

REFLECTION OF EXISTENTIALISTIC IDEAS IN THE WORKS OF JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

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Abstract *This article examines the core existentialistic ideas in the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, focusing on his principle that existence precedes essence, the nature of human freedom and responsibility, and the concept of bad faith. Using a qualitative analytical approach based on Sartre's primary works and secondary scholarly interpretations, the study explores how Sartre articulates radical freedom in a godless universe and the ethical implications of this freedom. The findings highlight Sartre's emphasis on individual self-creation, the anxiety arising from absolute freedom, and the psychological mechanisms of self-deception. The discussion underscores the continuing relevance of Sartre's existentialism in contemporary philosophical and ethical discourse, advocating for authentic living through acceptance of freedom and responsibility.*

Keywords: *Jean-Paul Sartre, existentialism, existence precedes essence, human freedom, bad faith, authenticity, atheistic existentialism*

INTRODUCTION

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) stands as one of the most influential figures in existentialist philosophy, a movement that centers on human existence, freedom, and responsibility. Sartre's existentialism is famously grounded in the assertion that "existence precedes essence," which posits that humans first exist without any predetermined nature and only later define themselves through their choices and actions. This idea directly challenges traditional metaphysical and theological views that assume a fixed human nature or divine blueprint. Sartre's philosophy explores how individuals confront their radical freedom, the anxiety this freedom produces, and the human tendency to evade responsibility through what he terms "bad faith." The present study aims to analyze these core existentialistic ideas in Sartre's work, focusing on his ontology of human freedom, the concept of bad faith, and the implications of his atheistic existentialism.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative analytical approach grounded in a comprehensive review of primary and secondary literature on Sartre's existentialism. Key primary texts, including *Being and Nothingness* and Sartre's public lecture *Existentialism is a Humanism*, serve as the foundation for understanding his philosophical framework. Secondary sources such as philosophical encyclopedias and academic commentaries provide contextualization and critical perspectives. The analysis focuses on three principal themes: the principle that existence precedes essence, the nature of human freedom and responsibility, and the phenomenon of bad faith. By synthesizing these sources, the study seeks to present a coherent and nuanced understanding of Sartre's existentialism and its ethical and practical implications.

RESULTS

The analysis confirms that the cornerstone of Sartre's existentialism is the claim that "existence precedes essence." Unlike objects whose essence or purpose is predefined—such as a knife, whose essence is to cut—humans first appear in the world without any predetermined nature or purpose and must create their essence through choices and actions. This ontological freedom means that humans are "condemned to be free," bearing full responsibility for defining themselves in a world devoid of inherent meaning or divine guidance.

Sartre's existentialism emphasizes radical freedom, whereby individuals are not determined by biology, society, or external circumstances but actively shape their identity. This freedom, however, is accompanied by existential anguish or anxiety because it entails the burden of responsibility without external justification. Sartre illustrates this through the concept of "bad faith," a form of self-deception where individuals deny their freedom and responsibility by blaming their actions on external forces, such as social roles or deterministic factors. For example, a person who claims to act solely under orders is in bad faith, avoiding the recognition that their will ultimately governs their choices.

Furthermore, Sartre's atheistic existentialism rejects any notion of a divine creator who imposes human nature or moral absolutes. Without God, humans are left to invent their own values and ethics, making freedom both a gift and a challenge. The world is seen as absurd and devoid of intrinsic meaning, yet this absence of meaning opens the possibility for authentic self-creation. Sartre's existentialism thus calls for embracing freedom responsibly, acknowledging the anguish it entails, and living authentically by accepting one's role as the author of one's own life.

DISCUSSION

Sartre's existentialism offers a profound rethinking of human existence, rejecting determinism and essentialism in favor of radical freedom and self-definition. The

principle that existence precedes essence challenges traditional metaphysical and theological views, placing the individual's experience and choices at the center of meaning-making. This shift foregrounds human responsibility, making each person accountable for their actions and the values they uphold.

The concept of bad faith reveals the psychological mechanisms by which individuals evade this responsibility, highlighting the tension between freedom and self-deception. Sartre's analysis of bad faith remains relevant in contemporary discussions about authenticity, identity, and moral agency, illustrating how people struggle with the demands of freedom in everyday life.

Sartre's atheistic stance further intensifies the existential condition by removing any external source of meaning or morality. This radical freedom can provoke existential angst but also empowers individuals to create their own essence and ethical framework. The practical implication is a call to live authentically, embracing freedom and responsibility despite the inherent absurdity of life.

In conclusion, Sartre's existentialistic ideas profoundly influence modern philosophy by articulating a vision of human existence characterized by freedom, responsibility, and the necessity of self-creation. His work challenges individuals to confront the realities of their condition and to live deliberately and authentically in a world without predetermined meaning.

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