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THE NOTION OF HUMAN FREEDOM AND ITS IMPLICATION IN OUR SOCIETY TODAY

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Abstract

A major problematic concept in our world today is that of freedom which has gained prominence into mainstream discussions. Everyone craves freedom, since “it is only in freedom that man realizes his being” yet only a few think about the responsibilities of freedom. Here we encounter the problems inherent in the possibility of human free choice of actions as preordained by forces beyond his control and opposed to his will, the reconciliation of our answers to human freedom with our acknowledgment of objective necessity, and whether humans are not means of realizing the laws of social development. These and many more puzzles point to the fact that the problem of freedom has remained a perennial one down the ages. Freedom is a distinctive quality of man from other beings. A man beyond being intelligent is also free in his actions and deliberations in the face of decisions and choices. This article hence takes a critical look at the concept of Freedom. Adopting a critical methodological outlook from Sartrean dimension, it exposes its nature and pays particular attention to its attendant consequences in our society today.

Keywords

Self, Freedom, Choice, Determinism and Responsibility

1. Introduction

Most philosophers and seminal scholars have cast doubts on human freedom, thus series of debates on human freedom have emerged in the recent past. While some are of the opinion that man is the author and finisher of his existence, others insist that man is oblivious of what happens to him in this life and hence cannot control the future. The latter belief is anchored on the presumption that all that happens to man between birth and death has only the appearance of freedom. The inevitable result of this view therefore, is that the world is an independent, cosmic order, already fixed and established completely, thus there is no room for any possibility. Apart from the social and political arena, the issue of freedom has remained paramount in the scheme of all sectors of human endeavor. The basic questions remain; can there be any such thing as authentic freedom that is one that entails freedom as freedom? Can man actually attain freedom in the midst of all vicissitudes surrounding human existence? Little wonder then, that the problem of freedom has remained one of the cardinal issues in Ethics. Philosophers have tried in various ways to solve this problem. Some were of the view that man is never a free being but an intrinsic part of nature of the universe that necessarily follows the laws of nature. On the other hand, some philosophers uphold that man is essentially free. His freedom is such that it is not a mere property of man but the very essence of the being of man. This is however, an attempt to reconcile this discordant thesis and antithesis of human reality in terms of freedom that gave rise to this article.

Focusing primary on Sartre's adoption of the term, as the very being of man; an essential property of man that defines his being as such. This opens for him an infinite range of possibility to acquire what he wants and to rise beyond his facticities, since nothing limits his freedom. Given the above claims of Sartre, it becomes obvious that Sartre made some unfounded claim that man has absolute freedom. This conception has fueled great crises between man and the realities of his everyday life.

2. The Concept of Freedom

As already stated above, the word freedom is problematic in its nature, hence, it becomes a herculean task to really say what freedom is. Notwithstanding, many non-dogmatic attempts have been made to convey the implication of the word rather by different persons and groups in the society to declare a certain form of emancipation. The word "Freedom" ordinarily means a total release from bondage. The encyclopedia of philosophy described it as an "exception from

arbitrary, despotic or autocratic control, independence and civil liberty". It also means the state of being able to act without hindrance, liberty of action or the quality of being free from the control of fate or necessity; the power of self determination, readiness or willingness. The word freedom has been influential among the "Existentialists". For one like Sartre freedom is an indispensable attribute of man who is the sole creator of the universe, the master of himself and a being of possibilities. Freedom as an attribute belongs to that mode of being which Sartre refers to as the "for-itself" consciousness or man.

2.1 Freedom and Determinism

Freedom suggests free will. The will has to be free in order to will something. Hence, a free will is one that lacks any impediment. An insane person cannot act freely because he has been constrained with impediments that have become obstructions to his acting. With freedom man is praised for doing what is good and blamed for a wrong act. Coming to our world, there are things man cannot avoid namely, obedience to natural laws. Consequently, can man be said to be absolutely free? Not just freedom from external events but also freedom from the self. In part there is a common belief that the only escape from evil is to free the soul from the body. (Ibekwe, 2015, p. 122). This then brings us to the issue of determinism. Some are of the view that man is not free that whatever he does is what has already been designated for him. Thus for them, man is not free, since from the beginning he is determined in his actions.

