t?c là lúc tác gi? m?i ch?p ch?ng ti?n g?n ??n v?i ngôn t? theo ti?ng g?i m? h? c?a trái tim, không ph?i ??c và Vi?t ? b?c th?ng hoa – ngh?a là ?? s?c rút máu c?a mình và c?a k? khác ?? vi?t hay khi ??c sách thì ph?i len lén móc tim mình ra b? 1 bên gi??ng (vì s? v? tim :”)) Nh?ng có l? b?i tôi là k? ch? ?? tìm vui qua ch? ngh?a và ?ã v?t nghiên bút t? ki?p tr??c r?i nên tôi m?i th?y lòng mình l?nh l?o ??n v?y v?i s? nghi?p ??c – vi?t c?a nhân lo?i :”>

Có m?t chi ti?t v? “Satre tr? con” khá thú v? mà tôi cho là ít nhi?u ?ã ?nh h??ng ??n quan ?i?m ?? cao tính t? do c?ng nh? n?ng l?c ch?u trách nhi?m c?a b?n thân m?i cá nhân ??i v?i cu?c ??i mình trong thuy?t hi?n sinh c?a ông sau này. ?ó là v? ?a l?nh lòng, xa cách h?u nh? là b?m sinh c?a c?u bé Sartre ??i v?i nh?ng ng??i khác (k? c? ng??i thân), c? th? là vi?c ông xem ông ngo?i và m? mình nh? hai nhân v?t v?n h?c có th? phân tích m?t cách khách quan. ??c bi?t, ông ?ã bày t? n?i kinh t?m ??i v?i quy?n l?c ?àn áp c?a ng??i b? (t?i m?c ông c?m th?y may m?n vì s?m m?t b?). V?y là Satre có m?t ?i?m chung v?i vài tác gia khác nh? Kafka và Soren Kierkegaard :))) Không rõ ngài Freud tr? danh c?a chúng ta có bài lu?n nào ??t v?n ?? v? m?i liên h? gi?a tài n?ng v?n ch??ng c?a ??a con trai và s? sóng gió trong m?i quan h? v?i ng??i b? c?a anh ta hay không?

Ps 1: Xin ???c th? hi?n lòng c?m ph?n sâu s?c t?i b?n thi?t k? bìa c?a Nhã Nam, bi?t tôi thích màu xanh mà l?i còn thi?t k? bì nh? v?y [nh? th? Satre ?ang thò ??u ra nói v?i tôi r?ng: H?i em yêu bé nh?, hãy ??n cùng ta và khám phá trí óc ta nh? khám phá b?u tr?i ?êm, mà b?u tr?i c?a ?êm có bao gi? làm em th?t v?ng ?âu, ?úng không?]

Ps 2: Xin ???c nguýt nhè nh? m?t b?n ?ã "nhèm" (không rõ là vô tình hay c? ý) cu?n này tr??c m?t m?t k? ?ang kh? tu nh? mình :((((Mình ?ã ??i m?a ??i gió ??i c? s?m ch?p ?i mua cu?n này, ch?a h?t, còn mua luôn c? Ng??i xa l? c?a Camus cho ?? b? và cho kì nh?n túi m?i ch?u : "<

Ps 3: Rv ???c th?o b?i SCT's T ^^

Fábio Martins says

Demolidor

" Tornei-me traidor e continuei a sê-lo. É em vão que me entrego inteiro ao que empreendo, é em vão que me entrego sem reservas ao trabalho, à cólera, à amizade; eu sei que me renegarei num instante,eu quero é já me traio em plena paixão,pelo pressentimento jubiloso da minha traição futura".

K.D. Absolutely says

What did Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and Ernesto “Che” Guevara (1928-1967) have in common?

Prior to reading this book, I did not know that they saw each other when they were both still alive. This is my first book read written by Sartre and three years ago, I read John Lee Anderson’s *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*. Before Sartre’s image in my unsophisticated (read: zero knowledge in philosophy) mind was this old professor talking inside his wood-paneled and fully-carpeted office about the things like existentialism that was so deep I would never ever understand what he was saying. On the other hand, prior to the Anderson’s book, I used to see the image of Che Guevara printed on the t-shirts of some hip teenagers. I had some clues who he was because of the communist posters my handsome brother brought home when he was still in studying in a radical university. But not all young Filipinos: one caller in a morning show thought that Guevara was some kind of a band soloist so he asked what latest rock song he recorded.

Thanks to printed words. Thanks to books. We can read them and we can be informed. We can choose not to be ignorant. We can also contribute to influencing future generations by writing too. We can make books of our own.

