

# Existential Humanism of Jean Paul Sartre; a Philosophic Perceptive Analysis with an Especial Emphasis on His Excoigation of Freedom and Ethical Implications

Dr. PR Chandra Reddy

Associate Professor, Department of Science and Humanities, Mother Theresa Institute of Engineering and Technology,  
Melumoi, Palamaner, Chittoor Dt, Andhra Pradesh, PIN 517408, India

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## ABSTRACT

Jean Paul Sartre, an ardent advocate of atheistic existential humanism, openly pronounces time and time again that his philosophy is human centered and his man is free from the inconspicuous chains of illusions and delusions. Here the two terms 'existentialism' and 'humanism' are felt to be indistinct from both from denotative and connotative points of view. That's why an indefinite article precedes the word 'humanism.' On the other hand, existentialism is generally characterized as an expostulation against moral or physical determinism in regard to human race. Determinism is a religious belief that all events, including human thoughts and actions, are controlled by some external super human force. Some philosophers have followed determinism to say that individual human beings have no free will and can never be held morally responsible for their actions. Thinking people treat it is a kind of escapism. By the way, humanism, in its most general diligence may mean any system which centered on the conceptions of dignity of life and freedom of mankind. Hence Jean Paul Sartre makes his existentialism, humanism on the foundation of human freedom. He has done this by drawing and synthesizing the doctrines of Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger who contributed to the foundations of existentialism. The outcome is indeed a unique conception of freedom. Sartre begins and ends his speech, in the manner of Edmund Husserl, with a phenomenological description of pragmatism. This kind of analysis would reveal just a consciousness, 'the being subject,' existing exclusively as the consciousness of something, 'the being object' as a result, there are the subject and object. The idealism of existentialist throws light on the idea that humans should stop wasting time puzzling over the curiosity about their own existence, it's a mere waste of time and they ought to begin instead by accepting it as a fact, the first and most necessary fact; existence precedes essence. Existentialism is indeed a philosophy of downrightness.

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## TERMINOLOGY

Humanism, existentialism, *cognito*, priori, inclination, determinism, doctrine, consciousness, pessimism, blasphemy, human project, quietism, despair, contemplation, naturalism, self-deception.

Atheistic existential humanism is a philosophical discipline whose advocates maintain that existence precedes essence, asserts Jean Paul Sartre. Existentialists pertain themselves to humanity's very being, with its continuous, anguished struggle to exist. They take for granted that individuals have free will and are thus entirely responsible for their choices and actions. Even as existentialists reject deterministic views and systems of fate or destiny, they also reject that unchallengeable or absolute value systems exist to guide humanity and that human reason can adequately explain the universe. Existentialists, on the other hand, emphasize that individuals are free to make their choices, not to follow the religious value systems. They form their own meaning of being and creating sense in the process of life. Sartre argued that man makes himself. However, the attempt to create meaning and morality in a diverse word which is without defined guidelines and rules and combined with the belief that freedom and responsibility rest straight with the individual. This generates particularly severe anxiety for the individuals. Although existentialism holds out the possibility of an improved existence by placing the individual at the center of change, it may also run the risk of

promoting despair, hopelessness, and nihilism. Existentialism has gained global reputation in the after effects of World War II, particularly in Europe. Since World War II, existentialists have assembled into two major camps. In the manner of nineteenth-century philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, Christian existentialists such as Gabriel Marcel have emphasized that true freedom, including freedom from conflict and despair, may be found in God, who bridge the finite and the infinite. Some existentialists acknowledge this general orientation while rejecting any specific theology. Martin Heidegger and Sartre pioneered a second approach, one that asserts an atheistic universe in which individuals may make themselves through exercising their free will, but that necessitates making choices in the social field, including, perhaps, political struggle against repressive social institutions, laws, and conventions.

Sartre is an intellectual powerhouse, in his own time and even after. He has moved people: both scholars and laypeople, by the power of his thought provoking ideas and his tremendously powerful way of expressing them to drive his point of home. He has dimmed all category boundaries and violated conventional moralities. He is the first, probably, the last to turn down the Nobel Prize, for literature in 1964, adhering to his principles. He remains a symbol of enlightenment and a torchbearer of existentialism is humanism. He is one of the most prominent personalities in philosophy. His contributions, especially, to existentialism and phenomenology have made him a vital figure of the twentieth century. His books and plays act as a bridge for the public to understand his philosophy. On account of a slowly collapsing romantic idealism from the previous century, Sartre helped shift the Western thought into a new perspective through his literature and philosophical interpretations. Sartre used his lectures, novels and plays as a way for people to reach his highly complex ideas. They are regarding eventuality, theories of co-existence, ethics, freedom, authenticity and religion. He has used his magnum opus 'Being and Nothingness' for it. It is the source to his philosophical propositions. He is the first and the foremost humanist, trying to set human beings free from their own entangled constraints of blind faith. It is the universal love he has for humanity. It is felt across the world that without Sartre, the domains like, philosophy, literature, sociology and many more topics of study would not be what and how they are at present. It is felt that he was one of those who are born with a purpose.

