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Human Person and Development in Theistic and Atheistic Existentialist Thoughts

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Abstract

The existentialist philosophy makes the human society to understand the choices and opportunities that are available for every human person to better his or her life and living, or the human person has the rationality and intelligibility to create opportunities through actions taken and choices made in order to better his or her life and living. With existentialism and its atheistic and theistic versions of development, we understand that the human person acts because he or she exhibits the two elements - existence and morality. The human person is the only acting being in the world. The actions of the human person make him or her morally good or morally bad. Our chosen actions do not merely bring about effects external to us; and these actions and choices also form our dispositions and characters towards our development and the society we live in. We are what we act. With actions and choices, morality of development becomes indispensable and inevitable to shape our world for the better. The paper observed the philosophical trends of unnecessary demarcated misconceptions of the human person by both theistic and atheistic existentialists, and then, posited that there is no pragmatic difference of their thoughts, as the human person is meant to create opportunities or possibilities for his or herself. This paper adopted the phenomenological method of analysis to show the pragmatic capacities of the human person as an active agent of development. Therefore, the paper concludes that, through the developmental consciousness for the realization of authentic and responsible living and development, the human society must sustain the belief that the human person has the freedom or the ability to create and maximize opportunities to change his or her world for the better, and which is dependably on responsible exercising one's actions and choices.

Keywords: Existentialism, Human Person, Actions, Choices, Development, Human Life, Responsibility

Introduction

By the phenomenological assessment of human development, existentialism as a thought-system has been greatly regarded as one of the most important philosophical trends in the contemporary scientifically and technologically-driven age of values and ideologies, that is, a world of humanistic advancement (Igbafen 2010). It is a theory that recognizes the ability and capacity of the human person as a subject of lived experiences; that is, who can change his or her changing world of possibilities. With existentialism as a mode of thinking, the human society has succeeded in creating a new developmental revolution and realistic consciousness in our contemporary thoughts, civilization and socialization. It recognizes the human dispositions needed to change the world order; which is about the values and responsible contents of human actions and choices. Existentialism in praxis is about the consideration of human actions and choices in the presence of options, as the human person cannot develop or been meaningfully recognized outside the values and responsible contents of his or her actions and choices (See, Isanbor 2022, 145; Isanbor and Edema 2022, 145; Isanbor and Folorunso 2021, 55). Such existential praxis, according to many thinkers like Immanuel Levinas, Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers, determines the development of the human person and his or her society.

The philosophical usage of the term 'human person' here is to classify the individual as an active and responsible agent of development and as a subject of lived experiences. This is to delimit the usage of the term 'man' that is commonly visible and ardent indispensable in most of the

existentialist literature and their conceptualization of this human individual, to accommodate both sexes and their development. In all, the existentialist movement seeks to oppose to the traditional ways of thinking, especially in contemporary philosophy. One important point to be noted here is that existentialism as a way of thought is not confined to philosophy alone. Its divergent interests and points of view can be traced to other fields of study as such, sociology and psychology. But one fact that is to be understood is that the concern for human life in some way has always brand that there is philosophy since time immemorial, though it was never studied under the brand name of existentialism. Only with the advent of contemporary philosophy did thinkers start to study and analyze human life and the whole conditions for authentic living in terms of “quality” and authentic existence and they were thereafter referred to as existentialists and their views as existentialism.

Existentialism as a Thought and its Development

Existentialism as a philosophy deals with the individual human existence. It is a type of viewpoint that lays utmost importance to distinctive qualities of the individual as a subject of lived experiences and as an agent of development, his or her existence, rather than the human person and nature or the world understood in the abstract or general sense (Isanbor 2022, 145; Isanbor and Edema 2022, 145; Isanbor and Folorunso 2021, 55). Existentialism asserts that each human individual is unique, and possesses uniqueness as distinguished from abstract universal human qualities (Warnock 1970, 3). The true nature of an individual is to be understood as is revealed through his or her existence. Existentialism in the broader sense is 20th century philosophy that is centred upon the analysis of existence and the way human persons find themselves existing in the world of change. The notion is that humans exist first and then each individual spends a lifetime changing their essence or nature.

Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish thinker is generally regarded as the “father” of the existentialist movement. Kierkegaard was very much against the abstract conception offered by traditional philosophers regarding life and universe ((Igbafen 2010; Isanbor 2020, 22; 2015, 140). Kierkegaard tried to show that “truth is factual”, that it is a matter to be realized and experienced in our mundane daily life, something to be found in our ethical and spiritual life. While going through the history of existentialism, we find that soon after the First World War, the view advocated by Kierkegaard on existentialism, spread to Germany and some parts of America (Igbafen 2010). The existentialist movement gathered momentum after the First and Second World Wars. The devastating effects of the two world wars that inflicted immense pain and sufferings on human life forced the human person to re-think and direct its attention towards self-criticism and self-analysis. At this point, thinkers were alarmed at the prospect of the erosion of human values resulting from the unhindered application of science and technology. Science and technology was then used to maim and destroy the human life. But human life is the most valued treasure of the universe which is revealed by human existence in the world. Therefore, they have given utmost importance to human existence.

Existentialism, due to its very nature, is difficult, if not impossible to define. However, Walter Kaufmann, one of the more perceptive American existentialists, introduces his *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* by noting that: “existentialism is not a philosophy but a label for several widely different revolts against traditional philosophy (Igbafen 2010). Most of the living 'existentialists' have repudiated this label, and a bewildered outsider might well conclude that the only thing they have in common is a marked aversion for each other” (Sartre's thought as quoted in Kaufmann 1975, 11). In simpler terms, existentialism is a philosophy concerned with finding self and the meaning of life through freewill, choice, and personal responsibility. The belief is that people are searching for whom and what they are throughout life as they make choices based on their experiences, beliefs, and outlook. And personal choices become unique without the necessity of an objective form of truth. The existentialist believes that a person should be forced to choose and be responsible without the help of laws, ethnic rules, or traditions. Thus, existentialism as a movement and a philosophical dilemma focuses primarily on matters such as authenticity, absurdity, choice, individuality, commitment, subjectivity, freedom, death, alienation and existence of God and the nature of existence itself. The issues addressed in existentialist philosophy involve the problems of making free choices, of taking responsibility for what we choose, of overcoming alienation from our lives and so forth.

To many humanistic-minded philosophers such Hannah Arendt, Immanuel Levinas, Martin Buber and others, existentialism is the philosophy of human existence, a philosophy preoccupied

with what it means for a human being to exist in reference to what he or she can offer to his or her community (Omogbe 1991, 39). Here, the peculiar characteristic of human existence is described and analyzed to promote human life and the propensity of human freedom and authenticity. For the existentialists, the human existence is presented as a drama in which every individual is an actor. This means to exist is to be actively involved in the activities and circumstance that shape one's life. Thus, human existence does not simply mean, being there and inactively involved in what happens to one's life. The human person is a spectator but an actor in the drama of life. As an African proverbial saying puts it, "your prosperity or success depends on your hard work." Also the saying, "hunger kills a lazy person" accentuates the fact that human's active participation in life is what defines his or her essence, in the faces of anxieties, fears, worries and sufferings associated with some uncertainties of life (Ohiha 2014, 80).

This is the understanding of existentialism that Jean Paul Sartre stood for, and systematically developed, strengthened, amplified and popularized to the point that his name almost became synonymous with existentialism (Isanbor 2020, 155). Sartre recognized the ability and freedom of the human person as a being of possibilities who can change his or her fortune without references to any external forces or spirits. For Sartre, the human person is nothing else but what he or she makes of himself and that this is the first principle of existentialism (Sartre 1969, 15). This statement is made on the strength that God does not exist, at least for Sartre. Therefore, the human person as an individual is that who is abandoned, thrown into existence and abandoned in the world. Thus, existentialism is frequently viewed as an aesthetic movement rooted in certain philosophical thoughts. This, in some ways made religion to no longer have the luster it once had, failing not only to provide sense and meaning to people's lives but even failing to provide basis structure for daily living. Both the irrational wars and the rationalized sciences combined to undermine people's confidence in traditional religious faith, but few were willing to replace religion with secular beliefs, ideologies, fame, power or science.