The importance of reading and writing to his life. This is basically the main theme of this book, *The Words* by the existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. At the age of 59, he wrote this book about the first 10 years of his life on earth. He was exposed to books at a very young age. He remembered looking at the volumes and volumes of similar hardbound books stacked in his grandparents’ room. He did not know what were those but he loved to touch them and hear the flipping of the crisp pages. From then on, he resolved to himself that he would not only read those books someday but he also become a writer.

Same thing happened to Che Guevara. His parents also loved to buy and read books. In the above-mentioned Anderson’s biography of Guevara, one of Che’s childhood friends recalled that he could barely navigate inside the living room of the Guevaras because of the many stacks of books and magazines on the floor.

So, what made Sartre and Guevara in common? (1) They both loved to read; (2) They both believed and supported Marxism; (3) They actually saw and talk to each other in Cuba in the 60's. In fact, when Guevara died in 1967, Sartre declared "He is not only an intellectual but also the most complete human being of our age and the era's most perfect man"; (4) I both have read something about them. *Ako na!* (Me already!).

Next in my to-be-read is the childhood days of Sartre's girlfriend, Simone de Beauvoir, *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*.

Erik Graff says

Until this book and except for some of his political writings I've never much liked Sartre. The first exposure to him was in high school through three of his dramas. Read quickly and never seen performed, I wasn't impressed. The second was *Nausea*, an early novel also read in high school--I couldn't finish it. The third, in college, was the collection, *Essays on Existentialism*. I found myself in profound disagreement with his take on depth psychology. The fourth, in seminary, was *Being and Nothingness*. Here, as earlier with *Nausea*, I felt I was reading the symptomatology of a neurotic, not philosophy. Still, I did enjoy some of his political pronouncements and found myself in broad agreement with existentialist philosophy as it was attributed to him by other authors and in some of his essays.

The Words, however, was a pleasant read. The very concept of essaying an autobiography of one's youth was intriguing. Here Sartre considers primarily his first ten years and the three most influential figures of his childhood: his widowed mother and her parents, the Schweitzers (yes, apparently Jean-Paul was distantly related to Albert, though he receives but scant mention herein). Of the three, most important was his grandfather, the great authority figure who, directly and indirectly, appears to have led young Jean-Paul to a career as a writer.

Most of this book, however, is not about persons. Most of it appears to be an effort to describe a state of mind, Sartre's state of mind as a boy and, by implication, how that led to his being what he found himself to be at the time of his writing of this autobiography as a fifty-nine year old man. Here, naturally, one suspects a great deal of second-guessing, of the present overlaying the past--and indeed Sartre devotes a good deal of attention to the centrality of teleology to his developing sense of personhood and purpose.

Only at the book's end does Sartre seriously deal with the influence of the Protestant and Catholic ideologies which were among the givens of his upbringing. I found this approach illuminating and wish there had been more of it.

Fergus says

Sartre was - at the outset of his career, as well as at its end - a man without hope.

And in the middle? Like so many socially-minded intellectuals of a practical cast in mid-century, Jean-Paul Sartre leaned seriously toward socialism, Marxism and even, briefly, communism. Practical people refuse not to act. And Sartre had few illusions, which made practical action for a better world imperative. But disillusionment followed.

That is why *Les Mots*, *The Words*, seems so sad to us now. Disillusioned and prematurely aged by the beginnings of a long series of strokes, Sartre could no longer confidently act decisively. And without hope in his own - and mankind's - future, life was brutal.

His teacher Heidegger, on the other hand, never gave up at least the framework of Christian faith. After a spiritual crisis while studying for the Catholic priesthood, Heidegger had found he needed a more abstractly mystical version of the Gospel than traditional dogma permitted.

The two disagreed on the problem of nothingness as well.

Heidegger, a believer, saw in the Void a fertile region for personal growth. Sartre saw it as an impassable obstacle to self-fulfillment, the dark side of the dichotomy Being/Nothingness - for as proof of the perceived utter futility of the human predicament, the climax of his philosophical magnum opus states baldly, "Man is a hopeless passion."

But when Heidegger lectured on Nietzsche in Rome, temporarily escaping the madness of wartime Germany, it was to show the hope that lives in the midst of hopelessness in a broader interpretation of Being, in much the same manner as T.S. Eliot was urging in wartime London:

Descend lower, descend only
Into the world of perpetual solitude,
World not world, but that which is not world,
Internal darkness....

For both Eliot and Heidegger followed the dictum of the cryptic Presocratic, Heraklitos: "The way up IS the way down." In the mystical world of the Spirit, light becomes darkness and darkness light.

Sartre finished his life as he had begun his early years, without hope. But as he looked back on his life in this at times light and charmingly whimsical book, he saw many happy childhood memories - mixed, however, with the feeling that his life was slowly ebbing away without purpose or meaning.

