CHAPTER III

SARTRE'S NOTION OF FREEDOM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY
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Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), a French philosopher and writer, is the leading proponent of French atheistic existentialism. His philosophical views are distinct from other thinkers of the same school and his impact on modern thought is unprecedented. The writings of Sartre have probably been more influential in the West than those of any other thinker and literary figure since the World Wars. In his theoretical writings, Sartre has laid the foundations for an original doctrine of human predicament in modern age. His concern, however, has been to relate his theory to human response and the practical demands of living. To achieve this end, he has carried his philosophical concepts into his novels, short stories, plays, film scripts, literary and political essays; and subjected them to the test of imaginative experience. His uniqueness lies in the success with which he demonstrates the validity of existentialist doctrine in his literary works that are of the highest literary merit. In brief, Sartre has become the popularizer of his own philosophical thought as well as existentialist philosophy.

Among all the existentialist thinkers (both theists and atheists), Sartre alone has very clearly represented the existential philosophical system. According to him, "existence precedes essence"\(^1\), i.e. man's existence comes before its essence. According

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to him, there is at least one being whose existence comes before its essence. A being which exists before it can be defined by any conception of it. That being is man, or as Heidegger explains it, the human reality. Sartre explains this dictum saying that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world and defines himself afterwards. He points out that if man, in the view of an existentialist thinker, is undefineable, "it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself." Man, says Sartre, is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. This is the first principle of his philosophy.

Sartre has systematically developed the theory of freedom of the will. His conception of freedom is elaborated in all his writings, especially in Being and Nothingness ("L'être et le meant") and Existentialism and Humanism ("L'Existentialism est un humanisme").

Sartre's philosophical magnumopus, Being and Nothingness, is divided into six sections. It opens with an introduction in which the author introduces most of his key terms and discusses his method of philosophizing. Then follow four parts: the first about "Nothingness", nihilation, negation and bad faith;  

1. Ibid., p. 28.
2. Ibid., p. 28.
the second about consciousness and its being-for-itself. The third takes up being-for-others, or 'my self' looked at by others. This part deals with community, love and hate and many other social aspects of life. It is in this context that man realises his responsibility. Part four of the book consists of a detailed interpretation of consciousness resulting in the development of his theory of freedom. It may be said with justification that the crux of his writings is embodied in this part of "Being and Nothingness". The conclusion, the sixth section of the book, includes a short discussion of the possibility of an ethics based on the preceding account. However, it would not seem appropriate to discuss in detail all the sections of Being and Nothingness, what is relevant to our theme is the part four. In support of our interpretation of Sartre's theory of freedom, his other writings would also partly be referred to. While dealing with the implications of his theory of freedom and its practical consequences for individual and society, one should examine the third part of his Being and Nothingness also.

Being and Nothingness, sub-titled as "An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology", states clearly the central intention of Sartre. The theme of the 'Essay' vividly indicates that being is never exhausted by any of its phenomenal aspects; no particular perspective reveals the entire character of being. There are two modes of being—being-in-itself and being-for-itself. According to Sartre, being-in-itself (en-soi) is fixed, complete, wholly given
absolutely contingent, with no reason for its being. It is roughly equivalent to the inert world of objects and things:

*Being-in-itself* (Sartre's *en-soi*) is the self-contained being of a thing. A stone is a stone; it is what it is; and in being just what it is, no more and no less, the being of the thing always coincides with itself.

On the contrary, *being-for-itself* (*pour-soi*) is incomplete, fluid indeterminate and it corresponds to the being of human consciousness:

*Being-for-itself* (*pour-soi*) is co-existent with the realm of consciousness, and the nature of consciousness is that it is perpetually beyond itself. Our thought goes beyond itself, toward tomorrow or yesterday, and toward the outer edges of the world.

Sartre, further, points out that *being-in-itself* is prior to *being-for-itself* and the latter is dependent upon the former for its origin. *Being-for-itself* is derived from *being-in-itself* by an act of nihilation (nothingness), for *being-for-itself* is a nothingness in the heart of being. Lastly, the author concludes his phenomenological essay elucidating the nature and quality of freedom and delineating his programme of existential psycho-analysis. Freedom is discussed in relation to the will, in relation to facticity and finally in relation to responsibility.

Sartre points out that freedom is the nature of man and in anxiety man becomes aware of his freedom, knows himself

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responsible for his own being by commitment. He seeks the impossible reunion with being-in-itself, and in despair knows himself forever at odds with the "others" who by their glances can threaten a man, turning him into a mere object.

According to Sartre the will can never be the condition of freedom; it is simply a psychological manifestation of it. The will presupposes the foundation of an original freedom in order to be able to constitute itself as will. He says the will is derived or posited by reflective decision. It is a psychological manifestation which emerges within the complex of motives and ends already posited by the for-itself (mode of being). Rightly speaking, according to Sartre, it is not the "Will" that is free. "Man is free, man is freedom". The will, he assumes, is simply a manifestation of man's primordial freedom.

Freedom in relation to facticity gives rise to the situation. One should be very clear about the term "facticity". Existentialists use the word "facility" to designate the limiting factor in existence. "Facticity (the word has been coined to translate the German 'Faktizität' and French facticité) does not mean the same as 'factuality'. When one says that something is factual one is pointing to an objective state of affairs observable in the world. To existentialists, facticity, on the other hand,

1. Sartre, J.P., Existentialism and Humanism, op. cit., p. 34.
might be called the inner side of 'factuality'. In the words of John Macquarrie:

It is not an observed state of affairs but the inward, existential awareness of one's own being as a fact that is to be accepted. No one has chosen to be. He simply finds himself in existence. We discover ourselves, so to speak, as free existents in the midst of a world of things. We did not put ourselves in that world. ...The factical is the given, and above all, the givenness of our existence. That we are here is, if you like, an inexplicable brute fact. ¹

Or more precisely, in the words of Sartre 'facticity' is:

Facticity (facticité). The For-itself's necessary connection with the In-itself, hence with the world and its own past. It is what allows us to say that the For-itself is or exists. The facticity of freedom is the fact that freedom is not able not to be free. ²

Thus, freedom in relation to facticity, certainly gives rise to the existential situation. The situation is that ambiguous phenomenon in which it is impossible clearly to distinguish the contribution of freedom and the determinants of brute circumstances. This accounts for the paradox of freedom. ³ In speaking about the "paradox of freedom" Sartre holds that human-reality everywhere encounters resistances and obstacles which it has not created,

1. Ibid., pp. 189-90.
but these resistances and obstacles having meaning only in and through the free choice which human reality is.¹ A man is condemned to be free, so, according to Sartre, he did not create himself. In a particular concrete situation and anxiety man, Sartre asserts, becomes aware of his freedom and knows himself responsible for his own being by commitment and for the world in which he is thrown. Sartre, in this regard, writes in his Being and Nothingness:

...Man being condemned to be free carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being. ...Furthermore, this absolute responsibility is not resignation; it is simply the logical requirement of the consequences of our freedom. ...Every thing which happens to me is mine... Thus there are no accidents in a life; a community event which suddenly bursts forth and involves me in it does not come from the outside. If I am mobilized in a war, this war is my war; it is in my image and I deserve it. I deserve it first because I could always get out of it by suicide or by desertion; these ultimate possibles are those which must always be present for us when there is a question of envisaging a situation. For lack of getting out of it, I have chosen it.²

With a view to resolve the 'paradox of freedom', Sartre points out that there is freedom only in situation, and there is a situation only through freedom.³ He delineates five structures of the situation in which freedom and facticity interpenetrate

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2. Ibid., pp. 553-54.
3. Ibid., p. 489.
each other: (i) my place, (ii) my past, (iii) my environment, (iv) my fellow men, and (v) my death. Insofar as freedom always interpenetrates facticity, man becomes wholly responsible for himself. He is responsible for everything except for the fact of his responsibility. He is free, but is not free to obliterate fully his freedom. He is condemned to be free:

Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty and from the moment that he is thrown into this world, he is responsible for everything he does.