As a philosophical doctrine therefore, determinism holds that for everything that happens, there is a condition that necessitated or caused it. For the determinists, every event is a stipulated event. It cannot but happen as it is. No one can change its nature. The determinists negate the freedom of man. In fact, they are of the opinion that man should not be held responsible for his actions, since he is only bringing to fulfillment, what has already been designated for him.

2.2 Ethical Determinism

For this, the voluntary actions of man are determined by a corresponding good. In this regard, the target of man determines the way he acts. For instance, a bricklayer starts by laying bricks.

2.3 Physical Determinism

It States that every physical movement is necessitated by a physical cause. A falling object according to Newton must obey the law of motion.

2.4 Metaphysical Determinism

This is the view that the whole universe is an interrelated whole in which everything is connected with another thing. The universe is seen as a well ordered and interrelated system ruled by rigid laws of nature.

3. Views on Freedom

These include the patristic and medieval philosophers who unanimously x-rayed freedom from the point of view of man's relationship with God. For Augustine the fact that human beings have free will is unquestionable. Freedom for him means to decide or act with intention. Man is God's creation and freewill is a gift from God. Man is the author of his own decision and action. The freedom God gives to man is freedom to do good, not evil, though man can sometimes in certain circumstance yield to evil as a result of absolute freedom.

Thomas Aquinas conceives the idea of freedom from the ethical perspective. He argues that every action tends towards the good. He differentiates between human action and act of man. Against those who opine that human actions are determined by the stars, Thomas Aquinas states; No power is given anything unless it has use. But man has the power of judging and deliberating on all things that may be done by him . . . of course; this world would be useless if our choice would be caused by celestial bodies which do not come under our control ..., or power of reason. (Battista, 1985). Descartes and Kant later conceived this idea of freedom from the anthropocentric perspective. With the knowledge of science and other societal development, man becomes conscious of his autonomy. According to Batista 1985, the father of modern philosophy maintains in the fundamental clause of his philosophy, namely: *Cogito ergo sum* that "freedom is no longer as it was for previous authors, the result of a harmonic co-operation between intellect and will, but is the expression of the blind will to do, to act.

Kant seems to have a clearer and deeper understanding of the problem of freedom more than other thinkers of his time. He argues that even if the greater part of the power of reason crumbles, the power of freedom does not weaken because of it, and it even recovers for man all that was lost on the speculative terrain. (Camy, Christy and Bond (Ed), 2018). Kant defines freedom as *the property of the will to give to itself as law* and not to be subordinate to the law of necessity, as the phenomena are. He went further to argue that it remains for practical reason to find decisive argument in favour of freedom. In his *Fundamentals of the Metaphysics of Custom*, He argues further that man, as a reasoning being belongs to the intelligible world, and can never

think of causality of his own will other than the idea of freedom; since the independence from the determinate things of the sensible world is freedom.

Karl Jasper in his own existentialist account maintains that freedom is something that is lived in any concrete existence. This existential freedom is for him, self assurance in any decision as a historic origin. He opines that “where there is freedom, there is responsibility and where there is responsibility there is guilt” (Karl, 1967, p. 236).

For Hegel (1951) freedom is the proper essence of the spirit and that is to say, its own reality. He maintains that freedom cannot be an abstract quality of a person taken as isolated. For him then, freedom is real but it is only concretely affirmed when man integrates himself in the society. Karl Marx transposed certain Hegelian idea into his dialectical materialism. For him; true freedom is what all men will possess when men control the physical and social mechanisms that dominate them at present. De Finance (2019) posits that Freedom is necessity understood and utilized. There is no free will.

Soren Kierkegaard as edited by Walter (1974), in his concept of freedom argues that human existence has a peculiar meaning”. To exist is to be an actor and not simply a spectator in the drama of life”. Friedrich Nietzsche, established the reality of human freedom by proclaiming the death of God. Consequently the death of God for him sets man free. The death of God is man’s liberation, for now man is free from his oppressive commands and prohibitions which are obstacles to human development.

