

JEAN PAUL SARTRE'S ABSOLUTE FREEDOM AND ITS ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

Jean Paul Sartre believes that man is absolutely free, and this notion of his absolute freedom has brought about subjectivism and relativism in ethical and moral issues, neglecting the natural law in terms of life preservation and human dignity. This conception which is contrary to the original and authentic nature of the human person of body and soul has led to the different abuses and devaluation of the human person by many who feel they are free to do whatever they want and as they want. For Sartre, existence precedes essence, freedom is absolute and existence is freedom. Freedom for Sartre is not the freedom to do something. He says "you are free" because you always have a choice, "therefore choose". But this creates anxiety and anguish; individuals flee in self-deception and continue leading inauthentic lives. Man is free when his consciousness acknowledges that something is lacking, when he makes a purpose of himself, and when he commits. Sartre rejects determinism because he holds individuals to be outside of the world. There are no excuses which can be rooted in the idea of 'human nature' and this absolute freedom has really caused more harm in the society and even dehumanizes. This work tends to expose Jean-Paul Sartre's notion of absolute freedom and its ethical implication.

Key Words: Absolute, Freedom, subjectivism, human dignity and existence.

Introduction

The human person as an existential being is created as an authentic and unique being. Life is a gift that comes with dignity and is expected to be lived virtuously. However, it has been noticed that this dignity of man has been defied and dehumanized because one thinks he/she is free to do what he/she likes. Morality is seen as a mere act like any other thing. The implication therefore is that there is no

universal law guiding the society because each human person has absolute freedom to do what pleases them.

Freedom has really been misconstrued among people and this has brought about the reputation act towards the others. Many have seen freedom as the ability to do whatever one wants and how one wants it, forgetting that the other person's freedom begins from where theirs stop. Freedom implies the chance to choose for oneself, yet man does not choose himself in the world. Thus, man is determined in a lot of respect.

Jean-Paul Sartre wrote extensively on freedom. For him, man is condemned to be free. According to him, the only sense in which we are not free is that we are not free not to be free. Sartre's notion of freedom cannot be understood without understanding the 'situation.' For Sartre, man as being-in-the-world is always in situation but despite this situation in which he finds himself, he is always freely creating worlds. Thus, the ability of man to always freely create worlds despite his entanglement in the situation leads Sartre to declare that man is condemned to be free (Sartre, 2005, 77). Thus, this condemnation of man to freedom is in line with the idea that man has absolute freedom, which today is making men to act as irrational beings. Thus, the essay tends to establish that man is not absolutely free to what he/she likes or behaves irrationally.

Statement of the Problem

Jean-Paul Sartre's absolutization of freedom in his existentialism has brought about relativistic and even subjectivistic approaches to freedom in contemporary society. The deification of the self, by which Sartre wants man to be a being-for-itself, is the order of the day, making man one who creates his own morality. And this is really making us losing the virtuous life we ought to live. So, the focus in this work will be an attempt to restore this dignity of the human person that is deteriorating if not being lost in our time.

This has however; brought about several social ills in society and situations where humans are degraded to be tools for the benefit of the other. The other person becomes a threat to me and I become as well a threat to the other. This situation means that our society does not enjoy living together, sharing things in common, but finds itself in a situation where hatred, envy and exploitation prevail.

Looking at the Sartre's notion of freedom a critical mind may tend to ask questions like:

- ❖ Is man free to take his life that he/she can never give to himself or other?
- ❖ Does freedom mean to do what one likes?
- ❖ Is my freedom not limited by others freedom?
- ❖ Can morality be separated from operational freedom?

- ❖ Should right and just freedom be guided by morality and natural law?

These questions and similar ones would be answered in the course of this research work.