This abandonment to freedom is an expression of his facticity. Yet he must assume responsibility for the fact that his facticity is incomprehensible and contingent. The result is that his facticity or his final abandonment consists simply in the fact that he is condemned to be wholly responsible for himself. Although freedom and facticity interpenetrate, it remains incontestable that freedom is accorded a central place in the Sartrian conception of man.

As mentioned above, Sartre is a radical representative of existentialism. Besides him, Nietzsche, Albert Camus, Dostoyevsky and Heidegger also fall in the same group (atheistic one). None of these thinkers has voluntarily called himself an advocate

1. Ibid., pp. 489-531.
of existentialism as Sartre does. He is very emphatic in asserting himself to be a representative of atheistic existentialism. He, in this connection, avers:

Atheistic existentialism, of which I am a representative, declares with great consistency that... God does not exist... Of course, there is no God. In other words—and this is, I believe, the purport of all that we in France call radicalism—nothing will be changed if God does not exist; we shall re-discover the same norms of honesty, progress and humanity, and we shall have disposed of God as an out-of-date hypothesis which will die away quietly of itself.

Sartre draws important conclusions from atheism. He constructs his philosophical thought and especially a theory of freedom on the basis of his atheistic outlook.

Sartre asserts that there is no God and hence "everything is permitted." Had there been God human freedom would have been curtailed. In case God does not exist, Sartre points out, there is only one being whose existence comes before its essence and that being is 'man'. Man is undefinable because, to begin with, he is nothing:

Freedom is precisely the nothingness which is made to-be at the heart of man and which forces human-reality to make itself instead of to be... for human reality, to be is to choose oneself; nothing comes to it either from outside or from within which it can receive or accept. ...Thus, freedom is not a being; it is the being of man—i.e., his nothingness of being.

2. Ibid., pp. 440-441.
A human individual will not be anything unless and until he will be what he makes of himself. Hence, according to Sartre, there is no human nature because there is no God to have such a conception of it. As he says:

For if indeed existence precedes essence, one will never be able to explain one's action by reference to a given and specific human nature; in other words, there is no determinism—man is free, man is freedom.  

Man is not what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills, what he chooses and "what he makes of himself" through freedom and "that is the first principle of existentialism." Moreover, freedom, according to Sartre, is the sole foundation of all values.

As stated earlier, in his Being and Nothingness, Sartre has devoted nearly 184 pages exclusively to freedom, in the fourth part entitled "Having, Doing and Being". Freedom, according to Sartre, is precisely nothingness:

Freedom in its foundation coincides with the nothingness which is at the heart of man. Human reality is free because it is not enough.

1. Sartre, J.P., Existentialism and Humanism, op. cit., p. 34.
2. Ibid., p. 28.
3. Ibid., p. 28.
He holds that "the essential freedom, the ultimate and final freedom that can be taken from a man is to say 'No'."\(^1\) Nikolai Berdyaev has made similar remarks saying: "...Freedom can not be derived from being; it is rooted in nothingness, in non-being, if we are to use ontological terminology. Freedom is baseless, neither determined by nor born of being."\(^2\) For Sartre, freedom in its very essence is negative, though this negativity is also creativity. By this "No" Sartre means that, "Man is the being by whom nothing comes into being."\(^3\) In other words, it can be said that although all existentialists are interested in the problem of freedom, it is Sartre alone among them who has presented a rigorously constructed theory of freedom, and he uses the terms 'freedom' and 'human reality' synonymously. According to him, "the free project is fundamental for it is my being"\(^4\), and "to be human is to be free".

According to Sartre there is no universally obligatory moral law and no set of absolute fixed values, for there is no God. Quoting in his lecture on "Humanism" the sayings of Dostoyevsky, Sartre asserts that if God does not exist everything would be permitted. This conclusion is the starting point for existentialism according to Sartre. He holds that man is the

\(^1\) Barrett, W., op. cit., p. 215.
\(^2\) Cf. John Macquarrie's *Existentialism*, op. cit., p. 179.
\(^3\) Barrett, W., op. cit., p. 216.
sole source of values, and it rests with the individual to create or choose his own scale of values, and his own ideal. But this phrase "rests with" leads to the condemnation of freedom:

The fact is that man cannot help being free, and he cannot help acting in the world. Even if he chooses to commit suicide, he chooses and so acts. And these acts are performed with motives.

Again, according to Sartre, it is man himself who makes the motive a motive, and who gives it value and meaning. And, in this respect, the choice of particular values depends on an initial project, an initial choice of an ideal. He says

The individual, simply because he is a free, self-transcending subject, cannot help projecting an initial, freely-chosen ideal, in the light of which he determines particular values.

The individual human person, as mentioned above, is for Sartre, the sole source of all values and his freedom being their foundation. Regarding this theme, he, in his polemical work Existentialism and Humanism, emphatically expresses:

We can not decide a priori what it is that should be done. ... Man makes himself; he is not found ready-made; he makes himself by the choice of his morality, and he cannot but choose a morality, such is the pressure of circumstances upon him. We define man only in relation to his commitments; it is therefore absurd to reproach us for irresponsibility in our choice.

2. Ibid., p. 189.
Thus, according to Sartre man's freedom is unrestricted, and there is no given universally-obligatory moral law on account of which he ought to act. There are no absolute given values. Man himself is the source of all values. In the absence of given values or universally-obligatory moral law, man's freedom, in fact, according to Sartre, is restricted. He points out that man's freedom is restricted because of his own peculiar character, by his physico-psychological make-up and finally by the historical situation in which he finds himself 'there' in the world. In this way, Sartre tries to make the individual responsible for his physico-psychological make-up and for the historical situation in which he finds himself and in which he has to act.¹ He is responsible for every thing, because he is an existing being that alone possesses freedom. He is condemned to freedom:

My historical situation is what it is for me; and what it is for me depends on the end which I have set before myself. And since I choose my ideal or end freely, it also depends on me what my historical situation is. My liberty is thus unrestricted.²

According to Sartre, a human individual is never determined. He explicitly says that man cannot be sometimes free and sometimes determined: he is either entirely and always free or he is never free at all.³ The real motive of human behaviour, Sartre

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2. Ibid., p. 190.
holds, is an original project of being freely chosen at the moment one wrenches oneself away from the in-itself to create one's own world. It is in terms of this original project of being that human behavior receives its ultimate explanation. No type of science can explain human behaviour. Sartre, in his *Being and Nothingness*, very emphatically says that though "Heredity, education, environment, physiological constitution" are "the great explanatory (factors) of our epoch," but they explain nothing. The one and only genuine cause of human behaviour is the individual's fundamental project of being. And that very project, says Sartre, is a "Choice, not a state"; it is not buried in "the darkness of unconscious". It is rather a "free and conscious determination" of oneself.

Another crucial concept involved in Sartre's doctrine of freedom is 'anguish'. For existentialists, especially for Sartre, the term "anguish" stands for every specific meanings. Anguish is explained as:

The reflective apprehension of the self as freedom, the realization that a nothingness slips in between myself and my past and future so that nothing relieves me from the necessity of continually choosing myself and nothing guarantees the validity of the values which I choose. Fear is of something in the world, anguish is anguish before myself.

1. Ibid., p. 559.
2. Ibid., p. 573.
3. Ibid., p. 573.
4. Ibid., p. 628.
In this way, Sartre's ultimate proof that an individual's behavior is fully determined by a free, prereflective choice of himself, is of course, the experience of anguish in which the individual finds himself compelled to reconstitute his being in utter isolation and without external help. \(^1\) According to Sartre, as mentioned before, human reality and freedom are synonymous: "What we call freedom is impossible to distinguish from the being of human reality. ... there is no difference between the being of man and his being-free (être-libre)". \(^2\) In other words, far from being a rare visitor freedom is billeted on man for life and, therefore, man is "constrained to be free". Further, when in self-reflection, man apprehends his own freedom, when he realizes that consciousness is not determined by the past because past is constantly "nihilated", and in this way, grasps his total separation from the world and with it the impossibility of excusing one's choices, in such a state, there occurs anguish. Sartre, in this connection, says in his *Being and Nothingness*:

> In each instance of reflection anguish is born as a structure of the reflective consciousness in so far as the latter considers consciousness as an object of reflection;... \(^3\)

Theoretically speaking, in the face of anguish one should be able to adopt various attitudes, but the immediate and the most natural behavior when confronted with anguish is flight. In this

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state man flees from the responsibility of choice and escapes it by depicting himself as a thing, determined by his past. This results in inauthenticity of existence, according to Sartre. He says:

Psychological determinism, before being a theoretical conception, is first an attitude of excuse, or, if you prefer, the basis of all attitudes of excuse.