For Sartre, freedom entails the freedom of choosing but not the freedom of not choosing. It is not possible for a free being to avoid making a choice since man is free to choose not to choose what he wants, but he is not free not to choose since a refusal to choose is already a choice made. To refuse to choose is in fact one way of choosing; to refuse to take a decision is already a decision taken.

Sartre having discovered the reality of human freedom goes on to say that man is not free not to be free. He cannot avoid being free for he is “condemned to be free” and whatever he decides to do is an exercise of this freedom. However, man’s exercise of his freedom is often obstructed by various factors of physical, psychological, social and environmental nature. Some of these factors (e.g., insanity, physical force or violence) render the exercise of freedom completely impossible, and consequently removes moral responsibility. There are other factors that also render the exercise of freedom difficult but not impossible, such as habit, anger, fear, or any strong emotion, psychic illness, drunkenness, etc. These consequently diminish moral responsibility but do not completely remove it.

4. The Self as Subject of Freedom

Human freedom has no limit and boundary. For Sartre (1954, p. 162) “human reality is what makes itself to be and this is complete free choice. Hence, the famous existentialist idiom: Existence precedes essence. The uniqueness of the self in Sartrean philosophy is the ability of man to exhibit his human freedom. Freedom for the existentialist is not a property of the will but the very structure of the being of man. According to Sartre, it is the existence of freedom and the ability to shape the future that distinguishes man from all other beings known to us on earth. That is why Sartre crowned man with absolute freedom and responsibility by presenting him as the sole creator of the universe. This makes the source of his actualization possible. It is through freedom, decision and responsibility that man becomes authentically himself. He is able to transform the world by decisions he makes. This is the position of Sartre according to Leep (1965) liberty confers on man the creative power which allows him to escape the mechanical laws of cosmic evolution, and to take in hand his own existential becoming. Every act of creation gives us the proof of our own liberty and that of our fellow men.

For Sartre, man’s freedom is absolute. It belongs to the structure of man or the for-itself. Man’s freedom elevates him above the past, the environment, the rules of language and the dialectics of history. Man’s freedom transcends all these and they have their existence and meaning from man’s freedom. Since man is condemned to be free according to Sartre, he is condemned because he did not create himself, yet in order respect, he is free because he is thrown into the world without explanation, he is responsible for everything he does. This means that no limit to my freedom can be found. Sartre thus asserts “man is nothing else than his plan; he is therefore nothing else than the ensemble of his acts, nothing than his life” (Sartre, 1967, p. 47).

Sartre does not see freedom as a cause, but rather the source of man’s estrangement. From other things and from other selves, man is at the same time the source of its creativity. Man aims at his interaction between his own possibilities and the external world in future. In this sense therefore, it is only in action that reality is possible. However, life becomes meaningless unless it is lived and the value realized is that which each individual fashions into it. Sartre maintains that man is obliged to act in a situation and since we are condemned to be free, choice is always possible as testified.

5. Absoluteness of Freedom?

From Sartre's absolute or limitless freedom, one would understand that whatever situation one finds himself, one is expected to embrace it. This is because he has deliberately chosen to engage in such a project. In Sartre's own explanation, it is therefore senseless to think of complaining, nothing foreign has decided what we are, feel or live, for there are no accidents in a life. Everyone therefore has to realize himself to be a subject among others, and each choice must be taken in responsibility not only to the individual self but to all men. Sartre explained various types of personal feelings and sexual behavior as following from this central contradiction. It follows then, that giving excuses of not being able to do certain things he said shows "bad faith" since the only limit to my freedom is the world of resisting things. Man knows that only when he is dead and the stories of his effort told, will his nature be known, and that by then the story cannot even be told without alien meanings being impressed on it. Hence if he stops to reflect on his nature at any particular moment, he will feel anguish, the consequences of realizing his freedom without exercising it. If by ignoring his freedom, man realizes only his immersion in the world of undifferentiated things, he will feel nausea, the nausea we feel in front of any vicious, shapeless substance that extends meaninglessly in all directions. He is therefore wise if he never dwells on one aspect of his being to the exclusion of the other, he will continually exercise his freedom in concrete projects in the world. Sartre in affirmation of the above thought stated thus, "Man's plan in nature is that of a unique dynamic creature among the inanimate and this dynamism springs from the fact that he is able to see everything to his needs, his desire, his aversion and fear." (Sartre, 1958, p. 12.)