In his writing *Existentialism is a Humanism*, Sartre attempted to say that the being-for-itself is not responsible for himself alone but for all men because by choosing for himself he chooses for all. Does this not result in an absolute monarchical and totalitarian claim? How can one person by choosing for himself choose for all others? Jean-Paul Sartre's pronouncement that Man is condemned to be free has been the propeller of this research, with the aim of transforming the minds of people from their conceived notion of absolute freedom, to that of an ethically lived freedom. Hence we shall make a critical study of Sartre's Absolutism in Freedom and its Ethical implications.

Objectives of the Study

The essay purposefully shoulders the task of undertaking a profound reflection over the rhetoric of human respect in the society and the massacre of people by people. This essay is a clarion call over the apparent forgetfulness of the dignity of the human person in our society in the name of freedom. It is a clear call on us to take serious note of the acute danger of slaughtering ourselves daily because of socio-politico-religious issues.

Jean-Paul Sartre in his philosophy came up with the notion of absolute freedom for man. However, our society today seems to be following the trend of Sartre on his concept of absolute freedom. Some individuals in our society today, see themselves as absolutely free beings thus creating their own morality based on relativism and subjectivism. This work is relevant today, in an era of relativism and subjectivism in which it is affirmed that human beings make their own truth individually, freedom is spoken about as in contraposition to any objective truth, as if freedom were the ability to act anyhow in itself, and not a faculty specifically human that is actually aimed to the accomplishment of the human being. Therefore, in the midst of moral decadence in our society today, this work answers a call to reaffirm and make an attempt to give a paradigm to the understanding of freedom as opposed to that of Jean-Paul Sartre in his philosophy.

Clarification of Terms

Sartre distinguished between two kinds of being namely conscious being (*être-pour-soi*) and unconscious being (*être-en-soi*). He identifies conscious being (being for itself) with the human being.

Being-In-Itself

Being-in-itself, according to Sartre, is both the unconscious being of phenomena: houses, stones and sand, and the being of ideas. They have nothing secret or hidden. They are in fact a synthesis: the synthesis of itself in itself.

Being-for-Itself

Being-for-itself means simply the person or human reality. The being-for-itself is the free, conscious, autonomous and responsible being. For-itself is the being of subjects, not of objects or things of ideas. It characterizes man as acting and conscious, as distinct from the beings of unconscious objects. The being- for-itself is characteristically active, self-regarding and self-affirming of its being.

Sartre's Concept Freedom

Among the many attributes of man is freedom. Apart from the cognitive level at which man distinguishes himself from animals and other inferior beings, man also possesses freedom. According to Sartre, man becomes conscious of his freedom when he is thrown into a critical 'situation' in which he is called upon to choose between the given alternatives for a life time. Human freedom is seen by Sartre in terms of negation, nihilation and nothingness. Freedom is the capacity of negation, nihilation which characterize the being for- itself. The foundation of freedom is nothingness. Negation directly engages my freedom, says Sartre, (Sartre, 2005, 78-79).

Freedom as Related to Man

Man has life in common with all living beings. In common with animals, he has sensitive knowledge and instinctive inclinations towards those things which correspond to his own needs or fundamental appetites. Man however, distinguishes himself at the cognitive level from animals and other inferior beings by virtue of the intelligence which allows him a total aperture either towards the world or towards himself. The appetitive level he distinguishes himself by virtue of a will by which he freely chooses within the space of the aperture that which he retains as more opportune for the realization of his own being. Man, beyond being intelligent, is also free. Freedom is therefore, another attribute of his excellence and nobility, and represents another great window for looking into the mystery of man, with a goal of acquiring a more correct, more complete, more adequate comprehension of him.

Furthermore, whoever attaches a real meaning to the term 'freedom' negatively expresses a certain absence of necessity. It is evident, therefore, that being subject must be called being free, for it is through his freedom that man transcends necessity. Freedom however, should be understood positively as a certain autonomy of being, a certain independence of being, a belonging to oneself on the ground of a 'to be' which is his own and thus not generated. Scholastic philosophy uses the term 'substance' for the ontological autonomy of man as subject.