In short, what is called the anguish of freedom could more accurately be called "anguish before the necessity of choosing." The anguish of freedom, Sartre holds, is really anguish over the fact that one must choose: "For human reality", Sartre asserts, "to be is to choose oneself; nothing comes to it either from the outside or from within which it can receive or accept." The anguish of freedom arises only with the realization that one must always decide for oneself, and that efforts to shift the burden of responsibility upon others are necessarily self-defeating. Not to choose, as mentioned above, is also to choose, for even if we deliver our power of decision to others, we are still responsible for having done so. It is always the individual who decides that others will choose for him. At times he may dull the awareness of

1. Ibid., p. 40.
his original and inalienable responsibility, but he can never wholly suppress that awareness. It will always be there even on the surface of consciousness as a vague sense of guilt or uneasy feeling or personal inadequacy. In this regard Sartre says:

I am condemned to be free. This means that no limits to my freedom can be found except freedom itself or, if you prefer, that we are not free to cease being free. To the extent that the for-itself wishes to hide its own nothingness from itself and to incorporate the in-itself as its true mode of being, it is trying also to hide its freedom from itself. ¹

Thus, of all the existentialists, Sartre has most stressed the anguish of freedom. The manner in which he has developed the set of ideas connected with this form of anguish has, therefore, a special interest and concern. Pointing out the importance of 'choice' Sartre says that the universe would be vain and meaningless if man does not endow it with meaning by an unceasing act of choice. Freedom is the summum bonum of Sartre's ethical system as well as his socio-political thought. The very being of the For-itself (existing human individual) which is "condemned to be free", insists Sartre, "must choose itself—i.e., make itself. To be free does not mean 'to obtain what one has wished' but rather "by oneself to determine oneself to wish" (in the

broad sense of choosing). In other words, to Sartre, "Success is not important to freedom."¹

So far we have given the salient features of Sartre's notion of freedom for existing individual person. Now we propose in brief to assess the implications of his doctrine of freedom for society and politics.

Here again Sartre's major philosophical work "Being and Nothingness" would mainly be considered for elaborating the issue. The part four, "Having, Doing and Being" in general and its third sub-part "Freedom and Responsibility", in particular would be sufficient to expound the crux of the problem. Sartre has also dealt with this problem in Existentialism and Humanism, and The Problem of Method as well.

Man being "condemned to be free" carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders. He is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being. Besides his own being, he has to realise the existence, freedom and responsibility for others. According to Sartre, the word "responsibility" means in its ordinary sense: "consciousness (of) being the incontestable author of an event or an object."² In this sense the responsibility

¹ Ibid., pp. 483 and 631.
² Ibid., op. cit., p. 553.
of the for-itself or an existing individual is overwhelming since he is the one by whom it happens that there is a world and since he is also the one who radically makes himself to be, whatever may be the situation in which he finds himself. The for-itself must wholly assume this situation with its peculiar co-efficient of adversity, even though it be insupportable. Sartre points out in this connection that:

\[\text{(Man) must assume the situation with the proud consciousness of being the author of it, for the very worst disadvantages or the worst threats which can endanger my person have meaning only in and through my project; and it is on the ground of the engagement which I am that they appear.}^1\]

Sartre says further:

\[\text{It is, therefore, senseless to think of complaining since nothing foreign has decided what we feel, what we live, or what we are.}^2\]

Again, Sartre holds that one must not consider this absolute responsibility in terms of resignation but in reality, "it is simply the logical requirement of the consequences of our freedom."^3 For everything, every happening, existing human being is responsible. Everything occurs in a human situation and not in a non-human situation. That is why Sartre says:

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1. Ibid., p. 554.
2. Ibid., p. 554.
3. Ibid., p. 554.
What happens to me happens through me, and I can neither affect myself with it not revolt against it nor resign myself to it. ...Everything which happens to me is mine. By this we must understand first of all that I am always equal to what happens to me qua man, for what happens to a man through other men and through himself can be only human. The most terrible situation of wars, the worst tortures do not create a non-human state of things; there is no non-human situation. It is only through fear, flight, and recourse to magical types of conduct that I shall decide on the non-human, but this decision is human, and I shall carry the entire responsibility for it. 1

Sartre asserts that there are no accidents in a life and a community event which suddenly bursts forth and involves one in it does not come from the outside. For every decision human individual is responsible. To start a war or to stop a war, man is free to decide what course of action is to be chosen. It is so, because of the fact that "the peculiar character of human-reality" says Sartre, "is that it is without excuse."2

Sartre uses the term "responsibility" in his own particular context. In general its usage is mainly individualistic. As indicated earlier, by "responsibility" Sartre means the sense of being "the incontestable author" of one's being.3 The feeling of anguish (or "human freedom" as some existentialists call it) is an awareness either "muted or in full-strength" that "an

1. Ibid., p. 554.
2. Ibid., p. 555.
3. Ibid., p. 553
abrupt metamorphosis of my initial project—i.e., by another choice of myself and my ends... this modification is always possible."¹ Thus, for the person who has known the full-strength experience of anguish there can be no question, according to Sartre, that one is the free author of one's actual behaviour or that one could subsequently make a free choice to change totally one's initial project. It is evident that Sartre comes close to defining the experience of anguish as one which brings a realization of these facts to the very surface of consciousness. But here the question arises as to how is the person who has not personally had the full-strength experience of anguish to know that it is possible? Sartre's answer, regarding this issue is not as clear as it could have been. However, it appears to mean as follows:

The prereflective or nonreflective awareness of anguish and responsibility is manifested on the surface of consciousness in the sense of pride or shame... ²

And Sartre holds that it is perfectly clear even to the reflective consciousness that one is often proud or ashamed of features of one's behaviour (being) which one has not chosen at the level of one's consciousness.³ Further, according to him man is aware of himself on the level of reflective consciousness. To the reflective consciousness man's behaviour appears to be determined

3. Ibid., p. 123.
chiefly by passion and environmental circumstances. Sartre is completely aware of such possible way of attack. He writes in this regard:

We are fully conscious of the choice we are. And if someone objects that... it would be necessary to be conscious not of our-being-chosen but of choosing ourselves we shall reply that this consciousness is expressed by the twofold "feeling" of anguish and responsibility. Anguish, abandonment, responsibility, whether muted or full strength, constitute the quality of our consciousness in so far as this is pure and simple freedom. ¹

Anguish, as we know, according to Sartre, is the reflective apprehension of the self as freedom. It is the realization that a nothingness slips in between oneself and one's past and future so that nothing relieves one from the necessity of continually choosing oneself. In any case one has to choose and there is no guarantee to the validity of one's particular choice. Anguish is anguish before those who have borne responsibilities. It is also a condition of one's action. In Existentialism and Humanism, Sartre explains the theme of 'anguish' and 'responsibility' by giving an example of a military leader:

Everything happens to every man as though the whole human race had its eyes fixed upon what he is doing and regulated its conduct accordingly. So every man ought to say, "Am I really a man who has the right to act in such a manner that humanity regulates itself by what I do." If a man

¹ Sartre, J.P., Being and Nothingness, p. 464.
does not say that, he is dissembling his anguish. Clearly, the anguish with which we are concerned here is not one that could lead to quietism or inaction. It is anguish pure and simple, of the kind well known to all those who have borne responsibilities. When, for instance, a military leader takes upon himself the responsibility for an attack and sends a number of men to their death, he chooses to do it and at bottom he alone chooses. No doubt he acts under a higher command, but its orders, which are more general, require interpretation by him and upon that interpretation depends the life often, fourteen or twenty men. In making the decision, he cannot but feel a certain anguish. All leaders know that anguish. It does not prevent their acting, on the contrary it is the very condition of their action, for the action presupposes that there is a plurality of possibilities, and in choosing one of these, they realise that it has value only because it is chosen. Now it is anguish of that kind which existentialism describes, and moreover, ... makes explicit through direct responsibility towards other men who are concerned. Far from being a screen which could separate us from action, it is a condition of action itself.

