

SARTRE'S WORLD OF ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES AND HUMAN EXISTENCE IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The world is full of bountiful opportunities but very pathetic that many do not take advantage or maximize the various favourable circumstances that the world provides for human existential well-being. Sartre is a protagonist of the world of endless possibilities for humans and it is at the heart of his philosophy. His existentialism places no limitation on the capacity of an individual to transcend self. His concepts of freedom, 'Existence precedes essence', atheism and individual transcendence are the bedrock of his philosophy of endless possibilities. He holds that an individual can transcend himself to achieve more than he/she can imagine. Pathetically, Africa is a clime that has not made the best use of the opportunities that the terrestrial space provides for the well-being of her people. The continent still struggles with the issues of high rate of poverty, environmental degradation, corrupt leadership, terrible infrastructure and social amenities among others in the midst of abundant human and natural resources. What then are the strength and limitations of Sartre's thought? What can Africa learn from the philosophy of Sartre for qualitative human existence? How can Africa maximize the opportunities that the world provides for better human existence? Answers to these questions are at the heart of this paper. The paper adopts a comparative analytical method in achieving its objectives.

Keywords: Sartre, Word of Endless Possibilities, Africa

INTRODUCTION

Jean-Paul Charles Aymard Sartre is a key figure in modern existentialism. His impact on modern thought is unprecedented and has probably influenced the West more than other thinkers and literary figures since the two-world war.¹ His plays, short stories and Novels are the best expression of his existential contributions to the world. His passion and commitment to human being is clearly seen in all his works and philosophy. His works provide us with a coherence theory of human existence. He is unapologetic that man can live a meaningful, functional and qualitative life. To live authentically is for the individual to take advantage of his unrestricted freedom, outlive himself, (seeking to

¹John Gerassi, Jean-Paul Sartre: Hated Conscience of his Century. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 77.

Existentialism: Crash Course Philosophy. <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=YaDYRdcmkHS>.

become what he is not), believe in himself rather than any spiritual being and rate the fact of his existence his essence.

This is contrary to the thoughts of essentialists like Plato and Aristotle who holds that everything has an essence, which exists before birth. To them, part of what it is to be a good human is to adhere to one's essence. In this regard, one's essence gives one a purpose.² Against the above, Sartre asserts that everyman has to write his purpose. Each man must in fact determine the path of his essence. This paper seeks to interrogate this aspect of Sartre's existential thought by isolating the strength and limitations of his thought. However, the heart of this paper is its application to the African context. There is no doubt that the people of Africa must change orientation to the type that makes the best use of the opportunities that the world provides. This is a major way human existence can become more meaningful to the people of the continent. As a result, the work presents Sartre's existentialism as a template for Africans in achieving a world of endless possibilities.

Sartre's World of Endless Possibilities

Sartre was incurably optimistic about the capacity of an individual to achieve his goals and desire. To him, nothing except the individual himself can be an obstacle to self fulfilment and satisfaction. Not even God or the society should be an impediment to the individual to achieve the best world possible. His argument is that the individual is never exhausted by any of his phenomenal aspects. There is no particular perspective that reveals the entire character of man. Hence, the individual is limitless in his desire to achieve the best world possible. Sartre in this regard distinguishes between human consciousness and everything which is outside human consciousness. This is why '*being-for-self*' is different from '*being-in-itself*'.³ Being-in-itself (which is not the being of man) does not have the consciousness that transcends itself.⁴ "A stone is a stone – it is what it is and in being just what it is, no more and no less."⁵ It is fixed, complete and without consciousness.

On the contrary, *Being-for-Itself* (which is the being of man) has potentiality and is transcendent. It can become what it is not. It is perpetually beyond itself. It is, therefore incomplete, fluid, indeterminate and it corresponds to the being of human consciousness.⁶ Whatever a man is not today, he can become tomorrow. What is needed is his consciousness of his ability to go beyond himself.

²Existentialism: Crash Course Philosophy. <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=YaDYRdcmkHS>.

³Peter Caws, Sartre (London: Routledge and K Paul, 1979), 181.

⁴Ibid.

⁵John Webber, The Existentialism of Jean-Paul-Sartre (London: Routledge, 2009), 66.

⁶John Kanka ed., Jean-Paul-Sartre: Existentialism is a Humanism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 204.

Roquentin, the protagonist in *Nausea* confirms that man must project and loose himself beyond himself. The individual must desire to be, without ever being able to be a substance. To realize a conscious project, therefore, he must transcend himself and reach outside of himself. This is authentic existence and self-realization.⁷ Though an individual may never reach his ideal realization, it is still better for him to reach out beyond himself than for him to live in bad faith like *being-in-itself*.

The fact that man is indeterminate and fluid suggests the capacity to change or take a new course at any point in time. This provides an opportunity for an individual to evaluate his actions and decisions and possibly change his destiny direction. It also implies that man must always dream big. His reflections and actions should be adventurous and decisive. He must always believe in himself to achieve the impossible. Noting, not even failure must discourage him from reaching his goals. His dreams and imagination must be bigger than himself and his environment.