Absolutism of Freedom in Sartre's Existentialism

Sartre is usually misunderstood as having an exaggerated view of human freedom, no doubt because of the claims in the "Existentialism and Humanism" lecture that there is no determinism; we are free, we are freedom, we are condemned to be free. The only sense, in which we are not free for Sartre, is that we are not free not to be free. Sartrean freedom cannot be understood without understanding the 'situation.' A human being is not separable from the human condition (Stephen, 2001, 28).

Sartre endorses Heidegger's view that we are 'thrown' into the world. We are but did not choose to be. Seemingly, inconsistently with this, Sartre says that, in a sense, I choose to be born. Clearly however, any kind of Platonic pre-existence is out of the question here. Sartre thinks it is false that we pre-date our empirical existence. Drawing a distinction between existence and essence, Sartre means that what my birth is, or is to be me, largely depends on how I freely think of it. Its significance is the significance I bestow upon it. Thus, freedom does not pre-date existence. Freedom is existence, and in it existence precedes the essence we freely choose.

According to Stephen Priest, Sartre says in his *Being and Nothingness* that a person is their freedom. He however identifies the upsurge of freedom, choice, and the person himself, as one and the same being. Thus he says "I do not have my freedom. I am it." The will has no role in the exercise of Sartrean freedom. The moment the will operates; the decision is already taken. Thus Sartre's libertarianism entails that human actions are unpredictable. For Sartre, the only respect in which I am free is that I am free not to be free. I am not able not to choose (Stephen, 2001, 180).

Sartre's Freedom and the Negation of Other Inferences

Freedom for Sartre negates other influences like God which we will be looking at in this part. Strictly speaking, Sartre has only one argument to reject God, namely 'man's freedom.' This argument is thus presented in different ways. Human freedom, as it is conceived by Sartre, simply cannot tolerate the idea that there is a God. On decisive issues of his philosophy, Sartre drops the phenomenological dimension of thinking by isolating being-for-itself from facticity. The consequence is that freedom as transcendence is inflated to absolute autonomy. If occasionally Sartre describes the situation character of freedom, the value of the description is undermined by his conviction that the meaning of the situation is determined by subjectivity in a wholly autonomous way. The next step Sartre takes is the denial of any dependence of man upon God.

For Sartre, God is not king of human kind, for man is free. If God had wanted to rule man he says, he should not have created him as a free being. For me this assertion of Sartre is a contradiction, for an atheist who had denied the existence of God, affirms his existence at this point as one who created man. He further says that at the very moment when God created man as a free being, this freedom turned against God, insofar as man as freedom no longer belongs

to God. Thus, there is no one to give orders to man. He goes on to say, there is no God, for man is free. A real God would press man as freedom to death. However, man is free and, therefore, there cannot be God. Sartre posits a question: why must a real God destroy human freedom? To justify this idea, Sartre relies on classical thinking about God as creator. God creates in accord with a certain idea of reality to be created, just as an artisan who makes a paperknife first has an idea of that paperknife. God, then, is a superior craftsman, and the result of his act of creation is prefixed in God's idea. The question to arise would be what is the meaning of this being fixed with respect to man? According to Sartre, it means that man as freedom is destroyed. For man is reduced to something like a paperknife, to a being that is what he is not; he is a project and as transcendence, he is the execution of this project. It is the subject itself, which controls this execution. Man is not, but makes himself. Thus to admit a real God, Sartre thinks, amounts to conceiving man as a thing, as a being which lies prostrated upon itself. It is the denial of man as project, as transcendence, as freedom.

Sartre also denied God in his study of intersubjectivity. He asks what is God if there is a God? He is the other par excellence. However, what does the experience of the other's subjectivity mean for me? As we explained above, 'to experience the other's subjectivity means to experience his stare, to experience my being looked at.' This stare implies the death of my subjectivity as project, as transcendence, as freedom. Under the other's stare, I appear as a thing in the world, I am what I am. My being-for-the-other means that I am robbed of my transcendence. However, if I want to save my manhood, I have to raise myself, reject through my stare the other's subjectivity and reduce him to a thing in the world.