However, man in the world is surrounded by significant objects. It behooves him therefore to transform the world with the choice and decisions he makes. For each person is an absolute choice of self from the standpoint of a world of knowledge and of techniques which this choice both assumes and illumines, each person is an absolute date and is perfectly unthinkable at another date.

6. Freedom as Relative

According to Sartre, man is freedom and freedom is man. He cannot be alienated from freedom for he is absolutely free. He is condemned to be free. Sartre seems here to misinterpreted as follow Rousseau's dictum that "man is born free but he is everywhere in chains". (Rosseau, 1968, p. 49). Man for Sartre is in chains in relation to freedom, he is not free

not to be free, therefore man is relative to his freedom and freedom is the property of man for it pertains to him as an individual. This is why he must own responsibility for all his actions without appeal to determinism. Freedom is the very being of the for-itself and it must forever choose itself. For Sartre, man does not first of all exist before being free. He is relatively and ontologically free, his existence is his freedom and his freedom, his existence. Man thus cannot think about a progressive world without emphasis on freedom. Thus, Bunk, (2019), acknowledges this when He posits that the lack of freedom hinges upon creativity and success in the art world. This shows clearly the indispensability of freedom.

7. The Authentic Self

This is the one which requires a lucid and truthful awareness of the situation and avoidance of false relations. Hence man lives an authentic life by only acting according to his own good choice, and at the same time knowing the effect of this choice of his. Therefore, the authentic self involves himself actively in making his good choice and absorbing the pressures of responsibilities and risks demanded by the situation. Thus, the only ideal recognized by his freedom is that of making choices in an authentic spirit, that is with full lucidity about his total responsibility for the ends he proposes and the means he takes. The authentic individual, the only genuinely free man is the one who can bear the look of life from the perspective of an artistic ontology. Hence, the gaining of authentic freedom is the sole prize of life.

Therefore, man acts courageously when he takes charge of his life and destiny and then the authenticity of man lies in his own very self, either for or against. That is to say, each must invent his own values and exist authentically in so far as he strives to realize values that are really his own. We must be able to redirect our desires when the need arises in order to maintain our authentic selves. Authenticity consists in life of freedom and self actualization that alone can make life enjoyable. Vallet, (1974, p. 11) makes it clearer thus; “The person who strives to develop himself or herself helps to shape and determine his own life, such individuals are usually happier than those whose lives are determined or managed by other”.

Therefore, authentic existence is when one will choose to take over his being as his own responsibility. He will face it squarely and unequivocally, and allow it to disclose itself fully and uniquely as his own. In Sartre and other philosophers of his like, the self is still struggling to survive. But to the modern philosophers, the self is an impertinence. Hence, it is in the power of knowing what one is doing, of being sane and responsible that we understand the authentic self.

8. Freedom and God

Since Sartre gave us a dualistic ontology that is completely exclusive of God, it follows then that Sartre has no place for God in his ontology. Arguing at the early part of his "Being and Nothingness," Sartre failed headlong to the phenomenologist's prejudice that the essence of being lies in its manifestation since; there is no being which is not the being of a certain mode of being. Man which cannot be apprehended through the mode of being which manifests being and veils it at the same time. Consciousness can always pass beyond the existent, not towards its being. That is why we call it onto-theological, since a fundamental characteristic of its transcendence is to transcend the ontic towards the ontological. The meaning of the being of the existent in so far as it reveals itself to consciousness is the phenomenon of being. This meaning has itself a being, based on which it manifests itself. (Darchy, 1962, p. 89).