The present account is a lecture by Sartre who accepted the offer to elucidate his critics and to present the relation between his existentialism and humanism on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1945, in Paris. He appeared in front of a packed crowd, without notes, and proceeded to defend his atheistic existential humanism which means placing man at the center of the human world and focusing on humanistic values and devotion to human welfare. He understands that the discussion of existentialism has been moved from the academic platforms with philosophers to the common platform of laypeople. He begins his lengthy, informative, and enlightening monologue explaining, with mundane examples, the principles of existentialism. The lecture is a modified description of his philosophy addressed to the detractors of his existentialism; mainly the Communists, Marxists and the Christians believers. He declares that he is an atheist; his aim is to correct the mistaken notions of some Christian believers about his philosophy. The religious believers criticize the statement of Sartre: man is nothing other than what he makes of himself; it nullifies the belief of God. They assume that it would disregard the better side of human nature. They also question the morality of existential philosophy. To them, denying God's existence and ignoring his teachings are a thorn in the flesh. As for the Communists, Sartre has hoped for some form of understanding with the movement as he thinks that their ideology is progressive. But the Communists are under the feeling that existentialism is a bourgeois philosophy. It is a mere contemplative doctrine and it encourages people to follow inaction, fate, destiny, quietism, and despair that ultimately make people passive. Taking his lecture as an opportunity, Sartre gives a thorough clarification of his existential humanism and the aspects related to it, it shows the Communist critics that there is similarity between his philosophy and the Communist ideology.

Sartre elaborates on the title by acknowledging existentialism is a kind of humanism. This is largely because some people, believers and Marxists, have mistakenly viewed existentialism is pessimistic and negative to human life, as it is cited above. On the other hand, he strongly feels that, in fact, the detractors of existentialism are the very pessimists. The detractors of existentialism believe that everything is predestined and man is a mere puppet in the hands of God, thus they have followed determinism and this belief makes man a dormant being. The determinist views and argues that determinism is true and determinism rules out human freedom and responsibility which should be rejected. The determinist believes in God, and he would only be able to handle something as bewildering as the world and the human. Sartre comes down heavily on determinism and rejects this view, as it would deny the intrinsic freedom of man and makes him inactive and dependent. Sartre is out and out a libertarian and argues that human freedom and responsibility must be accepted for they are the head and shoulders above the rest. As humans, they ought to find their own course through the world and make their own choices about what they consider value, what they are going to expect from one another, and what they are going to deice is good or bad. Even though Sartre does not believe in God and feels that man as 'essentially alone,' he recognizes humans are unavoidably connected with other people. Thus humans must be responsible when they make a choice because others would be affected and they are free to react negatively. The purpose of Sartre is to wake people up and to make them think and act in a proper way to shun excuses for their actions.

After that, Sartre tries to more unequivocally define existentialism. He wonders why some people use the term existentialism as a fashionable insult rather than actually trying to understand what it really means and he reminds the audience that existentialism is hardly intended for only specialists and philosophers. It is for all the humans who would like to live their lives actively and in a better way. Existential humanism adopts the theory of the human world but gets rid of the naturalist tendency and making man as an underling under any supernatural entity. It claims that to be human is to be engaged in certain ways with the world. The positive point of this claim is that the description of a human life is one of a practical involvement in the world.

Shakespeare in his *Julius Caesar* says, 'Men at some time are masters of their fates: the fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings. Might you become master of your fate through choice - no matter what the stars say?' Here what Sartre and Shakespeare pronounce is same, the choices one makes give a different design to one's life. Sartre distinguishes Christian existentialists from atheistic existentialists like himself, but he announces that the truth one can't deny is the concept that 'existence precedes essence.' What he means is that human existence is the contrary to the existence of any manufactured product, such as a paper knife, whose essence precedes its existence because its manufacturer has created it to serve a particular purpose, unlike man. Rousseau says that man was born free and everywhere he is in chains. Here the chains can be considered as the blind belief in determinism. To the maximum extent, one's life depends on the choices one makes in one's life. Besides, the only thing that remains true is that there is a mind or consciousness which one can't doubt and can believe its perceptions. And thus the famous formulation, 'I think, therefore I am,' the world famous mighty phrase, finds itself as the corner stone of existentialism. It means that one is able to think, therefore one exists. It is a philosophical proof of existence based on the fact that someone is capable of any form of thought necessarily exists, the great French philosopher and mathematician Rene Descartes announces in his 'Meditations on First Philosophy.' Here Sartre holds that humans have freedom to think and to make choices, it is undeniable that they are responsible for the consequences as well, for one's choices can influence the whole humanity. Thus he promotes universal humanism, based on individuality, which has moral significance too. In addition to that, the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger whose philosophical analysis is focused on the human being's existence in his or her world as an individual and within his or her social context. From this standpoint, both the world and the being are viewed as undividable. Thus it can be understood that the personal responsibility is vast as it engages all humanity.