Many critics of existentialism raised this issue that "Existentialism" being a philosophical interpretation of "human individual" has nothing to do with interpersonal relationship or say the life of "others" or the community. But this charge, against existentialists seems unjustified. The fact is, what Olson says:

The existentialists have stressed the fundamental significance of interpersonal relationships for the individual more than the members of any other philosophical movement with the single exception of humanism.

Again, Sartre's critics ask: why should a movement which is radically *individualistic* devote so much space to the analysis of human relationships? Furthermore, is there not an inconsistency in maintaining the importance of *other persons* in our lives while at the same time vigorously asserting that in the last analysis each of us stands alone and must himself as an individual bear full responsibility for this being?

Regarding all the above charges of critics against existentialism, actually it may be said that there is no inconsistency in the position of Sartre and other existentialists in this matter. There are three factors here examined by Olson in this context.¹

In the *first* place, in general, individuality does not usually consist in living alone or isolating oneself from others. The individualist has to be defined by the manner in which he relates to others. In this respect, Socrates and Kierkegaard were both intense individualists. They were 'individualists' because of their personal or say existential experience:

But even then, in their social contracts and intensity of their personal relationships few men are able to match them. For Kierkegaard it was merely the "subjective sphere" or the "inwardness" of man through which he became aware of the relationship of others' subjectivity and of God. Similarly, Socrates was a street philosopher, who made it his business to talk with anybody who would spare the time. In a similar way, Sartre's much-talked-about café life is as nothing compared to it.

Secondly, even the man living in seclusion, as Nietzsche did a good part of his life, is not thereby cut off from others spiritually. For, according to him, physical isolation does not mean indifference to others:

Physical isolation is simply one way in which men relate to others and thereby define their own being. If there were but one man in the world it would be impossible for him to withdraw or retreat from other human beings.

In other words, the life of the individual would be incomplete without the relationship of other individual persons. Even a state of recluse may also be defined as a social concept. In this regard, Olson refers to Sartre and Camus that even after the quarrel their relationship was deep and each influenced the life of the other:

3. Ibid., p. 167.
The very concept of a recluse is a social concept; one could not be or be defined as such except in a social world. After the death of Camus, Sartre wrote a tribute to him. In it he mentioned that they had quarreled and ceased to see much of one another. But, Sartre adds, this was of no importance. They were still close in the sense that they read what each other wrote and reacted strongly to it. Even after the quarrel each figured prominently in the life of the other. ¹

In simple words, man in his loneliness tries to relate himself with others in different types of thinking, feeling, writing, creating or doing etc.

In the third place, it seems absolutely illogical to assume the impossibility of retaining one's aloneness in the sense of not allowing others to dictate one's choices while simultaneously maintaining valuable physical or spiritual contact with others. Those critics who feel that there is some sort of logical inconsistency in stressing at one and the same time the uniqueness of the individual and besides this, his dependence upon others are merely betraying the fact that they themselves do not share the existentialist's beliefs about the nature and value of personal relationships. Definitely they fail to understand the following:

(a) Kierkegaard's conception of "subjectivity" or the "individuals" who according to him "alone are real," ² and the analysis of the relationship between God and man; (b) Heidegger's analysis of "being" (in German, "das Seiende" & "das Sein")

¹ Ibid., pp. 167-68.
His concept of *das Man* or 'the public at large'; *Dasein*—man's "being there"—who must live out of his life in and through his escapable relationship to the world; (c) Jasper's conception of philosophical problems,—the problem of "communication" or "—thou" relationship and the idea of God and Transcendence; (d) Marcel's study of 'Being', man in different situations, the inner spiritual and worldly life of the individual; (e) Sartre's analysis of "Being" (in French, *l'etant* & *l'etre*). His concepts of nothingness, being-for-itself, being-in-itself, being-for-others, freedom and responsibility, metaphysics and ethics.

According to existentialist thinkers there are mainly three significant values that make human relationships. These are: (i) intensity, (ii) dignity, and (iii) personal love.¹

The first value is intensity. Since human relationships involve a reciprocity between free human agents, there is an uneliminable element of threat and danger. In this way, the awareness of danger or dread is the source of all intense states of consciousness.

The second value involved in human relationship is 'dignity'. Since there is a necessary reciprocity in human relationships, one's freedom can always be pitted against the freedom of the other. Existentialists hold that no matter how adverse the

¹ Olson, R.G., *op. cit.*, pp. 170-171.
circumstances there is always possibility of triumph, so long as one maintains the consciousness of one's own freedom. It is but natural that on the one hand, man wishes to be recognised within the group of human persons, while, on the other hand, he always desires to maintain the consciousness of his own personal freedom and identity. Sartre delineates the substance in the following words:

The man who discovers himself directly in the cogito also discovers all the others, and discovers them as the condition of his own existence. He recognises that he cannot be anything (in the sense in which one says one is spiritual or that one is wicked or jealous) unless others recognise him as such.

Again in the same context he explains that one is unable to know the reality of one's ownself, unless one has the ability to mediate another. In this connection Sartre says:

I cannot obtain any truth whatsoever about myself, except through the mediation of another. The other is indispensable to my existence, and equally so to any knowledge I can have to myself. Under these conditions, the intimate discovery of myself is at the same time the revelation of the other as a freedom which confronts mine, and which cannot think or will without doing so either for or against me. Thus, at once, we find ourselves in a world which is, let us say, that of "inter-subjectivity". It is in this world that man has to decide what he is and what others are.  

2. Ibid., p. 45.
In the sphere of dignity, on the one hand, man has relationship with others, and realizes personally of his freedom, on the other.

Finally, according to some existentialists (especially Marcel) the human condition permits personal love as the source of human relationships. Love is an enterprise and an intense relationship between two persons, i.e., two free human agents. Love, a substitute term for existential experience, works as the unitive creative factor. It is not only necessary for the mutual recognition of one's own and the others' freedom but also a sufficient condition for it. Two persons who mutually recognise the irreducible human reality of the other cannot but love one another. They may remain engrossed in their own egocentricity and be involved in their own personal projects. Yet it can be said that each will necessarily remain for the other a live presence and a being of inestimable worth. In this regard Olson remarks:

> Mutual recognition of the other's freedom separates two persons and guarantees their uniqueness, but at the same time it reveals them to one another as individuals and guarantees the possibility of genuine communication or exchange.¹

But for Sartre, love in its sexual as well as its emotive forms, far from being a cohesive force, is a source of conflict. Love is "the desire to assimilate the other to myself."² But on accent of the fact that the For-itself can never be reduced to an in-itself the attempt to assimilate the subjectivity of the other or to be

1. Olson, Robert G., op. cit., p. 171.
assimilated by the other is bound to result in frustration and ambiguity. Further "even the desire to become merely flesh in its character as en-soi. In any case, whatever partial satisfaction may be obtained in the sexual act is dispersed by its consummation."¹ Sartre says that while man attempts to free himself from the hold of the other, the 'other' is trying to free himself from him. In this way both the parties seek to enslave the other. Sartre gives the name "conflict" to this reciprocal or object-in-itself and moving relation. He says:

These projects put me in direct connection with the other's freedom. It is in this sense that love is a conflict.

In the light of these facts, Sartre observes that, the other's freedom is the foundation of man's being. But if he exists by means of other's freedom, he has no security. He feels insecure in this type of freedom. Man has to exist, in any case, as a free being. Sartre says:

My project of recovering my being can be realized only if I get hold of this freedom and reduce it to being a freedom subject to my freedom.

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¹. Ibid., p. 116.


