



Freedom, Authenticity, and the Absurd: Exploring Existentialism in the Modern Era

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ABSTRACT

Existentialism, a philosophical movement emerging in the 19th and 20th centuries, offers a complete examination of human existence by highlighting concepts like authenticity, freedom, and facing absurdity. This essay investigates existentialist philosophy to muddle its views on proper autonomy and how it relates to human responsibility and agency. Negotiated on the babblings of existentialists including Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir, Martin Heidegger, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Jean-Paul Sartre, this essay dilutes the notion of individual freedom as a fundamental component of existentialist philosophy. Existentialists argue that people have radical freedom, meaning they can control their fate by decisions and deeds. In the realm of existentialist philosophy, authenticity emerges as a sporadic principle that emphasizes the significance of living in line with one's actual self and values. People may live honorably and passionately by disowning their independence and taking ownership of their lives. This allows them to transcend atypical societal norms and customs. Also, recognizing the knowledge that life has no intrinsic meaning or purpose is confronted by existentialism, which highlights the absurdity of human existence. People can face the absurdity of life and confirm their ability to bring meaning and importance to an apparently uncaring universe by engaging in acts of revolt and revolution.

I. The Existentialist Notion of Freedom

Existentialist thinkers argue for a radical reinterpretation of freedom, arguing that people have the inherent right to choose how their lives will unfold. The denial of any fixed human nature or predetermined essence lays at the ground

of existentialism. Instead, existentialists argue that people create their own essence by defining themselves via the decisions and deeds they commit to.

One of the utmost existentialist philosophers, Jean-Paul Sartre, is credited with saying that "existence precedes essence." Sartre bolts onto this notion in his masterpiece "Being and Nothingness," claiming that humans are destined to be free. Sartre mozzarella that we are thrown into a universe unloved by morals or meanings, and that is our difficult responsibility to establish our own importance. However, this extreme independence also comes with a great deal of responsibility and concern. The fantastic quote from Sartre that encapsulates this idea is "Man feasts on cobwebs to be free; because once injected into the world, he is responsible for everything he does."

Sartre's notion of "bad faith" provides additional insight into the existentialist interpretation of freedom. In bad faith, people deceive themselves in order to avoid the responsibilities that come with being free. Individuals deny their responsibility for their acts and give up their autonomy when they choose roles and identities that are imposed by society or when they seek guidance from outside authority. Nevertheless, genuine freedom, in Sartre's view, is the capacity to accept the unpredictability and anxiety that come with accepting one's radical autonomy.

Moreover, in her ground-breaking book "The Ethics of Ambiguity," Simone de Beauvoir builds onto Sartre's theories and highlights the significance of freedom in confining oneself as an ethical agent. De Beauvoir contends that freedom is a relational concept as well as a subjective experience. People shape not only their personal lives but also the social and political systems that control human existence when they exercise their freedom. Therefore, pursuing individual liberty is simply one aspect of freedom; another is realizing how interdependent and connected all humans are.

II. Authenticity and Responsibility

Worthless Authenticity—the dedication to live in line with one's genuine self and ideals—is highly valued in existentialist philosophy. The idea of accepting complete responsibility for one's decisions and deeds, even in the face of uncertainty and difficulty, is fundamental to the existentialist concept of authenticity.

The issue of authenticity is examined by Friedrich Nietzsche, who is frequently cited as a predecessor to existentialism, in his iconic book "Thus Spoke Zarathustra." Nietzsche gives us a vision of the "overman" or "superman"—someone who embraces their inner urges and passions and transcends traditional morality—through the character of Zarathustra. In order to live authentically and passionately, Zarathustra meditates humanity to break free from the confines of cultural norms and customs.

Nietzsche's theory of the "will to power" clarifies the existentialist interpretation of authenticity even more. The urge to express one's autonomy and control one's own fate is known as the will to power, and it is what motivates human behaviour. People who embrace the will to power smart that they are capable of making their own decisions and take ownership of their existence.

Moreover, Nietzsche's ideas are expanded upon by existentialist philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger, who stress the significance of authenticity in identifying oneself as an ethical agent. According to Sartre, being authentic entails accepting responsibility for one's life and realizing one's profound freedom. The concept of "mauvaise foi," or ill faith, in which people trick themselves into thinking they are not free and so avoid taking responsibility for their acts, is criticized by Sartre in "Being and Nothingness." According to Sartre, being authentic means accepting the inherent ambiguity of human existence, making decisions that are consistent with one's own beliefs and ideals, and confronting life's fears and uncertainties head-on.

In "Being and Time," Martin Heidegger examines the idea of authenticity from the perspective of "being-towards-death." According to Heidegger, accepting our death acts as a wake-up call to real existence, forcing us to face the fleeting nature of life and the pressing need to lead meaningful lives. We are forced to re-evaluate our goals, let go of unimportant worries from daily life, and grasp the chance for genuine self-expression and fulfilment when faced with death.