One of the mighty affirmations of Sartre is 'Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he chooses or does.' The philosopher has believed that human beings live in constant fear and frustration, not exclusively because life is miserable, but because they are free. Shakespeare in his play, 'Much Ado about Nothing,' annotates on freedom, liberty, and selfishness, 'If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking. In the meantime, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.' It shows that two intellectuals may think like. According to Sartre, man is free to make his own choices, but is "doomed" to be free, because man hasn't created himself. Man on the earth without his consent, has to choose and act freely in every situation he is in. Everything he performs is the result of being free for has to make choices. Man makes choices every single day: some big, some small, some are choices related to time and money. Others are related to the life roles each man prioritizes. There are a billion things man could do, but he must make choices within his limited time. Life is nothing but a totality of conscious choices that man continuously makes. Whether he wants it or not, directly or indirectly, he is choosing everything. Others don't choose for him in his life. It is he who makes the choice and he is free to do it. The elemental point of Sartre is that from the moment man is thrown into the world, he must be exclusively responsible for all of his choices and actions. There are hardly any eternal values or ethics that man can base the way he lives. Sartre says that man can't break away that he has picked one action over another because it is what God has wanted, or because it was in his nature to do so which is escapism indeed. The responsibility is his and his alone. Sartre believes that throughout each of man's existence, he must create meaning in each of his life, and this is what it means to exist. Man is responsible for his destiny and the way he lives is formed from what he makes of himself.

Sartre claims that human life has no meaning. If man takes a profound look at his life and thinks of before and after his life, he can find out that it is meaningless. He strives, wants money, position, prestige, and when he has it, what else? He has found out something for himself if life has real meaning, but he asks what the purpose or goal of life is, rather than the meaning. The purpose can be found by thinking people, or one can invent a purpose out of one's misery, confusion and conflict. But the purpose is not the meaning. The meaning is to find out for himself by looking at himself, from the depth of his heart, from the depth of his feelings and from the depth of his thought. So, when he looks at his life, remembers the petty quarrels, the shallow mind, the arguments, the brutish people, narrow-minded neighbours, etc, and when he looks at all that, does he not feel shattered and shocked? Doesn't he feel the life he is living daily, going to work from morning till night for forty or fifty years, coming home, quarrelling, tired out, sleeping to take rest, has really no meaning? So, can he look at it without getting depressed, without wanting to change it? If he wants to change it, he

will change it to another pattern which will be equally confusing. When his mind is confused and out of that confusion he chooses, what he chooses must be the result of his confusion. This is his life, his daily attempts, his anxieties, his hurts, his pain. In this way it can be understood that human life has no meaning and this is what Sartre says. But humans can make their lives purposeful. What kind of a purpose is it? It depends on the individual. Albert Camus, a French philosopher, wrote a mighty line, denying that there is an answer to the question, 'What is the meaning of life?' Camus indicated that human life is absurd; that the fate of humans is much like that of King Sisyphus, in Greek mythology, who was doomed by Zeus to endlessly push an immense boulder up a hill, only to watch it roll back down every time it neared the top and he had to repeat this action for eternity. The king knows that his work is meaningless, but he has to do it. Here the rock is the meaning of life which man pushes up the hill in search of an answer, only to see it rolling back down again. Just like King Sisyphus, man can start over, despite the fact the rock returns to the bottom of the hill once more. However Camus, like Sartre, gives a positive thought for people to create purpose, despite the ridiculousness of life. Man must guess King Sisyphus is happy and he too can imagine himself happy, if only he can shift his search from looking for the meaning of life, by focusing on the purpose, to find meaning in life.

It is felt that one of the vital focal directions of existentialism is existence does precede essence. However, Sartre vehemently asserts that the key defining perception of existentialism is that the existence of a human is indeed prior to his or her essence, as cited above. Through this assertion and declaration, Sartre refutes, what he calls, the 'deterministic excuses' and claims that people are responsible for the consequences of choices they have made in their lives. This doctrine makes people tread the practical and realistic way and not be blown away by illusions and delusions. Essence, in this context, refers to a very ancient philosophic idea that all things have a predefined, perfect set of characteristics endowed by God. For example, the essence of a table is that it has four legs, a surface, in a square or rectangular shape, and people sit on it or things can be put on it or it can be used for writing. However, it is sure that every table doesn't match its essence. One might have a table with three legs, or a broken surface, or round is its shape, or that no one sits on it. The actual details of a particular table, not all the tables, make up its existence. The thought that existence precedes essence is true for all the human beings, there is no predefined pattern or design that all of them must fit into; can be called the universal pattern or design. People live their lives and that in turn define what they truly are, not any kind of idealized set of characteristics or behaviour. It is said that no two humans think alike or cent per cent. This idea is the core of Sartre's version of existentialism. The significances are that one must create one's own purpose of life, place his or her own value on his or her acts, and that his or her individual freedom is absolute and unbounded. As an annotation, Sartre, although being an atheist, gives what one considers to be one of the best ever descriptions of God, as the 'union of existence and essence,' meaning that God is the full existential realization of every perfect, ideal or essential attribute of God; it is the strong belief of believers across the world, but no one has seen him. Sartre, of course, described God as impossibility and such thing as God never exists.