As a consequence to human struggles and fears, both theistic and atheistic strands of existentialism were developed to determine the conceptualization of the human person and his or her development in every human society, as the human person is naturally religious and morally-deterministic (Igbafen 2010). While theistic existentialism affirms a belief in the existence of God and His place in the developmental affairs of the human person, the atheistic existentialism, as the name indicates, denies the same. Existentialism in general has been described as the attempt to philosophize from the standpoint of the actor of living and development rather than from that of a detached spectator of living and development. As one might well imagine, the resultant philosophy will vary enormously depending upon its Theistic and Atheistic presuppositions. Our examination here will be of both strands varieties of existentialism, drawing a link on their points of convergence and divergence.

Existential Imports of the Human Person and Development

The understanding of the nature of the human person can be better represented psychologically and then existentially. This is in order to posit his or her relational disposition that is associated with his or her conceptual and pragmatic consideration as *animarum faber*, and then in an extensional recognition, as *Imago Faber* (Cf, Isanbor 2022, 146; Isanbor and Edema 2022, 147; Isanbor and Folorunso 2021, 57). The instinctive disposition of his or her nature propels an ardent accessibility to control the desires of other animals whose instincts are not as strong or effectively relational as he or she is. Evaluating the existential imports of human actions and valued choices, as psychologically put, the consciousness to demarcate the rights from the wrongs, the truths from falsities, shows the relational nature of human persons in established and ordered society that classifies them as humans. These existentialists' observations can be said to have been made from the epistemic understanding of the phenomenological constructs of the human person on the basis of natural law philosophy, where the individual as a subject of lived experiences and as an active agent of development look for all-exclusive analysis to justify their essence as a 'special animals' in creation, and then seeks peace and justice in realizing integral development (Igbafen 2010). In all, such evaluation of human actions and valued choices in relation to his or her existential capacity and capability situates him or her as "a rational animal" (Aristotle), "a chained Prometheus" (Sophocles), a fallen soul" (Plato), "an image of the logos" (Philo), "an image of God" (Origen), "a rational subsistent" (Thomas Aquinas), "a thinking reed" (Blaise Pascal), "a mode of the substance" (Benedict Spinoza), "will of power"

(Fredrick Nietzsche), “a symbolic being” (Martin Heidegger), “an alienated essence” (Cassirer), “an incarnate spirit” (Max Scheler), “an utopic being” (Bloch), etcetera (Arinze 2008, 3; Mondin 1985, 13-15). Hence, on a more existential note, the individual as a person is: “the highest ground of being” (Immanuel Kant), “the working intellect” (St Augustine of Hippo), “a being seduced by glittering and attractive life” (Gabriel Marcel), “a promised loving being” (Jurgen Maritain), “a being-in-relationship” (Martin Buber), “a being as a stranger” (Karl Jaspers), “the essential being” (Albert Camus), “the original fruit of wisdom” (Paul Oredipe), “the extended reality” (Soren Kierkegaard), “the nurtured spirit” (Pope Benedict XVI), “an instinctive and fixated agent” (Sigmund Freud), “the confused existent” (Philip Isanbor), “the useless passion” (Cyril Ngamen), “conditional embodied personality” (Eric Fromm), “faith essence” (Pope John Paul II), “an impossible possibility” (Batista Mondin); and “a freak of chance”; “an evolutionary specimen”; “the modifier of living”, and “a product of mutations” (Jean Paul Sartre).

Nevertheless, from all classification of the human person above, Jean Paul Sartre seems to have many phenomenological names of the human person- a being into his or her very self. The concerns of the human person by Sartre really show the true meaning of existentialism as a movement of knowledge in philosophy and religion, especially some psychological imports of the human person in the faces of existential fears, joys, worries, challenges, absurdities and uncertainties, even the reality of death. The concerns of human living by Jean Paul Sartre on the meaning of existentialism are best assessed within the social and psychological placements of the human person as a subject of lived experiences and the determinant (maker) of histories (Isanbor 2022, 156). These classifications or conceptions show the complexity of the nature of the human person, a being capable of many things and functionalities. The human person remains who and what he or she is, and nothing more. He or she is a being of rationality, intelligibility and dynamic adaptation, and his or her existence in relation to his or her actions and valued choices is contingent, unnecessary and accidental, and his or her existence is superfluous (Olajide 2017, 17). All these qualities exemplify the complex nature of humanity that cannot be fully defined, the composition of the body and the spirit or soul that are in unity for its wellbeing, in controlling the contents of his or her desires, interests and dispositions. But today, the human person is today anthropologically called *Homo sapiens* (the wise person- the last and highest degree of evolutionary development) (Dimkpa 2013, 48). On the sense of socialization of its indispensable importance; he or she is classified as *persona veritatis* (the person of truth), *persona pacis* (the person of peace). Through the seated clemency of human rationality and intelligibility, peace becomes highly inevitable, since without peace and its collaborative justice, no integral development can be envisaged or seem to be possible.