The Proof of God's Existence

As understood in traditional Judaism, Christianity and Islam, God is the creator of the cosmos. Leibniz puts this clearly in the 17th century when he wrote "try as we may, we cannot do without God".

A cosmological argument is an argument that begins with a phenomenon in the universe and traces it beyond the universe to its origin in an ultimate cause which is identified as God. A cosmological argument, in natural theology, is an argument which claims that the existence of God can be inferred from facts concerning causation, explanation, change, motion, contingency, dependency, or finitude with respect to the universe or some totality of objects.

Cosmological arguments for God's existence propose that God is the ultimate explanation or cause of everything. Such arguments begin with an empirical observation of the world—that there is motion, or causes, or just ordinary things that exist—and conclude this observation is explained by God's existence. The locus classicus for the statement of the cosmological arguments is in the five ways of Aquinas. Motion, causation, contingency, degrees of perfection and order and harmony in the universe.in the universe.

Around us, things are in motion. St. Thomas Aquinas argued that all the causation and motion we observe can be traced back to God, who is an uncaused cause or unmoved mover. In summary:

1. Causes and motion exist.
2. All causation or motion requires some prior cause or motion; things can't happen nor move for no reason.
3. But this chain of causation or motion cannot go back infinitely; this seems impossible.
4. Therefore, there must be a first, uncaused cause, or first, unmoved mover.
5. The most plausible example of an uncaused cause or unmoved mover would be God.
6. Therefore, God exists.

Aquinas thinks that if an object is in motion, it must be caused to move by something outside itself. Aquinas got this idea from Aristotle. Aristotle held that if an object continues to move, its motion must be sustained by a force that keeps it in motion. If you remove the force, the object stop moving. Aquinas thus encounters the principle that whatever is moved is moved by another nothing is the cause of its own motion.

The Ethical Implications of Jean Paul Sartre's Absolute Freedom

The aim of this heading is to examine the implications that arise or have arisen from this absolutism in freedom which Sartre has postulated. Sartre's postulation of absolute freedom for man (man is condemned to be free), has fallen into the trap of positing anti-social values. Examples of these anti-social values are euthanasia, abortion, suicide and many more. Thus, today, our society is suffering from many ills, because of the so called freedom.

Abortion

Abortion is defined medically as the termination of pregnancy by any means before the foetus is sufficiently developed to survive. However, the practice of induced abortion requires a definition that is properly descriptive of moral reality (Alvare, 2003, 24). In the light of this, John Paul II in his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life) defines abortion which he called 'procured abortion' as "The deliberate and direct killing, by whatever means it is carried out, of a human being in the initial phase of his or her existence, extending from conception to birth (John Paul II, 2005, 307). The notion of abortion has sparked a lot of debate, some consenting to it, and some disapproving of it. However, in contemporary society, many hold the idea that they are free to decide for themselves what is good, thus being in line with Sartre's concept of freedom.

Sartre believes that man has freedom to choose what is good for him as an existing individual without the influence of anything from without, and that we can never make a wrong choice.

Sartre succinctly asserts; “Man is condemned to be free (Moses, 2005, 132-133). Man makes himself through choices among alternatives in his life as a pure subjectivity. According to this view of Sartre, we always choose the right and nothing can be good for us without being good for all. So we should therefore not accept the ready-made or static concept as it may be of existence forced upon us. Although Sartre does not talk about the unborn as such, his starting point however is that man is born in the world without his own knowledge and that his state in the world is that of being-thrown-in-the-world. This conviction was initiated by Martin Heidegger and later picked up by Sartre. This statement of Sartre means that man’s being in the world is not determined by any force or even by God because there is no God in absolute freedom of man. Thus, man should never appeal to any authority for explanations about his morals. By saying that man is what he wills himself to be after his thrust towards existence, Sartre meant that man is free to shape his life as he pleases, irrespective of any pervading circumstances (Moses, 2005, 136).