³. Ibid., p. 366.
Sartre introduces a concept of 'alienation' closely akin to that of Marx, but with features that preserve coherence with the philosophical outlook presented in Being and Nothingness. He is of the view that man's own action is alienated if its effect is as though it were the act of another person or of "the others". In the case of such an action, Sartre claims, one becomes as though one were the others, and not himself. Through subjugation to public opinion a man behaves otherwise than would be natural for him; he acts as the others, and each one of the others does the same. Thus, he does not remain himself but becomes a "prey for others". It is in such a situation that alienation takes place.¹

Sartre conspicuously stresses upon man's freedom and facticity. No doubt man is condemned to be free and has his unique subjective being. It is a fact that he is far more radically alienated from his being-for-others than from his facticity. But this state, together with the fact that his being-for-others must be lived on the prereflective level in pride or shame, makes of his being-for-others a far more fearful structure of being than facticity. In other words, according to Sartre, the presence or "The existence of Others" makes man to

¹ Ibid., p. 543.
feel a sense of guilt, shame, fall and alienation. He says:

If there is an Other, whatever or whoever he may be, whatever may be his relations with me, and without his acting upon me in any way except by the pure upsurge of his being—then I have an outside, I have a nature. My original fall is the existence of the Other. Shame—like pride—is the apprehension of myself as a nature although that very nature escapes me and is unknowable as such.

He further underlines the above theme in the chapter three: "Concrete Relations With Others" in part three: (Being-For-Others) of his philosophical magnum opus 'Being and Nothingness':

It is before the Other that I am guilty. I am guilty first when beneath the Other's look I experience my alienation and my nakedness as a fall from grace which I must assume. This is the meaning of the famous line from Scripture: "They knew that they were naked." Again I am guilty when in turn I look at the Other, because by the very fact of my own self-assertion I constitute him as an object and as an instrument,

1. Ibid., p. 263.
and I cause him to experience that same alienation which he must know assume. Thus original sin is my upsurge in a world where there are others; and whatever may be my further relations with others, these relations will be only variations on the original theme of my guilt.  

Generally Sartre's philosophical outlook appears to be an "individualistic" one, because "man" is the central theme of his thought system. Around this existing human individual or "I" with freedom, Sartre developed his philosophical system. On the basis of an individual man and his freedom, Sartre developed his views on different social, political, moral and religious issues. Among them social problem occupies the most important place in his philosophy. However, for him, freedom of choice, individual dignity, personal love and creative effort are the principal values, which are all grounded in the highest value, i.e., freedom.

As mentioned previously, in Sartre's existential philosophical outlook human individual plays the central and pivotal role. His famous dictum "existence precedes essence" has become the starting point and the central point for "existentialism" as well. The one being whose existence comes before its essence is human reality. Freedom is a part and parcel of man's being. He is condemned to be free. Sartre says:

"Man is nothing else but what he purposes, he exists only in so far as he realises himself he is therefore, nothing else but the sum of his actions, nothing else but what his life is."

1. Ibid., p. 410.
Actually what Sartre wants to say is that man should first of all realise himself. How far is he free and what is his responsibility towards his own being and other beings? He makes his own position clear by saying:

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 squarely upon his shoulders. ¹

In Existentialism and Humanism, Sartre very clearly indicates that man's responsibility is not merely for his own existence, (though in Being and Nothingness, as discussed earlier, he stresses it mainly for human existence and his dignity) but he is responsible for the world as well:

When we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but he is responsible for all men. ²

By defining the term "subjectivism", Sartre makes a radical attempt to analyse the concept of freedom and its implications for individual and society. He explains:

"Subjectivism" means, on the one hand, the freedom of individual subject and, on the other, that man cannot pass beyond human subjectivity. It is the latter which is the deeper meaning of existentialism. ³

1. Ibid., p. 29.  
2. Ibid., p. 29.  
3. Ibid., p. 29.
This latter aspect—'man cannot move out (or go beyond) his subjectivity'—has its very relation, Sartre insists, for 'others' also. In other words, it is here that one finds the implication of Sartre's notion of freedom for society. As, in this connection he remarks:

> When we say that man chooses himself, we do mean that everyone of us must choose himself; but by that we also mean that in choosing for himself he chooses for all men.¹

Sartre argues that all the actions of man are directed to create himself and his environment. Human freedom bestows upon man the responsibility of creating social conditions that are necessary for living as free beings. To choose between this or that is at the same time to know and affirm the value of that which is choosen; because men are unable to choose the worse. Sartre asserts that one will not choose worse because it is not good for him and at the same time for others like him:

> What we choose is always the better; and nothing can be better for us unless it is better for all.²

Moreover, when one wills to exist he fashions his image accordingly, and this very image is valid for all men and for the entire epoch in which we find ourselves. In this regard, Sartre observes that man's responsibility is greater than it was conceived to be any time earlier in the history of human thought. He emphatically

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1. Ibid., p. 29.
2. Ibid., p. 29.
says:

Our responsibility is thus much greater than we read supposed, for it concerns mankind as a whole.  

In his work, 'The Problem of Method,' Sartre has also made an attempt to examine the social and political life of an individual. This work is the first part of his new theory of man as a social and political being. It is a theory avowedly Marxist in a very original sense. For Sartre has the aim of reinvigorating Marxism by the introduction of a new method—the Existentialist method. As he himself clearly says:

I have shown in 'The Problem of Method' that this is necessary if a living Marxism is to incorporate into itself the disciplines which have hitherto remained external to it.  

Existentialism, says Sartre in the Preface of his new work:  

The Problem of Method (preface of Critique de la raison dialectique) must find its place within the framework of Marxist philosophy:

"...I consider Marxism to be the unsurpassable (inépassable) philosophy of our time, and because I look upon the ideology of existence (a new name for his earlier "existentialism") and its 'comprehensive' method as an enclave within Marxism itself which at the same time embraces and rejects it."

1. Ibid., p. 25.  
Sartre strongly criticizes contemporary Marxists in the communist parties and socialist countries for having lost sight of Marx's recognition of the peculiarity of 'human existence'. Moreover, they look upon Marxism as though it was already a science, and not, as simply a set of statements about which way man has to go. Sartre says:

...We reproach contemporary Marxism for arbitrarily casting aside all the concrete conditions of human life and for preserving nothing from the totality of history but the abstract skeleton of universality. The result is its total loss of the sense of what man is: it has nothing with which to cover up this lack by the absurd psychology of Pavlov.

Therefore, what one should do, Sartre emphasizes, is not to reject Marxism, but "recapture man in the heart of Marxism."² In brief, in 'The Problem of Method', Sartre represents his new theory of man as a social agent. He aims at revigorating Marxism by existentialist concepts of human freedom and individuality, and the existential method of explaining human experience in terms of human choices. When Marxism has thus been fully modernized and humanized, Sartre argues, existentialism as a separate philosophy will cease to exist.

In order to understand Sartrian conception of a free society, Marxism may provide a way to look at it. In this attempt to

1. Ibid., p. 277.
2. Ibid., p. 277.
to incorporate his existentialism into a new Marxist synthesis
Sartre has laid emphasis on man as a member of a society, a
member of a class, a (free) representative of an epoch, that
is his existence as a free and creative constituent of collective
human existence. Having gone through the entire works of Sartre,
one finds clearly that his philosophy is very ambiguous with
regard to social and political issues, especially in the matter
of the relationship of an individual and his society. His doctrine
of freedom seems much individualistic rather than socialistic.
However, his philosophical writings contain long phenomenological
analysis. Sartre's fame as a novelist and dramatist should
certainly not lead one to underestimate him as a philosopher or
to think that he is a mere dilettante.