Human Person and Development in Theistic Existentialism

Theistic existentialism is more concerned with human nature, the indispensability of humans' relationship with God and the world as opposed to the nature of God as the focus. It is humans centred, not God's centred (Igbafen 2010). It does not start with God. This is its most important variation from theism. With God is assumed certainly to be there and of a given character; then people are defined in relationship to God. It emphasizes the place in which human beings find themselves when they first come to self-awareness rather than accounting for the absurdity of the universe on the basis of the fall, as a Christian theist would do. For the Christian theist, God is immediately responsible for this absurd universe; therefore, he or she must believe in God of the absurdity. Here, Albert Camus calls such faith “an intellectual suicide.” But the point is that while reason may lead us to atheism, we can always refuse to accept reason's conclusions and take a leap towards faith.

For **Soren Kierkegaard**, as a devout Christian who wanted the human persons to understand the reality of God as the absolute sovereign through the values of their existence, the human person necessarily exists with the consciousness of being created (Igbafen 2010). For Kierkegaard, there can be a belief in God even without a rational way to prove God's existence. Kierkegaard believed even it is only through the 'leap of faith' that modern person begins to restructure his or her life and truly live out the principles of Christianity. Kierkegaard was somehow not quite impressed with the objective and science-oriented world on the grounds that it was the scientific insistence for objectivity that has alienated the human person from the Christian belief (Isanbor 2022, 170). Kierkegaard believed that the human person must come to the understanding of his or her soul, destiny and the reality of God. For Kierkegaard, an individual who is

an agent of development is faced with choices in life that he alone can make, and for which he or she must accept complete responsibility. The moral implication of this arrangement is that, the human individual necessarily envelopes him/herself within community of persons, and such individual only radiates his or her authenticity within the moral influences of others and the universe. Hence, through the understanding of the person as a being of lived-experiences in relations to the personality of God, Kierkegaard defined three stages in “life's road” which are: *Aesthetic stage, ethical stage and religious stage*. But, in many ways, some of Kierkegaard's followers were different in their thoughts from in their consideration of this thought, They loved the religious impulses in his analysis of human existence and growth, but they recognized the need for pursue the values of human self-participation and self-identity in the faces of worldly struggles (Morin 2004, 244). For Kierkegaard, the individual is beyond its physicality. He exacted that the human mental disposition is powerful in helping the individual to exert some social and moral meaning in world of possibilities. These possibilities are beyond the influences of some non-human entities, but on the recognition of the divine influences. For Kierkegaard, in all stages of development, the mental disposition can define the individual as an active agent of development, and it helps the individual to achieve his or her self-authenticity and self-subjectivity, even in the midst of fears and trembling which the society presents before him or her.

It is on this concern that **Karl Jaspers** asserted that we can be guided by faith, love and insight in order to improve our lives as humans. First, Jaspers referred to Nietzsche's notion of human development and morality often as Jaspers is very close to Kierkegaard through the existential analysis of human morality and development. However, he does not accept either Nietzsche's anti-Christianity or Kierkegaard's “leap of faith” (Arikpo 2011, 172; Bogomilova 2012, 57). For Gabriel Marcel, the human persons can transcend extreme objectivity. We can participate in prayer, meditation or contemplation as we encounter an authentic and transcendent reality. There can be a reciprocal relation between a living personal God and a finite and concrete self or God (Igbafen 2010). It is on this concern for the self-projections in relation to the divine that Harold Titus in his book: *Living Issues in Philosophy* posits to strengthen the thought of Gabriel Marcel, owing that, “to refuse God is to refuse to be” (Titus 1968, 67). Though the human person cannot adequately conceptualize Being or God, but if he or she experiences the presence of God, no formal proof or conception is necessary.