Based on this assertion of Sartre, the problem of abortion can only be looked at from an individual point of view, and not what the regulations or laws state to be right for a group. The law can only be applied to social groups or some objective systems like schools or learning institutions. By doing this, we also avoid what Søren Kierkegaard calls the crowd mentality. According to Sartre, a person is born or begins to exist the moment he/she becomes conscious as ‘for-itself’ (conscious being). Because the foetus is being-in-itself (not conscious) it follows that it is not in existence; but it is a form of possible existence or a being that exists as a projection for the future. As a projection of the future, it is a freedom or a choice that has to be made (Moses, 2005, 136).

Furthermore, Sartre’s argument for abortion which is based on situation is not logically ascertained. A woman or girl pregnant, yes! It is obviously true that she finds herself in a situation which could have come through any means either as a result of rape or incest. However, the fact of being in this situation does not justify abortion since it is never right to repay evil with evil (I have been raped which is evil, consequently, I commit abortion which also is evil). The greatest love one can show in the midst of this situation is sacrifice and responsibility towards the sacredness of life. Through this, we portray our love and respect for life because ‘if I were to have been aborted. I would have not been in existence today.’

Euthanasia

The term ‘Euthanasia,’ is from the Greek words *eu thanatos*. *Eu* meaning ‘well,’ ‘good,’ or ‘easy’ and *thanatos* dying or death. It has today also become more commonly equated with one form of dying namely, ‘mercy killing (Friday, 2003, 457).’ According to Blessing Agidigbi, “Euthanasia is the wilful, direct or indirect killing of the incurably sick, be it at their request or the request of the patients, guardians or any other legal representative in the case of incurables who are incapable of deciding for themselves, for example, infants, the irrevocably comatose and mental defectives (Agidigbi, 2005,125).

There have been big controversies on whether euthanasia is permissible or not. Contemporary society with its liberal and utilitarian approaches to things has applied approaches to life which are not acceptable. The moral conscience is regarded as a mere human fabrication. This leads to arguments for and against the legitimacy of euthanasia.

Those who defend the legitimacy of euthanasia, have three main arguments to support their position. First, they see euthanasia as a dimension of human freedom and argue that the value represented by respect for autonomy is incomplete unless it encompasses the limiting case of suicide or assisted suicide. The second is that they argue that suicide and euthanasia are legitimate ways of bringing to an end suffering which cannot be adequately controlled or ended in any other way. This approach is however said to be able to undermine autonomy because it lapses if there is an equally effective way of controlling the pain and suffering. The third type of defense of euthanasia is exemplified by Ronald Dworkin's account which argues that "Respect for the intrinsic value of life, properly understood, sees life essentially as meaningful and valuable because of the shape given to it by the individual whose life it is, and that this shaping must include control over life's end (Harris, 2005, 580).

Put differently, according to this view it is not all autonomous decisions to end life that are justified, but only those which consent to the agent's own conception of what it is that makes their life make sense.

These arguments are Sartre's notion of absolute freedom where Sartre claims that man is condemned to be free. According to him, I do not have my freedom. I am it (Sartre, 2001, 180) by man being free, Sartre says he is also responsible for his actions. Thus for Sartre euthanasia is allowed because I am solely responsible for my actions. This means that I can choose to do whatever I want because I am free and responsible. This however leads to moral decadence.

On the other hand, those who argue against the moral legitimacy of euthanasia appeal to some 'sanctity of life' principle stressing the fact that the intentional termination of life is always immoral, no matter the circumstance surrounding such an act. They stress the fact that any systematic acceptance of euthanasia would lead to a damaging consequence for society – for instance, a lessening of respect for human life. With this divergence in views, should euthanasia be permissible? To this question, our stand should be clear like the religious stand on euthanasia which affirms the fact that God is the giver of life and he alone has the right to withdraw such a life if he so wishes. This means that no other person or being has the right to take the life that the creator (God) has created (Agidigbi, 2005, 130).