However, Sartre's creative writings present his ideas of
human existence and its historicity, freedom and socio-political
responsibility in a concrete form through men and women acting
and creating themselves with others and the world as well. His
triology, Roads to Freedom, a set of three novels,--"The Age of
Reason", "The Reprieve", and "Iron in the Soul",--which deal
with the human predicament in a Europe shattered by the Second
World War. These novels present different characters choosing
to be what they should be. At the same time there are certain
other characters that flee from choosing freely and lose themselves
amidst the faceless crowd of the war-victims and emigrants.
Sartre himself chose to join and lead the 'Resistance Movement'
of the French people living under the dictatorial regime of the Nazi Germany. Sartre depicts both 'silence' and 'action' as two ways of choosing freedom. If one chooses to keep silent, it means he refuses to have any communication with the Nazi rule. In Republic of Silence Sartre describes the situation of the French Resistance from 1940 to 1945 in the following words:

We were never more free than during the German occupation. We had lost all our rights, beginning with the right to talk. Every day we were insulted to our faces and had to take it in silence. Under one pretext or another, as workers, Jews, or political prisoners, we were deported en masse. Everywhere, on billboards, in the newspapers, on the screen, we encountered the revolting and insipid picture of ourselves that our suppressors wanted us to accept. And because of all this we were free. Because the Nazi venom seeped into our thoughts, every accurate thought was a conquest. Because an all-powerful police tried to force us to hold our tongues, every word took on the value of a declaration of principles. Because we were hunted down, everyone of our gestures had the weight of a solemn commitment...

Exile, captivity, and especially death (which we usually shrink from facing at all in happier days) became for us the habitual objects of our concern. We learned that they were neither inevitable accidents, nor even constant and inevitable dangers, but they must be considered as our lot itself, our destiny, the profound source of our reality as men. At every instant we lived up to the full sense of this commonplace little phrase: "Man is mortal!" And the choice that each of us made of his life was an authentic choice because it was made face to face with death, because it could always have been expressed in these terms: "Rather death than..." And here I am not speaking of the elite among us who were real Resistant, but of all Frenchmen who, at every hour of the night and day throughout four years, answered No. 1

Again, after 1947 Sartre reasserted his philosophic exposition in this connection in his work: *What is Literature*:

We have been taught to take Evil seriously. It is neither our fault nor our merit if we lived in a time when torture was a daily fact. Chateaubriand, Oradour, the Rue des Saussales, Dachau, and Auschwitz have all demonstrated to us that Evil is not an appearance, that knowing its cause does not dispel it, that it is not opposed to Good as a confused idea is to a clear one, that it is not the effect of passions which might be cured, of a fear which might be overcome, of a passing aberration which might be excused, of an ignorance which might be enlightened, that it can in no way be diverted, brought back, reduced, and incorporated into idealistic humanism, like that shade of which Leibnitz has written that it is necessary for the glare of daylight...

Perhaps a day will come when a happy age, looking back at the past, will see in this suffering and shame one of the paths which led to peace. But we are not on the side of history already made. We were, as I have said, situated in such a way that every lived minute seemed to us like something irreducible. Therefore, in spite of ourselves, we came to this conclusion, which will seem shocking to lofty souls: Evil cannot be redeemed.

It is not possible here to quote extensively from the literary works of J.P. Sartre. However, it would not be out of place to reproduce here some excerpts from William Barret's book *Irrational Man*, dealing with Sartre's substantialization of his doctrine of freedom:

His first novel, *Nausea* (1938), may well be his best book for the very reason that in

the intellectual and the creative artist come closest to being joined. Much as ideas and the elaboration of ideas figure in the book, the author has not shirked the novelist's tasks, and the remarkable things is the life with which the ideas are invested, which forms the intimate texture of the hero's experience and sensibility. The mood of this life is disgust, which can as well as any other mood become the occasion of discovery, a radical plunge into one's own existence. It is authentically human, this disgust, and turns out to be novelistically exciting, though it has nothing like the grand scope and implications of Celine's disgust. Sartre's treatment is more self-conscious and more subtle, philosophically, but also more static; his disgust is not embodied, as Celine's is, in the desperate picaresque of common life and the anonymous depths of street characters. Nausea is not so much a full novel as an extraordinary fragment of one. In his later fiction Sartre has turned away from the narrow and intense form of the early book to a broader panorama, and not always with entirely happy results.

These later novels—originally a trilogy, Less Chemins de la Liberte (The Roads to Liberty) and now a tetralogy—may go on being issued as endlessly as the roman fleuve of Jules Romains, if Sartre's volcanic activity as a writer continues. One does wish that Sartre would pause for a while and regroup his forces. The man really writes too much. Perhaps if literature becomes a mode of action one gets so caught up in it that one cannot stop the action. These later novels of his contain remarkable things—great scenes and passages—and their theme is the central Sartrian one of the search for liberty, or rather for the realization in life of that liberty that we always and essentially are, sometimes even in spite of ourselves. Yet they are so uneven in achievement, one regrets to see Sartre's great talents wandering and thinning out like spilt milk.

Of his plays, too, it may be said that his two earlier and shorter ones—Les Mouches (The Flies) and Huis Clos (No Exit)—are his best. They are at any rate the things to recommend to the reader who wishes to get the concrete drift of Sartre's philosophy but has no stomach for the elaborate dialectic of Being and Nothingness.
The Flies, first produce while the Resistance was still going on, is in form something of a set piece, since it deals with the myth of Orestes and the Furies; but it is charged throughout with a passion and eloquence born of Sartre's own personal convictions. Orestes is the spokesman for the Sartrian view of liberty. The solution of the play is not at all like that in Aeschylus, for here there are no supernatural agencies that can deliver Orestes from his guilt. He has to take that guilt upon himself, and he does so at the end of the play in a superbly defiant speech before the cosmic Gestapo chief Jupiter; he accepts his guilt, he exclaims, knowing that to do so is absurd because he is a man and therefore free. In discharging his freedom man also wills to accept the responsibility of it, thus becoming heavy with his own guilt. Conscience, Heidegger has said, is the will to be guilty—that is, to accept the guilt that we know will be ours whatever course of action we take.

No Exit, the most sensational of Sartre's dramatic successes, displays perhaps to their best advantage his real talents as a writer: the intense driving energy of the play, the passion of the ideas expressed, we can recognize as authentically his. The three characters of No Exit are planted in Hell; they are being punished, rather in the manner of Dante, by being given exactly the fruit of their evil itself. Having practiced "bad faith" in life—which, in Sartre's terms, is the surrendering of one's human liberty in order to possess, or try to possess, one's being as a thing—the three characters now have what they had sought to surrender themselves to. Having died, they cannot change anything in their past lives, which are exactly what they are, no more and no less, just like the static being of things. These three persons have no being other than that each has in the eyes of others; they exist in each other's gaze, in fact. But this is exactly what they longed for in life—to lose their own subjective being by identifying themselves with what they were in the eyes of other people. It is a torment that people do in fact choose on earth; the bourgeois salaud and the anti-Semit, Sartre says, have chosen as themselves their public stance or role,
and thus really exist not as free beings for themselves but as beings in the eyes of others. ¹

The absurdity of historic situation that has stripted off human existence of its freedom and authenticity is depicted in the following passages quoted from different dialogues of the different characters in Sartre's play Altona: Regarding making decision Werner complains to his Father:

"To decide! To decide! To be responsible for everything. Alone. On behalf of a hundred thousand men. And you have managed to live!"²

Johanna, the wife of Werner, proclaims that Werner has a right to make a choice without her own or his father's help, which actually implies her assertion that every individual has to choose for himself:

"...We love each other more than that, father. We have always decided everything that concerned us, together. ...If he swears under constraint, if he shuts himself up in this house in order to remain faithful to his vow, he will decide without me and against me. You will separate us forever."³

Again Johanna says that her very existence is because of freedom and she loves her husband Werner because of his love for independence. As he has lost his freedom, he is merely an object to be handled by others. She says:

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1. Ibid., pp. 224-226.
3. Ibid., p. 22.
"...I loved Werner for his independence, and you know very well that he has lost it."¹

She does not want to be the slave of anyone including Franz (her brother-in-law). She, very angrily, asserts:

"I have nothing more to say. Who Franz was, what he did, what has become of him, I do not know. The only thing I am certain of is that if we remain, it would be to become slaves to him."²

Again, regarding the freedom of choice Johanna opines:

"Werner, the game's up. It's up to us to choose. We shall either be servants of the madman whom they prefer to you, or we shall stand in the dock. What is your choice? Mine is made. The Assize Court. I'd rather a term in prison than penal servitude for life."³

Werner also wants to be free:

"On the contrary I am freeing myself. What do you want me to do? Turn them down flat?"⁴...