At least he had his many friends and the company of de Beauvoir.

But uncompromising till the end, he rejected the ordinary hope that makes life bearable for the rest of us.

Abas.Az says

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Eva Pliakou says

"Δεν υπ?ρχει καλ?ς πατ?ρας, ε?ναι καν?νας· κι ας μην κατηγορο?με τους ανθρ?πους αλλ? το δεσμ? της πατρ?τητας που ε?ναι σ?πιος. Τ?ποτα καλ?τερο απ? το να κ?νεις παιδι?, αλλ? και το να ?χεις παιδι? τι εκφυλισμ?ς! Αν ζο?σε, ο πατ?ρας μου θα ε?χε π?σει π?νω μου φαρδ?ς-πλατ?ς και θα με ε?χε συνθλ?ψει. Για καλ? μου τ?χη, π?θανε πολ? ν?ος· αν?μεσα στους Αινε?ες που κουβαλο?ν στην πλ?τη τον πατ?ρα τους, εγ? περν?ω απ? τη μ?α ?χθη στην ?λλη μ?νος και ?λο απ?χθεια γι' αυτο?ς τους α?ρατους γενν?τορες που καβαλικε?ουν τους γιο?ς τους εφ'?ρου ζω?ς· ?φησα π?σω μου ?ναν νεαρ? νεκρ? που δεν πρ?λαβε να γ?νει πατ?ρας μου και που σ?μερα θα μπορο?σε να ε?ναι ο γι?ς μου. ?ταν ?ραγε καλ? ? κακ?; Δεν ξ?ρω, αλλ? προσυπογρ?φω ευχαρ?στως την γν?μη εν?ς διαπρεπο?ς ψυχαναλυτ?: Δεν ?χω Υπερεγ?"

Michael says

Ohne Vater aufgewachsen sucht der kleine Sartre von Kindesbeinen an nach der Berechtigung seiner Existenz. Er entz?ckt die Erwachsenenwelt, indem er schon als Kleinstknirps die Kunst des Lesens erst simuliert, dann tats?chlich im Eigenstudium erwirbt. Er spielt Theater (im umfassenden Sinn des Wortes), sucht in B?chern und im Kino, einer ganz neu aufgekommene Unterhaltungsform, nach Vorbildern. Trotz aller Rollen, die er mit Inbrunst annimmt, scheint es doch, als w?rde die Welt nicht begreifen, dass nur noch einer fehlt: Sartre!
Als er sich schlie?lich in der Rolle des Schriftstellers versucht, sind die Weichen gestellt...

Sehr interessant fand ich, dass Sartres Gro?eltern noch ganz der b?rgerlichen Gesellschaft Frankreichs angeh?ren, wie sie uns bei Victor Hugo begegnet. Die fr?hen Erinnerungen k?nnten noch die eines Proust sein, trotz der drei Jahrzehnte Unterschied. Daran mag man erkennen, dass der gesellschaftliche Wandel immer schneller vonstatten geht. Schon bald wird es die Form des B?rgertums nicht mehr geben, der Sartres Gro?eltern angeh?rten. Insofern klingen auch Motive an, die mich bei Benjamins Berliner Kindheit um neunzehnhundert so sehr ber?hrt haben.

Ich hatte nicht mehr in Erinnerung, wie humorvoll DIE W?RTER geschrieben ist und wie gut lesbar. Der Leser muss keine gro?en philosophischen Vorkenntnisse haben, um das Buch lesen zu k?nnen und ein Bild vom jungen Sartre zu bekommen.

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Jonfaith says

Faith, even when profound, is never entire.

There is considerable audacity in a project of this nature. The famed philosopher/playwright/novelist creates a memoir fifty plus years into the past, a poking about in a small child's mind. I hazard to say there's a some fancy in these pages. Much as Sartre notes throughout most of his childhood he was acting, I assume the great thinker feels compelled to craft something of stature to merit his adult achievement. I will be honest: I don't remember much of my early life. One or two images of leaving Michigan ages 3-4. There are a few flutters after that. My adoptive mother telling everyone I was reading at age two. Was I? I have always had books and much like Sartre I feel indebted. Also, just like the author I had flowing curly locks, a surprise I guess after being bald for 14 months. The stories bifurcate there as Sartre benefited from his grandfather's library and I read comics and books from the local public library. Both of us constructed constant narratives where we were the heroes. He was encouraged to write. I was given a typewriter and I filled notebooks in junior high when I should have been learning geometry.