This also implies that the individual must be able to imagine and also translate his imagination to practicality through positive actions. Many developed countries of the world are where they are today in terms of industrialization and development because some individuals dare to lose themselves, think big and achieve things that are uncommon. Africa surely has a lot to learn in this regard. Africa is in need of individuals who will be willing to break away from environmental limitations, activate the power of human imagination and positive action, transcend themselves and change the course of their environment. Sartre world of possibilities is predicated on his concepts of freedom, 'existence precedes essence,' atheism and ethics. They are the bedrock of his believe that man can possibly achieve whatever he desires. It is important to consider the nexus between these concepts and his world of endless possibilities. Individual transcendence has great implications for freedom as an individual cannot transcend himself without being free. To become what he is not, man must enjoy maximum freedom. What then is the nature of Sartre's freedom?

In his two concepts of liberty, Isaiah Berlin started by asserting that the issues of obedience and coercion are important when political philosophy is discussed. Some of the issues he raised include, the justification for the individual to obey anyone else, should the individual be coerced? Why should we all not live as we like? After a long-related discussions, he makes a distinction between two types of freedom; positive and negative freedom. Negative liberty is "the absence of obstacles, barriers or constraints... positive liberty is the possibility of acting... in such a way as to take control of one's life."⁸ Germane to negative freedom is non-interference while positive liberty is when individuals want to be their own master or when one "wishes to be a

⁷Ian Carter "Positive and Negative Liberty" Standard Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/liberty/positive-negative/> Access May 8, 2020.

⁸Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty" in Four Essays of Liberty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 131.

subject, not an object.”⁹ Hence it is the form of freedom that allows the individual achieve his full potential. Though Sartre's concept of freedom substantially aligns with Berlin's idea of positive freedom, it also has some elements of his negative liberty as he argues that nothing including the society and religion must interfere in the freedom of the individual. He projects an authentic individual as a non-conformist. Sartre's ultimate goal is for the individual to be free to achieve personal projects. Hence, man must be consciously committed to that purpose for him to be said to be free. Sartre's freedom is therefore a theory of action.¹⁰

To Sartre, freedom is synonymous to the Being of man and cannot be separated. It is fundamental to man and not a derivate of anything. Man came to the world to be free. Freedom is therefore, natural to man and it cannot be in excess.¹¹ To him, freedom is used synonymously with human reality. According to him “the free project is fundamental for it is my being.”¹² To be human is to be free. To exist is to be free and if there is no freedom, there is no existence. Copleston in his commentary on Sartre's concept of freedom opines that. “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.”¹³ Consequently, the individual must assert his freedom, set goals, and be deliberate in achieving these goals through positive actions.

The freedom of man is unrestricted and there is no universal moral law that determines how he should act. However, Sartre is not just interested in man being free for the sake of freedom, the individual must break free of self-fastened shackles in order to attain his unlimited potentials. This is the reason for unlimited freedom.¹⁴ Freedom is, therefore meaningless if it cannot assist man to become the best that he can be. Roquent in asserts “I am free, I haven't a single reason for living left. I am going to outlive myself.”¹⁵ To outlive himself, he is seeking to become what he is not by reaching outside of himself. But what are the consequences of his concept of freedom to societal preservation? How is it possible for society to continue and community maintained despite Sartre's emphasis on absolute freedom? He answered these questions in *Existentialism is a Humanism*? “In willing freedom, we discover that it depends entirely upon the freedom of others. I cannot make liberty my aim unless I make that of others equally my aim.”¹⁶ His freedom therefore, accommodates the freedom of others and responsibility in the

⁹Ibid, 54.

¹⁰Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (London: Methuen and Co. 1972), 440.

¹¹Robert Denour, *Cumoning the Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre* (London: Oxford University Press, 1998), 207.

¹²F. Copleston, *Contemporary Philosophy* (London: Search Press, 1973), 189.

¹³Kanka, 62

¹⁴Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 553

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

use of freedom. This he restated in *Being and Nothingness* that we have a responsibility towards our freedom and the freedom of others.¹⁷ The preservation of the society is therefore, related to the responsibility of our freedom.

Responsibility is conceived as a conscious act of individual to know that he is the most important actor in whatever happens to him.¹⁸ The fact that he is absolutely free makes him become his choice and his choice becomes him. But man must “wholly assume the situation with the proud consciousness of the author of it.”¹⁹ It however, caution the individual not to make choices that are detrimental to others. It is taken that when an individual chooses himself, he is also choses for all men at the same time.²⁰ The individual choice must hence affirm that value of what we choose, for we must not choose evil. Our responsibility is therefore, greater than we might think because it concerns all mankind. Individual actions connote all mankind.

Sartre also talk about the *Anguish* of freedom. When he says man is in anguish, he means that a man who chooses and commits himself to an action but realizes that he is not only the individual that he chooses for, but that he is also a legislator choosing what humanity as a whole should be cannot help but be aware of his own full and profound responsibility.²¹ Man is free but in anguish of the fact that his freedom to choose and act is on behalf of others. He does not have the liberty to choose anyhow or to disappoint the universe.