In order to drive his point, existence precedes essence, home more efficaciously, Sartre takes a mundane example, a knife, and he compares the knife's manufacturer to the conventional notion of God as the creator: under this view, the believers assume that all the humans are the material figures of God. This is also called determinism. It is considered a philosophical theory which holds that all events are inevitable effects of antecedent sufficient causes and is often understood as denying the possibility of any free will. The early atheist philosophers were scared away by the religion, when it was so powerful that no one could go against what was written in the holy books as it was conceived blasphemy which a religious crime and it is usually defined as an utterance that shows contempt, disrespects or insults a deity or God or an object considered sacred or something considered inviolable. Take for an example, Giordano Bruno, an Italian philosopher, mathematician and cosmological theorist, was burnt alive in 1600 in Rome as he propagated the theory that the earth was spherical and it revolves around the Sun. In the year 1616, the Roman Catholic Church, Rome, investigated Galileo Galilei. In a trial, the Church ordered Galileo to stop discussing ideas that conflicted with the teachings of the Church. In those days, ideas that contravene with religious teachings are named heresy. Heresy was against the law and punishable by severe imprisonment or death. Religious leaders believed that heresy was evil. Galileo was ordered either to stop supporting heliocentric theory or to be ready for punishment. When Galileo died, Isaac Newton was born and he changed the conventional perception of the universe with his theories and the Church was silent on its religious teachings on the geocentric model of the universe. In England, Isaac Newton refused the religious ceremony of the Anglican Church. After his death, Deists (= people who believe that God created the universe and then abandoned it) sometimes claimed him as one of their own, as have Trinitarians (= who believe in trinity, means the union of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost in one Godhead). As a matter of fact, Isaac Newton was a Christian yet he contradicted both orthodox teachings and religious skepticism. On the whole, human will is freed from religious constraints. In philosophy and science, free will is supposed to be a power or capacity of humans to make decisions or to perform their actions being independent of any pre-destined event or state of the universe. As a result, enlightenment gained ground in Europe. Enlightenment is a powerful and intellectual movement of the late 17th and 18th centuries underlining reason and individualism than tradition. It was heavily influenced by the 17th-century



philosophers such as Descartes, Locke, and Newton, and its prominent figures included Kant, Goethe, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Adam Smith. This paved way to atheistic existentialism and others. The mighty words of Rousseau who supported the French Revolution are, 'Man will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest.'

Sartre disagrees with the idea that the traditional view that essence precedes existence as the religious people try to explain laypeople through a primitive 'human nature' which defines people's essence in advance. These views of those theists contrast with the pure atheistic existentialism of Sartre and others. His doctrine maintains that for humans, existence precedes essence. In other words, one finds oneself in the world before one becomes anything: believer, atheist, agnostic, rational, irrational, foolish, virtuous, and vile or skeptic. Sartre asserts that people have the power to determine themselves through the acts of their own will and pleasure, rather than their essence being determined by some nebulous hypothesis of human nature. He holds this power to define is the self or 'subjectivity.' Let a bit of light be thrown on the concepts of subjectivity and objectivity so that existentialism can be made out clearly. The dichotomy between subjectivity and objectivity is clear. Arguing against the notion of objectivity, analysts blend it with the idealized notion of pure objectivity and then eliminate various technical devices in its name. One cannot have a concept of objectivity without a concept of subjectivity. The simplest definition of objectivity is an aim at a particular person. Objectivity is the perception or experience of the external; on the contrary, subjectivity is the perception or experience of the internal. Subjectivity and objectivity are both necessary pathways to acquire knowledge and are dependent on each other; however, there is no objectivity without subjectivity. Sartre mentions another term, inter-subjectivity which refers to a shared perceptual experience of reality between two or more individuals. The term is presupposed that the humans are not able to find out reality except through their own senses such as sight, sound, smell, taste or tactual feeling.

Inter-subjectivity is a term firstly coined by the philosopher Edmund Husserl, an Austrian-German philosopher and mathematician. Inter-subjectivity is most plainly stated as the exchange of thoughts and feelings, both conscious and unconscious, between two or among persons or subjects, as assisted by empathy. To comprehend inter-subjectivity, it is essential first to define the term subjectivity which is the perception or experience of reality from within one's own perspective. As it is demonstrated, it is one's own self that one discovers in the *cogito*: the principle establishing the existence of a being from the fact of its thinking or awareness. It is the irrefutable pertinent point here. Contrary to the philosophy of Kierkegaard, contrary to that of Immanuel Kant, and contrary to that of the Communists, when it is said, 'I think' we are arriving at ourselves in the presence of the others. And as people are just as certain of the others as they are of themselves. The man, who comes upon himself directly in the *cogito*, also comes upon all the others. He finds them out as the stipulation of his own existence. It is a journey from subjectivity to inter-subjectivity. Man can't obtain any truth whatsoever about himself and except through the mediation of another. The other is indispensable to one's existence, and equally so to his knowledge he can have of himself. Sartre says in his lecture that the other is essential to his existence, and similarly so to any knowledge that he can have of himself. Under these circumstances, the intimate discovery of himself is possible, at the same time the disclosure of the other as a freedom which confronts him, and which cannot think or leave without doing so either in favour him or against him. Thus, at once, people find themselves in a world which is that of inter-subjectivity. All kinds of quietism, mysticism and materialism make one treat that every man including oneself as an object. That is, he or she is a set of pre-determined actions and reactions. And in no way it is different from the patterns of traits and phenomena which compose a lifeless object like, a table, or a chair or a stone or anything of the kind.