Philosophers that embrace existentialist ideas encourage people to face life's uncertainties, embrace their radical autonomy, and live honourably and passionately. They do this through examining authenticity and responsibility. In a world full of uncertainty and unpredictability, people express their independence and their ability to make their own decisions by taking accountability for their decisions and actions.

III. Confronting Absurdity

Existentialist philosophy addresses the fundamental absurdity of human existence—the sobering reality that life is meaningless and purposeless—especially as expressed by Albert Camus. In "The Myth of Sisyphus," Camus compares the state of humanity to that of a mythical character named Sisyphus, who is destined to drag a rock uphill and then back down again in an eternal loop that holds no ultimate significance. Camus suggests that human existence is inherently ridiculous.

Camus views the encounter with the absurd as an opportunity to struggle against life's absurdities rather than as a reason to give up. In the face of a universe that seems to be uncaring, people affirm their independence and autonomy by embracing the ludicrous. People are expected to develop their own meaning by authentically engaging with life's possibilities and challenges, as opposed to searching for a transcendent meaning or purpose.

Camus makes a distinction between the "revolt" of facing absurdity head-on and the "philosophical suicide" of joining religious or ideological systems that offer false certainty. Philosophical suicide provides illusory consolation, but in the end, it rejects the freedom and accountability that are fundamental to human existence. On the other hand, the revolt against the absurd entails acknowledging life's absurdity while yet resolving to live a life filled with passion and integrity.

Moreover, Camus describes three approaches that people can take to the absurd:

1. Acknowledgment: Acknowledging the absurd's presence is the first step in confronting it. People ought to embrace the ambiguity and uncertainty that come with being human, rather than rejecting or running away from the absurd.

2. Rebellion: Rebellion against the ridiculous is the second phase. In the face of absurdity, people are called upon to maintain their individuality and independence rather than give in to hopelessness or nihilism. People demonstrate their ability to give meaning and purpose to an apparently meaningless universe by engaging in acts of defiance and revolt.

3. Revolution: The last phase entails changing one's perspective on absurdity, or revolution. Those who accept the ludicrous as a necessary component of life might experience a deep sense of possibility and liberty. People find the fortitude to live true lives, to take advantage of chances for personal development and self-realization, and to affirm their humanity in the face of inconsistencies and inherent uncertainty in life when they confront the absurd.

In the midst of the inherent inconsistencies and uncertainties of life, Camus encourages people to live truly by embracing the totality of their freedom and responsibility through his examination of the absurd. When people face the ludicrous, they feel a deep feeling of freedom and possibility, which validates their ability to give meaning and purpose to an otherwise indifferent universe.

IV. Broder Implications of Existentialist Philosophy

Existentialist philosophy touches on a variety of facets of human experience and inquiry, reaching beyond the confines of philosophy with its emphasis on freedom, authenticity, and the confrontation with absurdity. A few of the wider ramifications of existentialist philosophy are briefly discussed in this section

Intersections with Psychology: Existentialist concepts have had a major impact on psychology, especially with the rise of existential psychology. In the therapeutic setting, psychologists like Viktor Frankl and Rollo May explored questions of meaning, responsibility, and choice by drawing on existentialist concepts. Therapeutic strategies and therapies meant to address existential issues and advance psychological well-being are still influenced by existential psychology.

Literary and Cultural Impact: Across decades, writers, filmmakers, and artists have been influenced by existentialist concepts, which have become ubiquitous in literature, art, and popular culture. From the existential sorrow of Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" to the absurdity of Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" and the moral quandaries of Fyodor Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment," existentialist concepts never fail to enthrall audiences and inspire contemplation on the nature of humanity. Dostoevsky's examination of guilt, suffering, and redemption in "Crime and Punishment" is a prime example of existentialist themes, which include the battle to

reconcile individual freedom with ethical duty and the search for meaning in a world characterized by moral ambiguity.

Existentialist philosophy continues to be relevant in modern discourse, providing insightful understandings of the intricacies of human existence and the difficulties of navigating an unpredictable environment. Existentialist concepts are still relevant in today's philosophical, psychological, sociological, and cultural studies conversations about identity, ethics, and the nature of reality. Furthermore, existentialism's focus on human agency and the pursuit of meaning speaks to those who are struggling with the existential issues of contemporary living and offers a framework for figuring out the intricacies of life. Its impact goes beyond philosophy to encompass a range of facets of human inquiry and cultural expression, influencing how we see ourselves, agency, and the pursuit of meaning in an ambiguous and uncertain environment.

V. Conclusion

To sum up, existentialism provides a deep understanding of human existence by highlighting authenticity, freedom, and facing absurdity. Existentialist philosophy encourages people to accept their extreme autonomy and take ownership of their decisions and deeds through the writings of notable intellectuals like Jean-Paul Sartre, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Albert Camus. The timeless legacy of existentialism permeates popular culture, psychology, and literature, encouraging introspection on the nature of humanity and the search for purpose in an uncertain world. Existentialism serves as a helpful guide for navigating the existential terrain by encouraging us to live truly, face life's inherent absurdity, and find meaning in it. We can carve out our own route and leave our mark in a universe devoid of fundamental meaning by claiming our freedom and embracing our humanity.

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