Your Name

Instructor Name

Course Number

Date

Philosophy of Existentialism

**Thesis**

Mankind did not create itself, therefore it is “condemned” to be and act free according to Sartre in his renowned article “Existentialism is a humanism”. Individuals are placed on this planet without their consent, therefore, they must be free to make choices and adopt actions according to their will in every situation they face. According to the implication that human beings have choice, every action and thought depends on the consequential result of being free. Everyone is condemned to display freedom because of two basic reasons; the choice of existence was not voluntary and human beings are the only creatures on this planet who are solely responsible for all of their actions. There is a fundamental question that interrogates the pre-planned determination of the human fate by God. How an individual can know that everything he does or says or even thinks in his life is a blind expression of our freedom? The concrete truth demonstrates that no one knows about this labyrinth.

It is totally up to human beings to finally decide if this undeniable freedom of choices is to be cherished and be solely responsible for the way one wants to deploy this freedom in any kind of behavior they want.

In the article, Existentialism is a Humanism; the primary point exudes the reality of the moment when a human being is sent in this world. That moment is crucial in defining and giving that individual the freedom and complete responsibility of all his actions. Once a human is in the world, he must take responsibility of all his present actions and those which he will undertake in the foreseeable future. Sartre makes a unique point and suggests that there is a lack of any ethics or values which can be considered as a standard. According to him, there is no concrete base or a yardstick approach which can be used as a prototype for all the humans. There is an absence of a model which has qualities and attributes that humans can apply to their lives. There is no rationality to hide behind the banner of unwillingness or utter determination for the actions that human beings adopt, because in the long run, everyone has a discrete choice for their thought, speech and action. The actions of the human beings pertaining to different styles and beliefs cannot be blamed or accredited to anyone other than their own self, therefore human beings have to take discrete and complete responsibility of their actions and people do not have a choice in this regard. A continuous implication drawing from this perspective is that a human cannot prove his choice of one action over the other by construing that this was God has pre-determined for me or that my inherent nature and personality attributes led me to do so. The authority of one’s actions is their own. Sartre in his article, propounds that throughout the course of their lives, human beings must strive for the creation and maintenance of meaning and this is the true essence of existence. An individual’s destiny is not the reason for his or her actions and consequences, rather it the nature of his or her actions, that in turn forms the lives.

According to the article, the question, “Are we free?” has been responded in positive affirmation by Sartre. Yet is seems like Sartre views this relentless freedom as a curse in disguise. The article is prevalent with the usage of a unique phrase, “condemned to be free”, which implies the nature of this freedom as a sheer inconvenience rather than a benevolence.

Sartre’s premises and notions largely arise from his staunch beliefs in atheism, therefore he views himself as solitary in the world and that his being has to depend only on himself. Sartre further purports that there is no existence of God or any other higher deity. This is a direct association to the nullification of the belief that is widely held by many people that their actions can be limited or fortified by God. This paves the way for a corollary that no one can hide behind excuses for their actions because everyone is responsible for their own choice of actions and there is no higher authority, to whom people should respond to.

Another pivotal idea of Existentialism has been probed into the article which delineates that human beings have the choice in everything that they do in this world. Existence precedes essence directly outlines the premise that due to a lack of pre-existing conceptualization of humanity, denotes that the true essence of every one’s life has to be created by that individual himself and this is not something which is pre-stated in advance. The idea that Sartre attempts to indicate is that first comes the existence of man and then chooses his fate through his actions by virtue of freedom.

The thesis indicates towards a suggestive premise that it is no longer beneficial to hide behind excuses or false meanings for the choice of actions that humans make. Everything that an individual does or say is his own choice and even though mankind is free to make anything out of his life, the one thing which bounds him is his inability to opt out of this freedom.

**Sartre vs. Kant on freedom**

The concept of free will advocated by Kant and the liberation proffered upon man by existentialism as suggested by Sartre are similar in nature in postulating that human beings are only restricted in their choice of actions due to their own conscience (Baiasu). Both the philosophers have drawn their individual abstractions on freedom from the consequential nature of human choice.

**Sartre vs. Buddha on freedom**

Sartre and Buddha both have made use of a humanistic approach regarding the existential complications and in the suggestion of their solutions (Franklin). Many questions that Sartre asked share a deep resonance with the prompts forwarded by Buddha which indicates their mutual experience in terms of existentialist problems. Both existentialism and Buddhism propound that mindfulness is essential and the main idea is “to become” as a direct outcome of the premise that existence precedes essence.

**Sartre vs. Plato on freedom**

Compared to Sartre, Plato only adopts those overtones of the language of freedom which are only favorable for him (Stalley). Plato’s proposition that those people who choose to act against the contours of reason and logic are not living their life according to their choices and preferences, is partially similar to Sartre’s suggestive undertaking of holding complete responsibility of an individual’s own actions.

**Conclusions**

1. All the speculative philosophies are countered by existentialism which stresses on the importance of distinct qualities of human beings and their unique existence.
2. Finding self through the adoption of free-will and observation of personal responsibility is central to the basic profile of existentialism.
3. An individual can only get acquainted with the meaning in his life through his existential struggles.

# **Works Cited:**

Baiasu, Sorin, ed. "Comparing Kant and Sartre." *Springer* (2016).

Franklin, J. Jeffrey. "Buddhism and Modern Existential Nihilism: Jean-Paul Sartre Meets Nagarjuna." *Religion & Literature* (2012): 73-96.

Stalley, Richard F. "Plato's doctrine of freedom." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1998): 145-158.