In this human centered existentialism, Sartre conceptualizes each human individual is a human project since everyone must actively work to build his or her own identity through the choices, actions and commitments throughout the life. For this, Sartre turns to the concept of subjectivity again. Sartre argues that the elementary meaning of existentialism is in the fact that people can't overcome this condition of subjectivity. The best comparison, for example, is 'a work of art' which is manufactured by the artisans who are human subjects start working with no predetermined meaning or mission. However, they develop meaning or essence by creatively constructing a coherent project of life that conveys meaning. There is also the second sense of project; as a verb, not a noun in which human life includes a self projection. People constantly imagine what they are, what they will become and what they make of themselves. And this projection forms each person's image of his or her personal human project. According to him, when people choose to do something, they indirectly affirm that they believe what they choose is good; otherwise, they would not choose it. Since the human good should be the same for everyone, whenever anyone chooses something good for himself, he reflects a view of what is good for humanity as a whole. This concept makes everyone responsible for his own person, also responsible for all men as people express values through their actions. It is a kind of collective responsibility as no man is an island according to John Donne, an English metaphysical poet. One of the French essayists, Francis Ponge says that man is a sacred thing for man. He feels that man is the important thing for man, no matter if it is bettering or

worsening of man, it can only be done by man. He adds that every man bears the whole stamp of the human condition and there is no justification for the present existence of man other than its expansion into an indefinitely open future. In his poem William Wordsworth expresses his grief by writing, 'And much it grieved my heart to think, what man has made of man.' Sartre says that including personal responsibility, are the traits of existentialism. When the phrase personal responsibility is taken for analysis, it is clear that one has to take full accountability for one's choices, actions, decisions and thoughts and more. When man holds himself responsible, it leaves little room for blame games, and he develops better control of his life. Being self-responsible is, undoubtedly, being self-aware.

When someone makes a choice, he asserts that he believes what he chooses to be good, otherwise, he would not have made that choice. But, the key point is since the human good should be the same for everyone, whenever anyone chooses something good for himself; he reflects a view of what is good for humanity as a whole. This is universality, if a choice is purely personal, it is different, but when the choice involves others, one has to be careful. Sartre emphasizes that one of the fundamental meanings of existentialism lies in the fact that people can't triumph over this condition of subjectivity. Sartre switches over to throw light on the three concepts: anguish, abandonment, and despair from the existential point of view. Sartre turns to deal with the word anguish, which describes a person's pain on realizing that he is morally responsible for his actions because those actions project an ideal for humanity as a whole. Here every individual would become a moral legislator for mankind. Sartre mentions a Danish philosopher, Søren Aabye Kierkegaard who says that people can either confront or choose to ignore their anguish. Confronting anguish means asking what if everyone acted this way or that way?

Kierkegaard compares the anguish with that of 'Abraham.' An angel, in a Biblical story, commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son and his total obedience was obligatory. Abraham wondered if it was really an angel or a devil or a hallucination that had appeared and commanded him to perform a heinous task; secondly, a deep insight a little deeper, made him think whether he was really Abraham. He found no proofs whether he was the proper person to make a choice. Would it not be a misconception of man upon the mankind? He was caught between to be and not to be. This is the existential dilemma which can be called anguish here. In fact, it is Abraham to decide to make a choice setting aside anguish. Sartre feels that everyone must say to himself if he is right to set a certain standard for all mankind. Sartre quotes for example, that anguish does not prevent action but it is rather a 'condition of action.' He gives another example of a military general who feels anguish at his responsibility for sending his troops into battle and there was no guarantee that all would survive. In making the decision, he can't but feel certain anguish, but it is inevitable to play his part in the military. Sartre feels that all leaders are in the know about that anguish which doesn't prevent them from their acting, on the other hand, it is the very condition of their action, because the action presupposes that there is a multitude of possibilities, and in choosing one of these, they realize that it has value only as it is chosen. Now it is anguish of that kind which existentialism describes, and moreover makes plain through direct responsibility towards other men who are concerned. Far from being a barrier which could separate people from action, it is a condition of action itself as is cited above.

The earlier French secularists believed that society did need a moral code of conduct to hold people together without any organized religion. But Sartre declares that God doesn't exist, and that humans must bear the full consequences of their choices. Abandonment is Sartre's second term which describes the fact that people are condemned to be free; without any objective moral laws from God or any another authoritative or pragmatic source, yet people can't avoid moral responsibility for all their choices, including the choice to do nothing. Sartre emphasizes that existential thought bases itself fundamentally on the idea that one's identity is constituted neither by nature nor by culture nor by determinism, since to exist is precisely to constitute such an identity. It is from this foundation that one can begin to understand abandonment and forlornness. Sartre searches for a new way to think about the value of human life which is largely a response to the decline of religion in the modern world. Sartre is straightforward about his atheism and believes that humans ought to create their morality for their own purposes, rather than receiving it from some supernatural source, may be God. Because of this, he suggests that people are abandoned in the world, and he thinks that, whether people choose to recognize it or hide from it, the human condition is structured by this abandonment. The believers suggest that people have to believe in God in order to have morals; however Sartre openly accepts that there is no God and everything is permissible. Accepting abandonment in this way does not mean that every action should be allowed, but rather than that, without an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent entity to pass judgment on people, morality is made known as an entirely human construct.