This position disallows active euthanasia which is done voluntarily. It also disallows passive euthanasia where it is felt that 'since he/she is going to die after all, there is no need of giving treatment.' The question is who says he/she would die? As long as he/she lies on bed even though he/she may be unconscious, he/she is still a human being and life has to be protected. The one who gives life is the one who takes it back. We are just caretakers of our life since the owner is God the creator. The doctor, who takes an oath to protect life by all means possible and does not do so because he feels there is no need, is not acting morally and acts against

medical ethics. He is to save life at all costs. It is however acceptable that the patient dies while being taken proper care of rather than the other way round of dying because of negligence. The human being at the critical situation (like the situation of sickness) demands our care and availability. This is another area where the voice of intersubjectivity and love is calling us. We are not only brothers and sisters in times of joy but also in times of suffering, but this suffering should not be resolved by the irrational and impatient suggestion of euthanasia. Our concern to our brothers and sisters in suffering is to be available to them, take care of them and love them in their situation.

Suicide

Contemporary society is filled with the idea of absolute freedom over one's life. Our society today speaks the language of suicide. Thus if I feel I have no meaning in life or that life seems to be a misery, the only thing to do is commit suicide, because living is only adding to my problems and not reducing them. The majority of those falling victims to this brain washing idea are young people.

When we speak of suicide here, we are speaking in the strict sense as the direct killing of oneself on one's own authority (Gonslaves, 1986, 246). Direct killing is an act of killing that is directly voluntary; meaning, death is intended either as an end or as a means to an end. Either the action is capable of only one effect and that effect is death, or the action is capable of several effects, including death, and among this death is the effect intended, either for its own sake or as a means to something else. Many opinions have been raised on the permissibility of suicide, some for and some against.

Among the arguments in favour of suicide is that first they say it is understood that no one should commit suicide for whom life holds out some hope or promise, and that people suffering from temporary despondency should be prevented from harming themselves, but there are always some for whom life has become an intolerable and irremediable burden. Thus, they are useless to society and to themselves. For them, it is better therefore for all concerned to retire from the scene of life through the ever open door. Another is that they argue admitting that God has given us life, yet it is truly a gift. No gift is expected to be retained indefinitely at the expense and to the harm of the receiver. When its possession becomes more injurious than its surrender it should be in accordance with the will of a good God and a wise use of his gift to relinquish it (Gonslaves, 1986, 246).

For Sartre, suicide is one of the ultimate possible which must always be present for us when there is a question of envisaging a situation. Thus for Sartre, if I am in a particular situation, and based on this situation I want to commit suicide; I am free because I am responsible for my being.

However, those who oppose suicide argue that suicide is often an act of cowardice and a refusal to face life courageously. They argue that we take the easy way out when we thrust the burdens we cannot bear onto the shoulders of our dependents. But not all are in this case they say; rather; they themselves are a burden on others. Yet they must not forget the worth of their own

person. Again they argue that life is a gift from God, but some gifts are given outright and others have strings attached. All God's gifts are restricted, but not because of any lack in his generosity, but because he has to make us responsible for their use when he entrusts them to our freedom. Freedom itself is perhaps his greatest gift, but we are not allowed to misuse it, though we are able to do so. Life has been given, and its allotted span goes with the gift. It is not ours to decide when we have had enough of it and to tell God that we are quitting (Gonslaves, 1986, 248).