"Father, I support you unreservedly. All lives are valuable. But, if one must choose, I think the life of a son must come first."⁵

Johanna encourages Werner to make a decision and choose his way in freedom:

"...So that's a family conference! ... Werner, I am leaving. With or without you. Choose."⁶

1. Ibid., p. 23.  2. Ibid., p. 27.
3. Ibid., p. 29.  4. Ibid., p. 30.
5. Ibid., p. 46.  6. Ibid., p. 50.
Johanna seems bold in making decisions, though she knows that she is powerless and alone: She tells her Father:

"...The interrogation has begun. I am turning on the spotlight. ...Where should I stand? Here? Good. Now, under the cold light of whole truths and perfect lies, I declare that I will not make any confession for the simple reason that I have none to make. I am alone, without strength and completely aware of my powerlessness. I am going to leave. I shall wait for Werner in Hamburg. If he doesn't come back...

Regarding history, Franz says to Leni:

"Everything is in place. History is sacred. If you change a single comma, nothing will be left."

It is man that makes history with his actions which are closely observed and judged all the time. Regarding this, says Franz to his sister, Leni:

"...You, me, all the dead, mankind. ... Be on your guard. They're watching you. ...No one is alone. ...Laugh while you can, my poor Leni, the thirtieth will arrive like a thief in the night; turn of a handle, the Vibrating Night. You'll land in the middle of them."

Franz replies to Leni:

"In the thirtieth century. Are you sure this comedy is being played for the first time? Are we living, or reincornated? ...Be on your guard! If the decapods are watching us, you may be sure they find us very ugly."

1. Ibid., p. 56.  
2. Ibid., p. 66.  
3. Ibid., p. 67.  
4. Ibid., p. 67.
According to Leni, her brother Franz is a coward and a victim of his own shame. He has no courage to face the reality, therefore, he just speaks incessantly without performing any courageous deed. She makes him realize his own predicament:

"I forbid you! I shall die; I am already dead, and I forbid you to plead my cause. I have only one judge—myself—and I acquit myself. Oh, witness for the defence, testify before yourself. You will be invulnerable if you dare to state: 'I have done what I wanted, and I want what I have done.'"¹

In Franz's speech we find helplessness also that restrains him from making a choice. When Johanna asked for his help he replies:

"No! ... I don't belong to this century. I will save the world as a whole, but I will not help any one in particular. ... I forbid you to draw me into your affairs. I am ill, do you understand? They take advantage of it to force me to live in the most abject dependence and you ought to be ashamed, you who are young and healthy, to ask someone who is weak and oppressed to help. ... I am delicate, Madam, and my peace of mind comes before everything. Doctor's orders. You could be strangled before my very eyes and I would not lift a finger. ... Do I disgust you?"²

Franz complains that he had not been given full freedom and everytime he was kept under constraint. When he is reminded by Johanna that what had happened and is happening, it was and is because of his own choosing. He says:

¹ Ibid., pp. 72-73.
² Ibid., pp. 78-79.
"Mine? But I never choose, my dear girl! I am chosen. Nine months before my birth, they had chosen my name, my career, my character and my fate. I tell you that this prison routine has been forced upon me, and you should understand that I would not submit myself to it unless it were vitally necessary."  

Johanna confesses her ignorance of her own choice:

"Of what I am going to tell you. ... I would rather not know what I know."  

In Sartre's eyes Franz, a character in Altona, is dumb and paralysed in the face of dread:

"Ah! (The smile remains a moment, then his features become tense. He is afraid.) Deprofundis clamavi! (He is overwhelmed by suffering.) Grind! Grind! Grind away! (He begins to tremble.)"

Silence is also a means of communication. It is the strongest weapon against the oppressor, the interrogator and the inquisitor. Such a silence issues from one's refusal to co-operate with injustice. Hence it is more communicative than speech. Sometimes words cannot express truth, and they become a veil to hide a lie. In Johanna's words:

"Well, so I lie. To Werner in silence, to Franz in words."

At an other place Franz says:

1. Ibid., p. 84.  
2. Ibid., p. 86.  
3. Ibid., p. 94.  
"...A pyramid of silence over my head. A silent millennium. That's killing me. And what if they don't even know I exist? What if they have forgotten me? What is to become of me without a trial? What contempt!" 1

When one is forced by a situation, one usually deceives oneself knowingly and pretends accordingly. In Johanna's confession this state of bad faith finds full expression:

"I'm my own worst enemy. My voice lies, and my body contradicts it. I talk about the famine, and I say that we are dying of starvation. Look at me now! Do I look starved? If Franz saw me..." 2

"Nothing except that he is trying to run away, and that we are helping him in it by our lies. Come on! You want to have it both ways. I tell you that one word is enough to kill him, and don't even flinch." 3

Father trembles in dread:

"...Twelve years ago I became aware of my son's fears through certain remarks which he let fall. He believed that they wanted to wipe out Germany, and he shut himself up in order not to witness our extermination. If it had been possible at that time to reveal the future to him, he would have been cured at once. Today it will be more difficult to save him. He has acquired certain habits. Leni spils him, and a cloistered life has certain advantages. But never fear, the only cure for his illness is the truth. He'll take it badly at first, for it will remove all his pretexts for sulking, but within a week he will be the first to thank you." 4

1. Ibid., p. 127. 2. Ibid., p. 102. 3. Ibid., p. 103. 4. Ibid., p. 103.
Franz's father does not allow his son and daughter-in-law to exercise their freedom as they intend to go out to another place to live. However, he offers them a conditional freedom. He commandingly says to Johanna to ask her brother-in-law to accept some proposals if he wants freedom:

"...Wait! I'll make you a proposition. ...Say nothing to your husband. Go and see Franz one last time and tell him that I request an interview. If he accepts, I'll release Werner his oath, and you both go whenever you wish. ... Johanna, I'm offering you freedom."

These words are meant to emphasize that freedom is not gained or bought on conditions. Franz, a prison of his own bad faith and inaction, realizes in him self-imposed isolation, the absurdity and hopelessness of life:

"Take it easy. ...Don't hurry me. All roads are closed, there isn't even the choice of a lesser evil. But there is one road that's never closed, since it leads nowhere—the worst one. Shall we take it?"

The act of depriving others of their freedom and imposing upon them one's choice makes man a machine, the Robot of the age of science and technology:

"Yes. A machine to give orders. ...Another summer, and the machine is still turning. Empty as usual. ... I'll tell you my life, but don't expect any great villainies. Oh no, not even that. Do you know why I reproach

1. Ibid., p. 104.
2. Ibid., p. 123.
myself? I've done nothing. ...Nothing!
Nothing! Never!"

Ghalib, one of the greatest Urdu and Persian poets, said:

"If, O God, Thou punisheth me for the sins I have committed,
Also commend me for the sins I longed for and yet did not commit."

Sartre, in a different way, makes man responsible for his undone goods or evils too:

"...You are guilty. God won't judge you by your deeds, but by what you haven't dared to do, by the crimes which should have been committed, and which you didn't commit. ..."

How silence can express man's freedom of choice is fully substantiated in the dialogue of the volunteers of the Resistance Movement captured by the Nazi occupation Forces. Sartre and Heidegger consider silence or to say "No" as one of the fundamental conditions of communication, that is the free choice of human existence. Some passages (in addition to Altona as we have already quoted in this regard) from Sartre's other two plays especially *Men Without Shadows* and *The Flies* exemplify the assertion of such a freedom of choice:

In 'Men Without Shadows', Lucie very emphatically asserts her right to remain silent:

"What about me? Must I stuff my ears too?
I don't want to listen to you because I don't
want despise you. Do you need words to give
you courage? I've seen animals die, and I
want to die like them—in silence."