Despair, like the other two directives: abandonment and anguish, is an emotional term. Here despair does not carry the connotations or denotations of darkness, desperation, nervousness, uneasiness and resignation that it generally carries. On the other hand, what Sartre means here is that people must not hope for miracles as they can't reasonably predict. The focal point is 'I must confine myself to what I can see.' He perceives the universe as probabilistic and, therefore, he

considers human predictive ability to be inherently limited, but he suggests that hope is actually detrimental to action rather than action-enabling because it leads people to wait for some miracles to happen and this makes them inactive. Thus, the attitude of despair is one of unemotional indifference to the way things appear. It is worthy to quote what Descartes said ‘Conquer yourself rather than conquering the world.’ What the philosopher and mathematician meant was, at the bottom, the same that humans should act without hope. Humans can’t rely on anything which is outside their control, but this doesn’t mean they should give up themselves to inertia: on the other way around, Sartre debates that it should lead people to enthuse themselves to a course of action, now that there has been no reality except action. To drive his point home, Sartre puts it that the genius of Proust, who was a French novelist, is the totality of the works of Proust. It can be understood by implication that everyone is wholly defined by what he or she actually does rather than by what they might have done if the circumstances had been different.

Sartre, an ardent advocate of atheistic existentialism, holds that humans suffer from anxiety and despair for they are worried about the results of our actions and everything predestined. Thus, in his philosophy, there is no place for quietism, now that he underlines that humans are their own plan, they are what they make of themselves; in other words, they are their choices and actions. Therefore, the humanism of Sartre is not marked by collective individuality as to negate social dimensions. He has clearly stated that when he chooses something he chooses it for the entire mankind, consequently his humanism is universal. Thus, man finds that himself in a world that is of inter-subjectivity in which man alone ought to decide what he is and what others are to be. If man makes his genuine humanity in his behaviour, he will no longer deceive himself, otherwise it is self-deception. Hence, Sartre humanism is the philosophy of eternal interests of man which are indeed today more compelling immediate action than ever before. As his existentialism pertained to man’s freedom and its objective is to change its target readers or to free them from any kind of illusion or delusion, therefore it has always been considered as a practical philosophy. As it is cited above, humanism is a very general term which is usually used to refer to any theory that puts human beings at the centre of things: for human, of human and by human. Humanism has a positive connotation of being humane and is generally connected with an optimistic outlook. The humanism that Sartre emphasizes is the dignity of human beings. It also stresses the centrality of human choices to the promotion of values. Thus his philosophy is optimism, subjectivism that is related to humanism.

When it comes to moral significances, Sartre doesn’t believe in religious morality as they are stoic and sometimes cruel. But human society is like a running river and so it acquires manifold changes; thus it is ever dynamic, now that human desires and aspirations change as time passes. Sartre trusts in the essential freedom of individuals; what is life without freedom? And he also believes that as free beings, people are responsible for their cognizance, their way of thinking and finally their choices and actions. It is to say that with total freedom there comes total responsibility. Thus, existentialism doesn’t give humans rampancy; there is freedom, but it should not disturb the freedom of others. He conceives that even those people who would not feel like being responsible and declare themselves are not responsible for their actions, are still making conscious choices and so there is chaos. They are thus responsible for anything that happens as a consequence of their choices, actions or inactions. The atheistic existentialism, therefore, makes every citizen of the world a responsible one. The moral philosophy of Sartre, maintains that ethics are an essential component of individual sense of right and wrong. In a broader perspective, he reveals much about his own ethics in his writings. He responds about the oppressive societal structures and the ways in which individuals might ideally interact with each other to affirm their respective humanity. However, Sartre is dismissive of any version of universal ethics which is impossible in a multi-religious and multi-cultural society. Sartre is clear that individual morals of humans are always first and foremost, as it is a matter of subjective, individual conscience.

When it comes to the other facets of Sartre, in his lecture, are the concepts of freedom and moral implication. The two occupy an important place in the philosophy of Sartre and in his existential humanism. According to Sartre, man is free to make his own choices, but he feels man is condemned to be free. According to Sartre, man is free to make his own choices, but he is condemned to be free, because man did not create himself. Even though man is put on the earth without his will and pleasure, he must choose and act freely from every situation he is in, but the time before his adolescence can be exempted. Everything he does is the result of being free because he has choice. Sartre states that the existence of God is not necessary for the existence of man and his morals. He gives extreme importance for the existence of human beings. Sartre’s existentialism is concerned with man’s freedom and its aim is to instill a new way of thinking and a better way of life of people. Therefore it has always been thought as a practical philosophy. Sartre trusts that freedom penetrates every aspect of the human condition. Thus, human existence is entwined with freedom for him. Every individual has a choice and it is this choice that characterizes each individual’s being. In addition to that, freedom is an integral part of responsibility. Sartre’s conception of freedom is high in integrity and does not allow any kind of excuses. Excuses are personality defects and they are ugly character flaws. They are the dirty ring around the



collar of your performance. It carries the distinct hint of a person who is of second-rate ability or value. At the same time, empowerment of individuals should make their own values and their own future.