Gabriel Marcel also argued against suicide. According to him, I can live in such a way that I belong to my body, am identified with it; or I can treat my body as an instrument in such a way that I am enslaved by it. He says suicide is the extreme case in which I seem to dispose of my body with absolute freedom of choice, but I am really the victim of a tragic illusion. The positive meaning of my liberty is the possibility of affirmation, the response to an invitation (Blackham, 1961, 69) Furthermore, Marcel asserts that it is not possible to apply my body as an object of 'having' in the way I have a car, a pen, or a book. In this having, the object of having reveals itself as an exteriority. There is a distance between what I have and me. What I have is to a certain extent independent of me. Thus I can dispose of my body as in the case of suicide or give it away without ceasing to be what I am. The same for Marcel cannot be asserted of my body.

My body is not so far removed from my conscious self, as is the ashtray on my desk. Likewise, he says, my body is not something external to me like my car. Thus I cannot dispose of my body, give it away as I dispose of money, or give away my golf clubs. All this, Marcel says, stems from the fact that my body is not 'a' body but 'my' body, not in the same way as my golf clubs are mine, but in such a way that my body embodies me. Even in the midst of suicide, I see it as a contradiction to equate absolute freedom and suicide. Actually, the argument is thus, one who claims that he possesses absolute freedom and then chooses suicide is contradicting his absolute freedom. To choose suicide is the affirmation that the absolute freedom he possesses is betrayed. Dying through suicide is actually that he wants to strip himself of that freedom which he thinks he has in absolute.

Conclusion

It is clear that the absolute freedom which Sartre is proposing would lead to a whole lot of chaos in the society. Thus, our society would no longer be one where lives and property can be secured but rather a place of insecurity and tyranny because of the fact of some people thinking they have the absolute freedom and power to run the affairs of the state as they like thereby bringing about social and political problems.

Sartre's assertion lacks inter-human morality, community and social justice. Since, for him, the being-for-itself is the source of all meaning other human person cannot possibly make a significant meaning to him. If each individual is condemned to be free, that is, is responsible for all meaning, he or she will also be condemned to his or her own world without having

anything in common with others. But the reality of life shows that human community and social justice is very important when it concerns genuine humanism. Thus, we cannot admit that Sartre's existentialism is humanism insofar it lacks these elements. After all Sartre admitted this by exclaiming that other people are hell for me (Levinas, 1969, 84)

According to Emmanuel Levinas Freedom is called into question only when in as much as it somehow finds itself imposed upon itself: if I could have freely chosen my own existence everything would be justified. In other words, freedom that imposes itself is put into question at the encounter with the Other. On the contrary, my freedom according to Levinas should be for the sake of the Other. As 'I' encounters the Other, is called back to the meaning of its freedom and this freedom however is called to responsibility and obligation towards the Other is genuine freedom. The encounter with the Other in Sartre threatens my freedom, and is equivalent to the fall of my freedom under the gaze of another freedom (Levinas, 1969, 84). Unlike Sartre, when the Other threatens my freedom, it is not for worse but rather for good, in the sense that, being in encounter with the Other, my freedom according to Levinas must be translated into responsibility and also goodness towards the Other. In this case, my freedom is not for its own sake but for the sake of the Other.

Absolutism of freedom in Sartre's existentialism is criticized by Marcel in two forms which are in his philosophy of inter-subjectivity and his concept of being and having. Marcel as a philosopher of inter-subjectivity stresses the fact that interpersonal relationship is an essential aspect of human existence which is opposed to Sartre's notion of being-for-others which is of conflict and not relational. According to him, man is essentially a being that is embodied in the world and it is as such that he experiences himself and becomes conscious of himself. He discovers himself in the world and in the midst of others as an embodied spirit. There is no need of proving the existence of the world or the existence of others since man is essentially related both to the world and to others (Olusola, 2008, 5).

Sartre's notion of absolutism has left our society with moral relativity. Thus bringing about a conflict between being (what we are) and having (what we possess). Many people today see themselves as objects of having, meaning that they feel they are absolutely free to do to themselves as they like and when they feel they are through, they dispose of themselves like any other possession they have. This is what leads, for example to suicide. Thus it is crystal clear that Sartre's philosophy of absolute freedom brings nothing other than relativism which in turn brings about social ills.

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