

SARTRE'S EXISTENTIALISM ON MODERN EDUCATION

Lucia ȘCHIOPU, lector superior

Rezumat

Existențialismul este o doctrină filozofică caracterizată printr-o accentuare a individualității, propagarea libertății individuale și a subiectivității. Sartre evidențiază crearea unei individualități ce se bazează pe: existența omului, silirea de a deveni, prin raportare la colectivitatea umană. Începutul existenței umane poate echivala cu un proces complex de modelare și de prelucrare a ego-ului. Astfel, odată cu ivirea unei percepții de autodefinire și precizie, omul se regăsește, prin reflex, constrâns de a-și întemeia un rost. În consecință, fiind într-un mediu, care îl stimulează de a concepe propriile sale forme de independență și de relaționare, individul este desemnat, prin spectrul propriilor dorințe și expectanțe, în funcție de totalitatea de stimuli exteriori create de rutină.

Existentialism is a doctrine that defines human life as possible; a doctrine, which states that every reality implies both an environment and a human subjectivity. A human being is a subject that acts, feels and simply lives. Otherwise saying the human being exists and gives meaning to his life. A central statement in Existentialism is existence precedes essence [1, p. 158].

What does it mean that existence precedes essence? It means that The Man exists, encounters himself, struggles in the world – and defines himself afterwards. If the man is not definable, it is because he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. Thus, there is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it. Man simply exists. Not that he is simply what he perceives himself to be, but he is what he wants to be or he wills, and as he conceives and creates himself after already existing. Man is what he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism.

„Man can will nothing unless he has first understood that he must count on no one but himself; that he is alone, abandoned on earth in the midst of his infinite responsibilities, without help, with no other aim than the one he sets himself, with no other destiny than the one he forges for himself on this earth.”

— [Jean-Paul Sartre](#)

And this is what is called “subjectivity”. Subjectivity means - man primarily exists – that man is searching for his way and oath in the future and is completely aware of what he is going to do. Man is a reflection which has a subjective life. Otherwise saying subjectivity is the starting point. It is identical with the terms autonomy and self- reflection. E.g. a man may wish to marry – but in such a case what is usually called a will is probably a manifestation of a prior and more spontaneous decision. This decision did not appear out of nowhere, it is true that existence is prior to essence: man is responsible for what he is.

Thus, the first effect of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence only upon his own shoulders. And, when it is said that man is responsible for himself, it does not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men.

A man is seen as a being. There are two types of being which Sartre calls the for-itself ('pour-soi') and the in-itself ('en-soi'). One way of understanding how they relate to each other is to think of being-in-itself as another word for *object* and the being-for-itself as another word for *subject*. The being-in-itself is something that is defined by its physical characteristics, whereas the subject is defined by consciousness, or nonphysical attributes.

Sartre states that the in-itself exists without justification independently of the for-itself, and thus constituting an absolute 'plenitude or completeness'. It characterizes its transcendence of the conscious experience. Compared with the in-itself, the for-itself is mainly featured by a lack of identity with itself. Consciousness is always a state of something, and therefore is defined in relation to something else. So, the for-itself always goes farther than the particular conscious experience, because consciousness is so spontaneous and unpredictable. It is impossible to involve it in a conscious experience.

Sartre finds the key concept that enables him to investigate the nature of the for-itself. He makes an analysis of the notion Nothingness and according to him it plays an important role in the being [2, p. 159]. The nothingness in question is also not simply the result of applying a logical operation, or negation to a proposition. This means that it is the very negation involved in characterizing something as destructible which makes destruction possible. For Sartre nothingness equals with destruction. The power of negation is an internal characteristic of the intentionality of consciousness.

A deeper analysis of the nothingness discovers the phenomenological understanding of the SELF. This means that the Self is presented as a unity for the for-itself, which has the task to seek for itself. Here should be mentioned and the temporal component that is the point, when the for- itself and itself coincide. So, the for- itself is not identical with its past of future. And, as Sartre says that I am therefore no longer who I am. Similarly with the future: I never coincide with that which I will be. First, „the past corresponds to the facticity of a human life that cannot choose what is already given about itself”. Second, the future opens up possibilities for the freedom of the for-itself. Otherwise saying if there is the case of the lack of coincidence between the for- itself and in- itself then there should be introduced the term as the lack of self- identity.

Sartre's primary idea is that humans, are „condemned to be free". This means that freedom is fundamental to being human; each human being must make his or her own choices. This theory is based upon his position that there is no creator and that human beings have no essence before their existence because there is no Creator. Thus: „existence precedes essence". From this can be concluded that since one cannot explain one's own actions and behavior, they are necessarily fully responsible for those actions.

Freedom is not defined by an ability to act. Freedom is rather to be understood as characteristic of the nature of consciousness, i.e. as spontaneity. But there is more to freedom. Sartre introduces the notion of freedom as a perspective to make choices, in any circumstances. In fact all human life consists in making choices [1, p. 157]. The further question is if this choice is the right one? But only with time it can be found an answer on this question.

Freedom is the main feature of man, each individual is free to add to their essence but cannot change that fundamental aspect [1, p. 159]. Because freedom defines man, man is obliged to act upon his freedom and change it through his choices and then to take responsibility. Sartre claims that man must admit that he is self-determined. Sartre himself is not a determinist. He believes that through different various targets, it is hidden the idea of absolute freedom. Sartre states that human beings have the choice to do whatever they want. They are still responsible for their actions and their consequences.

Sartre's conception of choice is viewed as an entire process that he calls the project. It starts with the original process that evolves in time. Sartre defines a philosophical doctrine based on an existentialist study of the nature of being. He states that values are never objective, as they are created by the choices and actions of free individuals. In his theory there is always room for hope. Freedom is humanity's curse as well as its blessing, and what the humanity makes of that freedom is our own decision.

Bibliography

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2. Ernst, Breisach, *Introduction to Modern Existentialism*, New York, 1962.