Sartre totally denied God at the phenomenological and ontological levels of existence. He therefore, looked at the traditional Thomistic Theodicy as a prejudice of creationism. Sartre simply dismissed the argument of theodicy as a fallacious argument moving from the possibility of God to his existence, and argues that, Leibnizian effort to define necessity in terms of possibility, - a definition taken up by Kant again is undertaken from the point of view of knowledge, from possibility to being, such as Leibniz conceives it as the passage from our ignorance to knowledge. And he concludes that "God if He exists is contingent. For Sartre, this illusion in man results as one of the fundamental passions of man. And exponently exposed in his "Nausea" that every existing thing is born without reason, prolongs itself out of weakness and dies by chance.

Then the Sartrean denial of God's existence rather than extolling the pride of man laments his predicaments in trying to be God. Man is left in a dilapidated passion, longing to be God, and so he is tormented by his supreme impossibility which he ever tries in futility to actualize. Thus what Sartre considers our salvation is our damnation for God rather than fetching him joy, only gives him sorrow. Perhaps the most positive contributions of Sartre's thought is the underscoring of alienation and forlornness of man when he denies the existence of God and a future life of man.

Thus, the idea of what Sartre considers our salvation becoming our damnation. This is because the denial of God and its implicit deification of man can only produce the painful feeling of anxiety and fear at the realization of our infinite responsibility for everything about our existence. This is an existential aberration, for man can never be responsible for everything about his existence. He never created himself and his existence in the world and any attempt to

appropriate a world, which is not his own making meted on him misery. Then Sartre should reckon that to be created at all is to be subject to an ultimate arbitrariness and determination. This is true since we have come into being through the operation of forces other than ourselves. In other words, we are creatures, contingent dependent beings. And not only is the fact that we exist as a result of the operation of forces beyond ourselves, but the fact that we exist with a certain nature, our freedom can only be: "A freedom within the basic situation of our being the kind of world we are.

That the basic conditions of our existence are thus set by forces beyond ourselves must be presupposed in any viable concept of human freedom. For any human action implying our concepts "free" and "responsible" must in the case be the actions of beings who have been created and formed by forces beyond themselves. Hence man was not created as a finitely perfect being; rather he was created as an immature and imperfect creature who was grown through time from the creator which is the perfection of man's nature in relation to him. This is so because man's nature is alien or natural towards his maker but is, ". . . inwardly structured towards him so that man will find at the same time his own perfecting and right relation to God". (Hick, Death, 1985, p. 255)

Since man has been created by God, for God, and is basically committed towards him, the principle that to be created and be under the creator ipso-facto nullifies the Sartrean language of personal agency. St. Thomas in his *Summa Theologiae*, asked whether it can be demonstrated that God exists and he answered succinctly, that from the knowledge of the effect, it is possible to infer the existence of its proper cause since no effect can exist without a preexisting cause. (Hick, 1985).

Then we come to the five ways of expressing God's existence, each starting with a fact of experience - motion or change, caused existence, corruptibility, composition and imperfection and they all lead to the existence of a self subsistent Being, considered as the necessary being, Absolute perfection, supreme end.

9. The Intersubjectivity of Freedom

This is mutual openness and we become really present to one another. In this way, in the "I-Thou" relationship, become present to the other in a mutual openness and self-giving. We are no longer two isolated entities, two strangers, two poor souls, plotting to hide each other's freedom rather writes Marcel. Here is meant an encounter a genuine meeting in love, friendship and spiritual availability (Glenn, 1978).

This meeting involves an invitation, an appeal to be engrossed in a loving encounter. For if I treat him as a thou, I treat him and apprehend him qua freedom and not only nature. Freedom is of primary importance for man because, man is most unfree when he is enclosed within himself, he becomes egocentric and his own prisoner. But a man on the other hand is somehow enriched by everything which enriches his brother and himself. Two – human beings open themselves up for one another, appeal to one another in a free, inner movement of love by which they break through their narrow individuality and thus become themselves. Thus each one of us in order to grow must open up to other beings without allowing himself to be dominated or neutralized. Thus, for Marcel 1962, to encounter someone is not merely to cross his path, but to be for the moment at least near or with him Marcel.