However, **Martin Heidegger** was quite rather indifferent to the question of God's placement in the affairs of human development. The concept of God in traditional philosophy and religion are not to be treated as the basis of everything (Arikpo 2011, 171; Bogomilova 2012, 56). For Heidegger, God is a being like any other beings. Thus, theistic existentialism is, for the most part, Christian in its outlook, but there have been existentialists of other theological persuasions, like Judaism. The main thing that sets them apart from atheistic existentialists is that they posit the existence of God, and that He is the source of our being. It is generally held that God has designed the world in such a way that we must define our own lives, and each individual is held accountable for his or her own self-identity. God is incomprehensibly paradoxical (this is exemplified in the incarnation of Christ); theism is not rationally justifiable, and the belief in God is the ultimate leap of faith (Igbafen 2010). For Heidegger, the human person is a being who comes into the world without his or her own consent, and in the world, he or she is confronted with his or her own nothingness. For some existentialists like Martin Heidegger, life as it were, is known, flung or cast into being and knows nothing of “whence” and “whither”, and when death does come, it disappeared completely and it cannot be grasped at all. Similar views were however upheld by some pessimists like Schopenhauer for whom “life is so bad that it ought not to be because it is evil and strife.” In the perspectives of epistemic progressivists and logical behaviourists like Richard Rorty and Gilbert Ryle, there is nothing like soul or mind; what people refer to as soul is merely the response of an organism to the environment and this according to them is observable. This school holds that spiritual entity or soul which is life itself is a mere logical construct; there is nothing like soul (Nwokeji 2008). The existential view of life is almost fatalistic and atheistic. This life has no transcendent value except something wrapped and just thrown. This causes anxiety as a part of human life. The anxiety factor helps us to be aware of our existence. An awareness of existence involves the individual in confrontations with fear, dread, consciousness, guilt, nothingness and death, which give human existence its meaningful purpose and ending as a distinct human being.

For **Martin Buber**, the individual as a person is himself or herself alone in community but

have respect for others. For him, morality is about human's relationship with the world around him or her, and that the contents of these experiences determine the relationship that he or she must be established. Buber emphasizes the need for respect and dignity amongst all human beings (Isanbor 2022, 157). For him, the human person as an individual needs to look at his or her fellow persons in terms of 'I-Thou' relationship rather than the 'I-It.' From Buber's understanding of human relationship for common development, Sigmund Freud links human morality to the trends of human civilization, and that, "beauty, cleanliness and order obviously occupy a special position among the requirement of civilization. No one will maintain that they are as important for life as control over the forces of nature or as some other factors with which we shall become acquainted" (Freud 1989, 47). Rather than as a thing to be used and manipulated for selfish ends, the human person needs to look upon his or her fellow person as an individual with his or her own intense personal world of meaning, purpose and responsibilities. For him, the philosophy of those who do not experience absurdities, worries and fears do not participate in the world. For the experience is 'in them' and not between them and the world. The world does not participate in experience. It allows itself to be experienced, but it is not concerned, for it contributes nothing and nothing happens to it. It means that the human person has been experiencing what belong to the basic world of 'I-It' rather the basic world of 'I-You', that is 'I-Thou.' The basic world of 'I-You' established the world of relation (Cox 2009, 15). It is from the standpoint 'I-It' that the senses and culture of inhumanity, death and destruction are foisted upon the human person by the other person or persons.

For **Gabriel Marcel**, the achievement and values of an authentic humanism has to be judged from the standpoint of whether it leads to conditions which facilitate human flourishing at its deepest levels. But a key element in the theological and moral assessment of human development is the '**being**' and '**having**' binomial first articulated by Gabriel Marcel, centred on the transcendent end of humanity. It is an *integral and solidarized humanism* capable of creating a new social, economic and political order, founded on the dignity and freedom of every human person, to be brought about in peace, justice and solidarity. This humanism can become a reality if individual men and women and their communities are able to cultivate moral and social virtues in themselves and spread them in the society they live. Piety, obedience and fidelity when genuine are the centre of code of ethics, which is irresistibly attached to human existence ((Igbafen 2010; Katsina 2009, 40). The implication of Gabriel Marcel's ethics satisfies the existentialist criteria for thought and action. This ethics can also be seen in the Confucius teachings of the Orientals. For the existentialists, the human person is not a passive observer of the world and the events therein. The human person is not an uncommitted and innovative transmitter of ideas, but an active participant in the tradition that transmits to posterity.