In his historical lecture, Sartre has compressed his words with lofty ideas and guiding principles to make the human world a better place to live in. He gives a specific example to help explain the practical results of such theoretical conceptions as abandonment. He narrates a story of his student who asked him for an advice. The student stands at the way which diverged into two paths; one is to stay with his mother, or to join the army to fight with the Germans to take revenge of his dead brother and to protect France. Sartre explains that no moral system, no matter whether it is religious or philosophical, could assure the student what he should do or which option should he choose. Here the pertinent point is that the abstract systems in the society are so divorced from reality that one can't answer such concrete questions. Sartre has, ultimately, apprised the student, rather vaguely, that he is entirely free, and he is the right one who can make a decision in that respect; he can't defer to a system to make it for him by others. Sartre also feels that the student has chosen him specifically, knowing that he would give him a better advice. If the student has wanted a believer's advice, he would have gone to a priest, or someone. If Sartre has given him an advice either to join the army or to be with his mother, he can throw the consequences of the advice on the philosopher. Now that he himself would choose a way, he would stand for the repercussions.

Sartre thoroughly expounds his notion of the self-deception of some people who would like to break away from the responsibility of their choices and acts. Since the primal feature of human existence is the capacity to choose in full awareness of one's own state and choices. It follows the basic question which is always whether or not one is true to oneself. Self-deception incessantly involves an attempt to evade personal responsibility for one person. For example, one attributes undesirable thoughts and actions to the influence upon him because of others. Thus, using a psychological theory to distinguish between a 'good I' and a 'bad me' only serves to continue one's evasion of responsibility and its co-occurrences. It is an excellent foppery, if something is good, the subject is 'I' but if something is bad, the subject becomes object 'me.' Sartre says that self-deception consists of irony since it is said that a person leads other to believe in order not to be believed or in other words, it is a lie since he is trying to hide something wrong that he does, but doesn't want others to know about it. For example, if something embarrassing has happened to somebody because of one particular person who would do his level best to convince the rest of the people that what they heard about it is not all true. The whole thing is just a misinterpretation and so he tries to make them believe it. Even if people go deeper and prove his involvement in the evil deed, and question him as to what would happen if all do the same. He would answer that everyone doesn't do that, means others wouldn't do what he does, a kind of thoroughgoing escapism. Self-deception also comprises of telling a lie to one's own self since it trains them that they create a positive object or they replace a negative memory with a positive one. The core of the lie implies in fact that the liar actually in complete knowledge of the truth which he is hiding. The person knows the entire truth of what has actually occurred, but he creates a fake reality and so he lives in a false or deceptive way because he makes himself believe that the lie is truth. The final characteristic of self-deception is denial; for he denies the truth which has actually happened. But he might be doing it unconsciously because it has become a habit of feigning a series of such denials.

When existentialism is viewed from choice, action and responsibility, the application of existential philosophy narrows down to how one chooses to live one's life, and the fact that one is forced to choose how to live one's life. To be or not to be, both are choices, 'but to be or not to be, that is the question,' says Shakespeare. It is felt that even if one chooses not to decide, one still have made a choice. In the light of that, one's inaction can also be a choice. Sartre holds that man knows that he is alive right now and so life is asking him to choose how he will or will not live tomorrow. Even though one believes in afterlife, one still knows that one exists here on the earth. And each moment one is forced to choose something and what one should do the next moment. These moments are the sum of one's existence in this life. This existence can seldom be denied till one breathes his last. Sometimes these choices can be mundane like, shall I go to college or be on leave? Shall I help him or be indifferent? Shall I change my mobile or adjust with the old one? But in the discernment, these small choices would lead people to the way that is their life. Whether one believes in life after death or not these present moments are really matter. One can't jump into afterlife saying the present is null and void. Thus all the theists, atheists and agnostics have to accept the present life and make choices and so the choices are a built-in part of life. Making choices would lead to actions as it is an inevitable consequence. Sartre says that humans are responsible for the results of their choices because they make choices which successively become actions. Thus man is the total sum of his choices and actions.

For an atheistic existentialist, a moral or praiseworthy life is possible because he takes responsibility of himself, in other words, he takes charge of himself. He is the one who acknowledges and owns up his freedom. He holds that he is responsible for his choices, and actions in such a way that he can help others realize their freedom. However, existentialism doesn't endorse any religious morality, quietism, determinism, fatalism and there is not any moral



enforcement supernatural element like God. It is because it comes under determinism which is a doctrine that advocates that all the events, including human thoughts and actions, are ultimately determined by the causes regarded as external to the will and pleasure of God. Some theistic philosophers have taken determinism to imply that individual human beings have no freedom to act and they can't behave according to their will and pleasure. And so, they can't be held morally responsible for their choices and actions. Shakespeare says, 'It is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeits of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters, the Sun, the Moon and Stars.' Existentialism presents the view that human cognizance is radically free. Here cognizance intends the state of being conscious, means awareness of one's own existence, sensations, thoughts, surroundings, etc. And it is always necessary to make right choices. Such freedom involves that one's ethical theory is not accidental, but well contemplated and chosen. It is because if one has to make a choice to act, one's ethical system doesn't automatically direct any action.