In this case, we have a real subject – object relationship, contrary to the menacing threat by Sartrean “other”. Marcel’s “other” is a loving co-present, thou, which he said is a reciprocal intercourse of I and thou who get to know one another as persons. Then Martin Buber explicitly expresses it this way: “it is only by concentrating my total being on the interests and needs of the other that I can affect that perfect mutual relationship which results in my genuinely living” (Buber, 1961, p. 140). In this then, life is between persons and not in them. For no man is an island so to say Paul 1961, states that the man who stands in lonely and proud isolation is doomed to loss of life, futility and unreality. Therefore, we cannot become selves as selves except in relationship. Hence, inter-subjectivity involves openness, a wholeness and directness. All its relations presuppose an authentic love with an accompanying responsibility and presentness. In short, the subject is not treated as an object, but as the magnetic centre of presence. The coming together has a metaphysical implication and involves a mingling of two presences.

Sartre’s principal aim here is to point out that the traditional debate is fundamentally misguided, in aiming to dismiss completely free will or determinism. What must be understood is that what is free and what is not free are internally related, the former is dependent on the later and finds its meaning and possibility in and through the later. The for-itself must perpetually transcend that Sartre calls facticity in order to exist. Facticity is the coefficient of adversity of things”. He defines facticity as the world of resistances or obstacles that surround a person which has to be surpassed. Thus, if there were no facticity, to be overcome, there would be no for-itself. Hence the action of surpassing and overcoming is the very being of this for-itself.

From what we have seen above, we can deduce that Sartre conceives the possibility of man’s reality in freedom; man is defined as a being, such that in its being, its freedom is at stake

because human reality perpetually tries to refuse to recognize its freedom. He thus concludes that this human reality is free because it is separated by nothingness from what it is and from what it will be.

10. Freedom and Choice

Choice is another concept that underpins the reality of freedom in its entirety. Since man is free he cannot avoid making choice. According to Sartre, “freedom is the freedom of choosing but not the freedom of not choosing. Not to choose is to choose not to choose”. The problem of choice like that of freedom constitutes a major problem in existentialist philosophy. The doctrine of existentialism holds that existence precedes essence. This implies that men do not have fixed natures that limit or determine their choices. Man exercises his freedom by choosing one course of action and by that very fact, makes another course of action impossible.

This implies then that what a man is, is determined by the choice he makes. It all depends on us to choose to be great or noble, or base and humiliated. It is then our choice that validates our action. Whatever project I decide to choose is an exercise of my freedom. There is nothing absolutely external to me according to Sartre, that forces me to choose. This is why Greene 1960 inaptly remarks that “The belief that approval of another or society in general can justify our actions is fallacy as is the belief that universally valid moral absolutes exist. Nor is there a transcendent self to which we can look for directive. Hence, just as each of us has free consciousness, we invariably make our choice independently. Each individual is the architect of his life.

11. Freedom and Responsibility

Man’s freedom according to Sartre, is accompanied by responsibility and disturbing anguish. Man is not the author of his being, yet he has to assume full responsibility for his manner of being because he is free. In line with this, freedom excludes the possibility of finding an excuse for what one is or does. Hence the first step of existentialism is to put the whole man in possession of what he is and to make the total responsibility of his existence repose on him. What this implies is that even if a man finds himself in a situation beyond his control although he is not responsible for being in that situation, he is nevertheless responsible for the way he reacts to it. Thus responsibility goes with freedom, for to be free is to be responsible. Freedom is therefore a heavy burden laid on man’s shoulders from which there can be no escape for “I am

responsible even for the desire of fleeing my responsibility”. In his trilogy, ‘*les chemins de la liberte,*’ Sartre portrays Mathew as a man who wants freedom without responsibility by refusing to marry. He eventually impregnated a girl and wanted to abort the baby. He was however confronted by his brother Jacques, a bourgeois whom he wanted to lend him money for abortion in a bid to flee from his responsibility. Thus, Jacques reminded him that freedom consists in frankly confronting the situation into which one has deliberately entered and accepting ones responsibility.