Human Person and Development in Atheistic Existentialism

Atheistic existentialism is, simply put, the philosophy of mere existence, and which is mainly about the glorification of the ability of the human person to care for his or herself without reference to external or divine force or being. This philosophical conception of the human person falls under the rubric of secularism, and greatly has an ontological position involving a denial or exclusion of transcendent and supernatural realities (Stevenson 1980, 25). It rejects the idea that there is any truth, only particular truths. It rejects the idea of any objective absolutes, stating that, "existence precedes essence" (Sartre 1970, 15). It maintains an anti-supernatural posture, holding that subjective existence has primacy over any substratum of the supernatural. Without any absolute basis, morality is subjective and it is reduced to preference; and without purposes of life, as pure existence, no meaning can be assumed or realized, but remains absurd. Nevertheless, the concerns for human living for the development of existentialism as a course of study and as a way of life are best assessed by many existentialists in the history of philosophical development.

Here, **Jean-Paul Sartre** summed up this concern for human development in relation to the notion of the operation of the natural rather than the supernatural by stating that the human person as an agent of change is a "useless passion" and deeply caring about an existence that ends at the grave, futile, meaningless and devoid of values (Sartre 1970, 15). Sartre's straight-forward and forceful atheism is revealed through his writing like, *Being and Nothingness* and his Lecture *Existentialism is a Humanism*, to name a few. Sartre's belief in the existence of God is quite different with the views generally accepted by the theistic existentialists. Sartre's emphasis is on human's personal freedom. For Sartre, God cannot exist outside a totality or whole. In fact, he says that God as a creator, who is supposed to have created the human person in his or her essence and left to act freely, is quite

incompatible with human freedom (Sartre, 1970, 17). God cannot determine, for him, God cannot determine the time when the individual is “to die.” This presupposes that the human person has an intrinsic desire to be God, and God can ultimately be identified with this desire. It means that the human person cannot rely on any external support or God, except his or her freedom. Therefore, the human person must rely on his or her resources which his or her freedom offers (Igbafen 2010). For Sartre, human's freedom is a double-edged sword in that as one is totally free to create his or her own life's essence, and that the individual is also fully responsible for his or her choices and actions. The human person as a being of development and as a subject of lived experiences has no excuse not to develop. Nobody does. He or she has no exit. For Sartre, we can make a difference in life, but not without choosing our goals and working towards them. To him, every progress the human person has made, every human act committed, has happened because some individuals or groups of individuals choose to make them happen and then struggle to achieve that choice. Very few, if any, of the things we achieve came about accidentally (Ukpong 2011; Igbafen 2010). The culture is situated in physical development of humanity, and promotes the idolization of human existence over human essence. Thus, the human person is made an object of development; all that is therein in creation as means to an end. The end is the maximization of earthly and mundane happiness of the human person. But the culture of essentialism promotes the inner makeup of the human person in production and development. And if responsibility to order the society behooves on the human persons, hence, the ethical directives of such arrangement depend on their rational prowess and intelligibility, and at the end, determines their happiness and the nature of their death.

Fredrick Nietzsche is a renowned atheistic existentialist. He advocated the concept of the “death of God” and also believed that we, humans killed God. For this we can say that Nietzsche, once upon a time did believe in God. But later on, he turned against God or the earthly or existential conditions that led to the death of God. He talked of the “Higher Man” embodying the higher values of the “Lord (Superman) of the earth”, not the virtues of mediocrity demonstrated by Christianity, democracy and socialism (Arikpo 2011, 172; Bogomilova 2012, 57; Igbafen 2010). Nietzsche opposes conventional Christianity which he believes that it makes the individual impersonal, passive, indifferent and uninvolved. For Nietzsche, the human person in all his or her characteristics has been seen as a being that is susceptible to dependency. He or she subscribes to a being higher than him or her, in order to feel secured and protected when his or her senses fail him or her or when in danger. The notion of a supreme or all powerful eternal being has been as old as the human person. Morality is about Master-Slave relationship, the will of the superman. The actions of the slave are good when he or she allows the dictates of the master. For Nietzsche, the individual needs to require of strength that it should not express itself as strength, but a willingness to change his or her situations, and that it should not be a wish to overpower, a wish to overthrow; a wish to become master, a thirst for enemies and antagonism and triumphs, is just as absurd as to require of weakness or limitation that it should express itself as strength (Nietzsche 2006, 19). Albeit, this notion or belief in an all powerful being has really been of help to man in his society, as it regulates the dealings of individuals with one another in the society, that is, it aided the development of civilization. As civilization advanced, and rational thinking thrived, the human person as an architect of development started probing into this purposes of living, and how to make meaning out of his or her societal engagements.