Existentialism is, very obviously, more of a moral theory than a moral system. Moral theory is practicable and it involves man, but moral system is God centered and it doesn't make people think and feel responsible for their choices and actions. Sartre considers values and ethics are important to freedom, for unrestrained freedom would lead to anarchy and chaos. He advocates that humans ought to respect one another and value one another. If they, as individuals, want to be as free as possible within a social order or within a socially accepted system, respecting of one another must be a must. In 'Existentialism Is a Humanism,' Sartre explains that existentialists can judge others, but it must be based on truth and honesty. He reminds people that their actions and statements are made within the view of others who will determine if people are truthful or not. For Sartre, it is erroneous to ignore facts and it is wrong to deceive oneself, it is reckoned as self-deception. Since the individuals are the head and shoulders above for existentialists, personal morality and ethics replace social morality and social ethics, however personal morality can lead to inter-personal morality. Ethics, when they are defined systems, are God centric, while morality is often based on individual feelings and judgments.

According to existentialism, moral theory commences and ends with the individuals. It is based on a point of good and evil. Religious morality conflicts with social ethics, especially when a religion's morality conflicts with the existing laws and greater social ethics. For example, if a killer confesses his crime in the presence of a priest, he is guiltless according to religious morality, but the legal system makes it null and void, it says that there should be punishment for crime. One of the problems laid by morality in existentialism is that it must be understood in relation to the impact of a decision. The ambit of a moral decision refers to the number and types of individuals affected by the decision. Generalization of morality depends on the group of a society and it changes with the principle of majority by minority. But personal morality in existentialism is individuality based. Personal morality accepts no external guidelines and no excuses. This kind of morality and authenticity form the core of atheistic existentialism. The test of personal morality is what one ought to do even if no others would know what one is doing. Despite its tiny defects and obscurities, existential humanism has marvelous appeal and ardent expression. It answers the kind of questions that most of us hope philosophy would response and which the contemporary analytic philosophy for the most part ignores. Perhaps the greatest strength of existentialism lies in its focus on freedom and individuality and most of the people betray themselves, most of the time, about the extent to which their actions are brought down by the factors which are beyond their control.

Sartre has addressed all the allegations made against his philosophy one after another in his lecture; here is another reproach against his existentialism. The accusers have commented that the existentialists take with one hand what they give with the other. It entails, at bottom, the values of the existentialists are frivolous, means not serious, since people choose them all by themselves and the values are not framed by any celestial agency. To that extent, Sartre says that he is very sorry if it should be so. As he has excluded God and not believed him to be the father, there must be somebody to devise values for humans and the somebody is man himself. Sartre says that humans have to take things as they are. And furthermore, to say that they devise values means neither more nor less than this; that there is no sense in life a priori: relating to or denoting reasoning or knowledge which proceeds from theoretical deduction rather than from observation or practical experience. Sartre, lastly, presents his existentialism is humanism and it doesn't promote pessimism. He responds that such a charge can come only from those who are afraid of the truth that life is genuinely difficult. Sartre says that his existentialism is nothing other than an effort to draw all the results of a logical atheistic position. The breakthrough that there is no God and that man is alone, is the beginning of a genuine existential humanism. It announces man as the free creature of all values of whatever meaning there is in human existence. Further, he clearly submits that existentialism does not ignore the human society or human universe. And that in taking a decision his existential humanism decides on behalf of the whole mankind. Existentialism does not aim at dumping man into despair. Its final goal is to prepare man to face anguish, abandonment and despair and to live a genuine human life. It is basically concerned with the human condition depending on making choices and being responsible. He has

defended his philosophy against his critics. He conceives that he has shown existentialism to be a philosophy of action not despair. It is a man centered philosophy of optimism not pessimism. It is a philosophy of values not nihilism. Existentialism is humanism because it is reminded that there is no legislator for man but himself. Man himself must decide for himself; also because it is shown that it is by seeking an aim of liberation that man can realize himself as truly human. It is true that the freedom of one is bound up with the freedom of everyone else. Thus his optimism is well founded. In conclusion, existentialism is a doctrine of action and optimism.

### **CONCLUSION**

Sartre distinguishes his atheistic existentialism in which God's existence is immaterial and disproves any kind of religious beliefs. Sartre believes in the necessary freedom of individuals, and he also trusts that humans as free beings. People are responsible for all the elements of themselves, their consciousness, and their actions. That is, with individual freedom comes individual responsibility which may turn to be inter-personal responsibility. Osho, an Indian philosopher and mystic can be remembered here, says that nobody is superior, nobody is inferior, and on the other hand, nobody is equal either. All the people are simply unique, incomparable and their choices in their lives make them so. He adds, 'You are what you are, I am what I am. I have to contribute my potential to my life; you have to contribute your potential to your life.' In this way one has to discover one's own being. The existentialist understanding of Sartre can be summed up with what it is to be human and human centric. In his view, the fundamental inspiration for action is to be found in the nature of cognizance of man. It is a desire for being. It is up to each human to exercise his freedom in such a way that he does not ignore his existence as a quality, condition, or state of being a fact, as well as a free human being. In doing so, he would come to understand more about the choices which his whole life represents. And thus about the values and actions that are thus projected. Such an understanding is only obtained through living this precious life with liveliness and avoiding the pitfalls of strategies of self-deceit such as bad faith. It is natural capacity for people to deceive themselves as bad faith. It exists in their tendency to believe they are not, who are really are; that they have no options and therefore act in an inauthentic manner. Sartre closes his work by emphasizing that existentialism, is a philosophy of action and one's defining oneself, and is optimistic and liberating oneself from the invisible constraints.

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