The second section Writing isn't as magical as the first Reading. He broaches his burgeoning narrative structures, slowly evolving in a stumbling gait --and how everything was ultimately enriched by attending school. That period of his life so deserved a further extensive treatment, if only his adolescent friendship with Paul Nizan. Outside of his widowed mother and tacit grandmother, women do not feature large in this vision. His partial blindness, his diminutive stature, his less than ideal looks all reflect upon this but without explicit comment.

Jeremy says

This shit is pretty good. Sartre is smart. What more can i say? This is about his childhood. i dont know how he remembers so much shit. maybe he is a robot? maybe i am a robot? the key here: sartre is an awesome writer. Thats enough.

"The words" is an autobiography written by Sartre the Great and we (him and I) have never been properly introduced before. It wasn't until a dear friend kindly offered me this book that I got the chance to discover Sartre the man and Sartre the writer. I have separated the two because I have clear distinct feelings for each. I do believe the man had a lot to do with Sartre becoming the Great author/philosopher he is and the aim of the autobiography itself was to show how one lead to another. Written at the age of 59, Sartre retraces back the first 10 years of his life, claiming that he knew back then that he wanted to become an author because of the influence of his grandfather and everything he read as well as his first attempts of writing. The influence of the family and the grandfather is present in the whole book which is divided in two parts entitled "reading" and "writing", respectively. From the organization one can tell that this book is logical and well structured and clearly shows the importance of family more than anything else in Sartre's decision because of its presence in both parts of the book. However, I found this autobiography to be too well organized and clear for my taste which made it hard for me to believe that it was genuine and honest as autobiographies should aim to be. Besides, I believe that Sartre was lying on two major issues one of which is more clear and evident than the other.

First, it is quasi impossible for someone to remember all the books read during childhood or at least as much books as those mentioned in this autobiography. I mean seriously, the other day I tried to remember the books I read the past month alone and I just couldn't remember anything! It was only after I consulted Goodreads that I was able to answer this question. So claiming that one recalls the book read 40 years ago is total bogus to me. No doubt about it!!!

Second, I am pretty sure that no one has an idea about what he/she wants to become when they get older. Let's assume some do, I am sure the idea would not be as clear and extremist (oh yes we'll get back to this) as that presented by Sartre. A child is a vessel for a thousand and one ideas a day while here Sartre presents himself as a one idea/goal/aim child. He also awkwardly views literature as a religion, his grandfather as a Priest (sometimes also God) and himself, the miracle child that has to write because literature needs him, because the world needs him. Said by a child, this might sound kind of cute, but you just feel that this arrogance cannot be that of a child but rather that of a successful intelligent yet obnoxious and shallow kind of a MAN. This further hints that the story we are reading is a fake one.

I am not evaluating the literary value of this book or Sartre the Great. It is absurd as I mentioned before. All the successes and intelligence in the world do not however justify the arrogance and pretentiousness of a man. Sartre the man, was full of that! He tries to dissimulate it in the child in him but I think he failed to convince me at least. Writing an autobiography by itself tends to stem in many cases from arrogance. The art of autobiography can also stem from other needs such as trauma or historical recording of events etc. In fact, it is for these reasons that some of my favorite literary books are autobiographies. However, Sartre was 59 when he decided to write about the reasons that made him become an author. Put into context, this book is the fruit of an arrogant big shot who feels the need to let people know how he became the successful man he is. To this aim he invents or reformulates his childhood story because one can just feel him lying as mentioned before. He fails however to overcome his arrogance at many instances starting from the moment when he starts detailing his genealogy. Seriously, what's wrong with men and family trees!!! Nothing justifies his choice of elaborating on his family tree at the very first pages of this book except extreme arrogance. The other major arrogant point was him believing he had to write to save humanity. Can someone be any more delusional than that? Please!

I am not sure if Sartre was self aware of the image he was giving of himself. But I believe that probably he was and he found nothing wrong in being arrogant. One cannot judge a literary masterpiece based on the character of its writer I agree, but I still believe that modesty in addition to the intellectual capacity makes the most captivating writers ever and probably the smartest (those who brag on the opposite fall in the

annoying category).

In conclusion, reading this book made me discover two Sartres, Sartre the man and Sartre the Great. One I loved and one I hate. Sartre the Great will never become one of my favorite authors because of the man I discovered behind. I cannot dare to deny Sartre the Great of his rightful literary and intellectual value. Then again some books' influence on you just cannot be detached from their authors' influence. But one thing is sure, I will not forget the Sartres.

Alejandro Saint-Barthélemy says

Pretenciosidad pueril infumable, pero me la calcé enterita.

Me gustó mucho esta sentencia ególatra, con todo: «Demasiado orgulloso para luchar por un primer puesto y demasiado vanidoso para conformarme con un segundo.»