For **Albert Camus**, in the advocacy of human freedom, the social philosophy seeks humanistic of holistic moral rectitude in human dealings. “Morality forms an integral part of man's vocation to fully realized himself. 'Fully human', they say, 'is fully alive' this vocation is the same for each person. Not only in order to create himself as a human being (auto-creation), but also as this person” (Asiegbu 2005, 70), and then classified as a dignified individual. For Camus, the individual must engage in a constant struggle which implies a total absence of hope (which has nothing to do with despair), and the morality in about the personal management of his or her freedom and passion. This is because, “from the absurd individual's privation of hope and rebellion against death stems a freedom to live fully in the present. This is a freedom from an objective future and pre-established goals which previously endowed life with meaning by paradoxically referring to something outside of life” (Starkey 2014, 150). Even within and in the present of absurdities, the human existence remains potentially viable in terms of its developmental demands, only within the interconnectedness of persons. It indicates that there must be developmental synergy between the lives of the living, the dead and the unborn (Isanbor 2015, 140). The course of the unborn centers on

the principle of intergenerational equity, and which identifies the indispensable responsibility that behooves the living (present) generations, to bequeath a healthy and safe society to the next generation, where the fate of the unborn lies. It takes the past generation to know the values of the present, and it demands their responsibility to sustain the rights and the values of the future generation. This is ethical tripartite dimension (the past, present and the future generation) of human existence, that true human development should be indispensably based.

In all, atheistic existentialism is the form of existentialism most commonly encountered in today's society. What sets it apart from theistic existentialism is that it rejects the notion of God and His transcendent will that should in some ways dictate how we should live. It rejects the notion that there is any "created" meaning to life and the world, and that a "leap of faith" is required of man in order for him to live an authentic life. In this kind of existentialism, belief in God is often considered a form of "Bad Faith." Bad faith is seen as any denial of freewill by lying to oneself about one's self and freedom. This can take many forms, from convincing oneself that some form of determinism is true, to a sort of "mimicry" where one acts as "one should." The questions on how "one" should act are often determined by an image one has of his or herself. This image usually corresponds to some sorts of social norm. This does not mean that all actions that are in accordance with social norms necessarily result in bad faith; the main point is the attitude one takes to one's own freedom, and the extent to which one acts in accordance with this freedom (Sartre 1970, 23). A sign of bad faith can be something like the denial of responsibility for something one has done on the grounds that one just did "as one does" or that one's genes determined one to do as one did. Exactly how one lies to oneself is hard to get a hold of. Sartre denied the subconscious power to do this, and he claims that the person who is lying to him/herself has to be aware that he/she is lying, that he/she is not determined, or this "thing" he/she makes him/herself out to be.

Evaluation: On the Relations of Theistic and Atheistic Existentialists' Thoughts on Human Person and Development

From above, it could be understood that theistic existentialist thoughts are more concerned with human nature and human's relationship with the divine, God, and with the world as in accordance with the nature of God. It is more of transcendental-centred philosophy, where God seems to determine the factors of human and societal development through the intelligible capacity and capability of the human person. On the other hand; the atheistic existentialist thoughts are concerned with the human development with due references to God and recognition of God. This is its most important variation from theism. With theism as a school of thought or as a philosophical movement of development, God is assumed to be there and of a given character, then people are defined in relationship with God. The philosophies of theistic existentialism and theism are both closely related, but little difference, as both have due references to the workability of the presence of God in human affairs and development.