The point Sartre is making here is that responsibility is the price one has to pay for enjoying ones freedom, otherwise it would lead to inauthentic life. Responsibility is the necessary consequence of freedom and it also gives freedom its essence. To deny responsibility is to water down the profundity of human freedom. Hence, responsibility here, implies cultivation of consciousness of the fact that one is the author of one’s action. It also means accountability for one’s action.

12. The Problematic of Freedom Today

In the age of technology like ours, it has become very common to speak about freedom and its attendant consequences. Many have referred to the 21st century as an age of freedom, hence everybody, nation, group, etc, wants to be free. The press wants freedom, the prisoner wants freedom, the burglar wants freedom, the drug addict wants freedom etc. Freedom is valued in that it helps to preserve the fundamental human rights. We have freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of religion etc. Sequel to this, man is free to say whatever he wishes or follow any group that appeals to him. No time in history has the word freedom been frequently misused than in our age. These usages account for reasons why many crimes and unhealthy lifestyles are on the increase. Does freedom entail crime or Violence? Does Freedom entail immorality or vicious living? Human freedom must be understood within the consciousness of its implication, both remote and proximate. It is in the this light that one speaks of an authentic freedom.

13. Conclusion

A thing is said to be authentic when it is known to be true, genuine, dependable, pure and reliable. In the existential arena, authenticity stresses the discovery of facticity. And it is consciousness that propels one towards the authenticity. This is what Sartre calls the ability “to

see ourselves as ourselves.” (Steve, 2009). More so, the authentic man thinks and acts in terms of an adequate understanding of whom he is. He substantiated this point in the following extract; “To be authentic is to realize fully, one’s being-in-situation, whatever this situation may happen to be, with a profound awareness that through the authentic realization of the being in situation, one brings to plenary existence the situation on the one hand and human reality on the other hand. This presupposes a partial study of what the situation requires and then a way of throwing oneself into it and determining oneself to be for-it-self in this situation.” (Ferdinand, 2001).

The most fundamental thing about Sartre’s authenticity is that it is the antithesis of bad faith (Bavint, 2019). He describes in-authenticity as the attempt to evade responsibility, for instance, a girl who consents to flirt. Sartre describes a situation in which a man compliments a woman and pays her polite attention by holding her hand in compliment of her vivacious look which she takes at face value refusing to acknowledge their ‘sexual background.

The woman leaves her hand in the hand of the man without facing up to what is implied by holding hands. She pretends not to know the resultant effect of her postponement of action. She refuses to choose not knowing that by that she has already made a choice through passive consent in a sense. In Sartre’s view, in-authenticity is the denial of the cardinal truth that we are free and responsible; whereas authenticity, as the antithesis of in-authenticity, is the acceptance of this cardinal truth. The authentic person responds fully to the appeal to get real in every situation. He expresses these views for the authentic person in his War Diary. In this work, Sartre argues that “authenticity consists in adopting human reality as one’s own.” (Hoare, 1939)

And this does not call for a radical change of being; rather it involves a radical shift in his attitude towards himself and his ineluctable situatedness. Instead of choosing not to choose as does the inauthentic person, the authentic person exercises his freedom assuming that this situation is the facticity in terms of which he must now choose himself. Freedom is a n underpinning element of authenticity (Wolfgang, 2020). The authentic person seeks to identify himself with his inalienable freedom rather than flee his freedom in the vain hope of identifying himself with the in-itself. Consequently, authentic being is not a permanent foundation that a person can choose to establish once and for all at a particular time, but rather an ongoing foundation that he must maintain by constantly choosing authentic responses to his situation. So, it is by no means enough to be authentic: it is necessary to adapt one’s life to ones authenticity. This is why he re-iterated that authenticity is the continued task of choosing responses that affirm freedom and responsibility rather than responses that signify a flight from it. The authentic

person takes on the task of continually resisting the slide into bad faith and threatens every project.

Authenticity generally accepted is a fundamental factor of existential life. But the nature and the realization of authenticity that Sartre proposes here ipso facto, is clear beyond every reasonable doubt that it is more of an intellectual and untenable idea but was exaggerated beyond human possibility.

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