A state of distress and anguish within one's ownself is depicted
in the following words of Sorbier:

"I want to know myself. I knew they'd end by
catching me, and one day I'd be up against a
wall, face to face with myself, absolutely
helpless. I used to say, will you be able to
stand it? It is my body that worries me, you
see. I've a miserable body, badly made, with
nerves like a woman. Well, the moment has
come. They're going to use their instruments on
me. But I have been cheated. I'm going to suffer
for nothing, and I shall die without what I'm worth." 1

Furthermore, a state of anger and aloofness finds expression in
his following statement:

"I said: bastard. You and I, we're both
bastards."...
"Leave me alone! Leave me alone! I'll talk.
I'll tell you everything you want to know."...
"Let me go. I can't bear his chair any more!
I can't bear it! I can't bear it!" 3

A sense of guilt of being alive seems evident in the speech
of Henri:

"...If only I could say to myself, I did what I
could. But it is probably too much to ask.
We've done something. I feel guilty. For thirty
years, I've felt guilty of something. Guilty of
being alive. Just now, houses are burning because
of me, innocent people are dead, and I am going
guilty to my grave. My whole life has been one
long mistake." 4

1. Ibid., p. 176.
2. Ibid., p. 179.
3. Ibid., p. 199.
4. Ibid., p. 181.
Another example of guilt mixed with the feeling of cowardliness is also found in the words of Sorbier when he says:

"...Lots of people die in their beds, with a clear conscience. Good sons, good husbands, good citizens, good fathers. ...Ha! They are cowards like me and they'll never know it. They're just lucky. ... Make me shut up! Why don't you make me shut up?

In Sartre's 'Men Without Shadows' we find further that Clochet's speech to Henery depicts an experience of dread:

"...Wait. He's beginning to feel it. Well? Of Course, I understand. Pain means nothing to a man of your intelligence. Or does it? I think it does. ... You're sweating. I can feel of you. ... Turn. He'll scream. He won't scream? You're moving. You can stop yourself screaming, but you can't help moving your head. How it hurts. ... Your jaws are like iron; you must be in such agony. Are you afraid? What are, you thinking? 'If I can only hold out for one moment, one little moment...' But after that moment, another will come, and another and another, untill the pain is too much and you won't be able to think of anything. We shall never let you go. ... Already, your eyes are beginning to fail. You can't see clearly any more. What do you see? Handsome boy. Turn. ... You're going to scream, Henri, you're going to scream. I can see the cry sweling in you throat; it's reached your lips. One little effort. Turn. ... How ashamed you must be. Turn. Don't stop...

Everyone is bound in this world. His freedom is curtailed through different constraints, and, in such circumstances one feels

1. Ibid., p. 188.
2. Ibid., pp. 195-196.
disappointment and agony in life and prefers to die or alienate oneself from the whole society. Luci expresses this feelings in the following words:

"...There's nothing to regret, you know; life has no real importance any more. Good-bye, my darling brother, you did what you could..."

"I've become another person. I don't know myself. Something has got blocked in my head..."

"...Now I have no future. I expect nothing but my death, and I shall die alone. ...leave me alone. We have nothing to say to each other..."

"Decide what? What does my consent matter? It's your lives you're saving not mine. I have decided to die."

She further asserts:

"...I must die and all my shame with me.
...I cannot bear myself, and after my death I pray that everything on earth may be as though I had never lived."

"My hate and my shame and my remorse—does none of that matter?"

"I am dried up. I feel so alone. I don't want to think of anyone but myself."

"...Everything has been poisoned."

Sartre represents different modes of human existence such as anguish, dread, shame, guilt, silence, bad faith, and freedom through the acts and words of the character in his plays. His exposition of human feeling and chaos in different situations in his imaginative works is far more vivid and subtle than in his

1. Ibid., p. 212.
2. Ibid., p. 213.
3. Ibid., p. 226.
4. Ibid., p. 226.
5. Ibid., p. 227.
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treatment of the same themes in philosophical jargon.

In his remarkable play, The Flies, Sartre tries to bring into lime light all above mentioned modes of human being through different characters of the play.

The experience of dread and guilty conscience is reflected in the words of Zeus, the god of gods in the Greek mythology, who is presented as the god of flies and death, when he depicts the picture of the people of Argos to Orestes, a brave person struggling for his freedom. In this passage Sartre presents God as a force restraining man from acting freely:

"...These people are great sinners but, as you see, they're working out their atonement. Let them be, young fellow, let them be; respect their sorrowful endeavour, and begone on tiptoe. You cannot share in their repentance. Since you did not share their crime your brazen innocence makes a gulf between you and them. So if you have any care for them, be off! Be Off, or you will work their doom. If you hinder them on their way, if even for a moment you turn their thoughts from their remorse, all their sins will harden on them—like cold fat. They have guilty consciences, they're afraid—and fear and guilty consciences have a good savour in the nostrils of the gods. Yes, the gods take pleasure in such poor souls. Would you oust them from the favour of the gods? What, moreover, could you give them in exchange? Good digestions, the grey monotony of provincial life, and the boredom—ah, the soul-destroying boredom—of long days of mild content..." ¹

Oreste's commitment to freedom enables him to act independently. He is free from all types of superstition and religious or

¹. Ibid., p.243.
family ties. His Tuitor addresses him thus:

"...Your mind is free from prejudice and superstition, you have no family ties, no religion and no calling; you are free to turn your head to anything. But you know better than to commit yourself—and their lies your strength...."**

Orestes asserts his freedom to act. In order to obtain his and his fellow men's freedom he is ready to sacrifice everything even his own self and his dearest mother. He says:

"...Whereas I-I'm free as air, thank God, My mind's my own, gloriously aloof. "**

"But, mind you, if there were something I could do, something to give me the freedom of the city; if, even by a crime, I could acquire their memories, their hopes and fears, and full with these the void within me, yes, even if I had to kill my own mother—"**

"It is not night; a new day is dawning. We are free, Electra. I feel as if I'd brought you into life, and I, too, had just been born..."**

"I am free, Electra. Freedom has crashed down on me like a thunder bolt."**

"And the anguish that consumes you—do you think it will ever cease ravaging my heart? But what matter? I am free. Beyond anguish, beyond remorse. Free. And at one with myself. No, you must not loathe yourself Electra. Give me your hand. I shall never forsake you."**

"She (Electra) is dearer to me than life. But her suffering comes from within, and only she can rid herself of it. For she is free."**

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1. Ibid., p. 246.
2. Ibid., p. 248.
3. Ibid., p. 295.
4. Ibid., p. 296.
5. Ibid., p. 303.
6. Ibid., p. 304.
"Neither slave nor master. I am my freedom. No sooner had you created me than I ceased to be yours."

Another dialogue reiterates similar feelings and ideas:

"...That was the last time, the last, I saw my youth. Suddenly, out of the blue, freedom crashed down on me, and swept me off my feet. Nature sprang back, my youth went with the wind, and I knew myself alone, utterly alone in the midst of this well-meaning little universe of yours. I was like a man who's lost his shadow. And there was nothing left in heaven, no Right or Wrong, nor anyone to give me orders."2...

"...I am doomed to have no other law but mine. For I, Zeus, am a man, and every man must find out his own way. Nature abhors man, and you too, god of gods, abhor mankind."...

"...I am free; each of us is alone, and our anguish is akin."5

In the last speech of Orestes too, one finds an expression of dread, shame, commitment or determination and boldness, all ushering from his love for freedom. Orestes addresses the people of Argos in these words:

"...As for your sins and your remorse, your night-fears and the crime Aegistheus committed—all are mine, I take them all upon me. Fear your Dead no longer; they are my Dead. And, see, your faithful flies, have left you, and come to me. But have no fear, people of Argos. I shall not sit on my victims throne or take the sceptre in my blood-stained hands. A god offered it to me, and I said 'No'. I wish to be a king without a kingdom, without subjects.

Farewell, my people. Try to reshape your lives. All here is new, all must begin anew. And for me, too, a new life is beginning. A strange life..."4

1. Ibid., p. 309.
2. Ibid., p. 310.
3. Ibid., p. 311.
4. Ibid., p. 316.