Theistic existentialism emphasizes the place in which human beings find themselves when they first come to self-awareness rather than accounting for the absurdity of the universe on the basis of the fall of human nature due to sins, as Christian theists would do. God is immediately responsible for this absurd universe; therefore, he concludes that he must believe in God despite the absurdity. From an atheistic conceptual and operational analysis of human existence and responsibility, Albert Camus calls such faith as an "intellectual suicide" (Camus 1955). For Sartre, the human persons are ultimately the authors of the things which rebound on them and from which they suffer. It is therefore not things that are merciless, it is the human person. It is therefore not the automatic effect of economic situation; it is on the contrary the human persons themselves who make their own history (Sartre 1960, 699). This kind of classification always leads us to atheism, and we can always refuse to accept reason's conclusions and take a leap toward faith. But, Here, Heidegger is quite neutral and indifferent to the question of God, the concepts of God in traditional philosophy and religion is not to be treated as the basis of everything, God. For him, is a being like any other being but he does not determine human development. Thus, theistic existentialism is, for the most part, Christian in its outlook, but there have been existentialists of other theological persuasions (like Judaism). The main thing that sets them apart from atheistic existentialists is that they posit the existence of God, as the source of our being. It is generally held that God has designed the world in such a way that we must define our own lives, and each individual is held accountable for his or her own self-identity. God is incomprehensibly paradoxical (this is exemplified in the incarnation of Christ); theism is not

rationally justifiable, and belief in God is the ultimate leap of faith.

For both atheistic and theistic existentialists, as responsible action and choices are demanded of the human person, it presupposes a morality of conscience and values in which the individual as an agent of development longs for what is good rather than the evil. The sensibility of his or her freedom is rationally deterministic to value the good in the midst of many options of actions and choices, as he or she is demanded to be responsible for his or her actions and choices, irrespective of one's recognition of the presence of God in the affairs of human development by the theistic existentialists. For instance, for Kierkegaard, the individual longs existentially to understand himself or herself in order to understand the reality of God, the absolute sovereign. He is against all attempts to make Christianity "inconsistent" but rather "reasonable." He is not defending Christianity through intellectual attempts, but through some rational-existential convictions. He is also against the conventional churchgoer. To know the true and real meaning of his or her life; he or she has to undergo pain and despair. This will make him or her abandon reason and embrace faith. This is what is known "leap of faith" in the life of an authentic individual (Arikpo 2011, 172; Bogomilova 2012, 57). On this, Jaspers asserts that we can be guided by faith, love and insight. Though he quotes Nietzsche, often he is closer to Kierkegaard. However, he does not accept either Nietzsche's anti-Christianity or Kierkegaard's "leap of faith." (Aripko 2011, 173). For Marcel, we can transcend extreme objectivity of the knowledge of God through the knowledge in reference to the others. We can participate in prayer, meditation or contemplation as we encounter an authentic and transcendent reality. There can be a reciprocal relation between a living personal God and a finite and concrete self or God. Harold Titus in *Living Issues in Philosophy* says about Marcel's view on the placement of God in human affairs, that, "to refuse God is to refuse to be." Though the human person cannot adequately conceptualize Divine Being or God, but if he or she experiences the presence of God, no formal conception is necessary, for it is his or her nature to project beyond the physical and mundane, that which the senses cannot project and retain as knowledge.

Conclusion

Both theistic and atheistic existentialists' thoughts present the human person in the heart of commonplace of values and opportunities, despite the fears of his or her limitations and absurdities. The human person is in the market-square where he or she is classified or known by what he or she does. If one does not bring anything to the market-square, he or she cannot have anything in return, for he or she cannot sell or buy from such place of values and opportunities, in order to change one's world for the better. The world as a separate brings out the ingenuity and uniqueness of the individual as an active agent of development and as a responsible subject of lived experiences. It is a place where fears and worries are surmounted as the individual is ready to risks and grab opportunities in order to make a difference, not really by the definitive determination of one's supernatural force, God. For the theistic existentialists, in the separate, God presents before all persons the ranges of opportunities or possibilities, at different models of understanding of life and living, to make difference, and then defines one's authentic living in reference to the values of other persons. To be rich or poor depends on how such opportunities are taken and utilized. Both theistic and atheistic existentialists are right as on their conception of human existence in relations to the values of one's actions and choices, as the ability of difference lies on the individual to maximize every opportunity before him or her and on the willingness to conquer his or her fears and worries, and face the future by the values of his or her actions and choices of today.

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