His dictum, *Existence Precedes Essence* is another bedrock of his world of possibilities. Sartre was the first to use the dictum and to him, it is the first principle of existence.²² To be human has a fundamental feature of existence that precedes its essence. Man first exists, encounters himself, define himself, and surge up in the world. He cannot be said to be anything before and outside his existence.²³ As a result, man is not a predetermined being. He is what he makes himself. No essence restricts what he can become. He is the only one that can restrict himself by reaching outside himself. Every decision and action the individual makes define his essence. Since man is not predetermined, he can be something today and be another tomorrow. Every individual has a future depending on what he desires for himself.

Human life in the thought of Sartre is like blank canvases. It is the responsibility of the individual just like an artists to paint them in whatever direction the individual desires. The individual is responsible for the painting of the canvases with essence.²⁴ He has the

¹⁷ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea* (HermordSworth: Pergy in Modern Classics, 1965), 145.

¹⁸ Peter Caws, Sartre, 181

¹⁹ Maurice Natanson, *A Critique of Jean-Paul Sartre Ontology* (The Haque: Nijhoft, 1973), 84.

²⁰ Thomas Flynn, *Existentialism: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 111.

²¹ Kanka, 48.

²² J. Wali, *A Short History of Existentialism*. Trans, Forrest Williams and Stanley Maron. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), 68.

²³ WilfridDesen, *The Tragic Finale: An Essay on the Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*. (New York: Harper Torch books, 2000), 14.

²⁴ John Macquarrie, *Existentialism* (new York: Penguin, 1972), 206.

freedom to paint on the canvas as he desires. Hence, there is a direct relationship between Sartre's dictum 'existence precedes essence' and his concept of freedom since man is nothing until he becomes what he makes himself. It is in the exercise of his freedom that he become whatever he become. Since no essence can be attributed to man prior to existence, and there is no human nature that exists outside or inside the being man, he is free unlimitedly.

Germane to his concept of freedom and 'existence precedes essence' is the concept of choice. Choice and freedom are Siamese twins in the philosophy of most existentialists and Sartre's not an exception. Heidegger for instance holds that choice determine freedom as an individual cannot be said to be free unless he makes choices.²⁵ Sartre asserts that choice is always possible but what is not possible is not to choose. Not choosing is a choice to Sartre. The usage of choice in Sartre's work does not mean a spontaneous reaction to issues but that the individual has a reflective control of the deeper aspects of himself that in turn determines how things will look to him, how he will feel in response to things and the relative importance each consideration will have for him when he deliberates about what to do.²⁶ The only true cause of human behaviour is the individual's fundamental project of being. Things like hereditary, education, environment, and psychological constitutions explains nothing about man. Any project, according to Sartre, is a "choice, not a state."²⁷ It is only an individual that lives authentically that can make maximum use of the opportunities that the terrestrial space provides. Anything outside this is bad faith.

Sartre's atheism is another bedrock of his world of possibilities for he is proud to be an atheist. His atheism declares that God does not exist and he is consistent about it. His existentialism rests on the notion that the non-existence of God does not have any negative effect on human values. Without God, man can attain progress, success, honesty, dignity and qualitative existence. He asserts that "nothing will change if God does not exist. We shall re-discover the same norms of honesty, progress, and humanity and we shall have disposed God as an out-of-date hypothesis which will die away quietly of itself."²⁸

Crucial to his world of possibilities is that his existentialism suggests that the non-existence of God makes everything permissible and possible because the existence of God is an obstacle to human freedom. Since God does not exist, man becomes the only being that is absolutely free and whose existence comes before his essence. Man without God is free to become whatever he wishes to become. He can pursue any life

²⁵Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 573.

²⁶Gerard T. Cambell "Sartre's Absolute Freedom" *Laval et Philosophique*, 33, No. 1 (1977), 72.

²⁷John K. Anslem, *An Introduction to Existentialism, Phenomenology and Hermeneutics* (Ibadan: Ebony Books, 2014).

²⁸Kanka, 48

project and exercise his limitless freedom to accomplish his goals and desire. Man without God is free from spiritual burdens laid on him by religious laws and conditions. He is free from celestial deterministic notions.

Sartre however went ahead to consequently argue that man can become his dream without spiritual encumbrances. Freedom, 'existence precedes essence and atheism in the existentialism of Sartre were meant to free the individuals from all obstacles for him to become his dream or for him to attain the world of endless possibilities. With the non-existence of God, man can become whatever he wants to become. What is needed according to Sartre is for man to rediscover himself and to comprehend that nothing can save him from himself not even the valid proof of the existence of God.

Sartre's world of endless possibilities is also predicated on his concept of ethics. Ethics to him is like an art work, so one cannot decide what ought to be done in terms of morality. What art and morality have in common is creation and inventory. "Man makes himself, he does not come into the world fully made, he makes himself by choosing his own morality and his circumstances are such that he has no option other than to choose his morality."²⁹ Since God has been eliminated in his existentialism, someone has to invent values. To invent values means life has no meaning *a priori*, life is meaningful until it is lived. It is man that gives life meaning and value is nothing more than the meaning that we give to it.³⁰ Hence, our actions define our values. When we choose, we express our values. Even where the individual seeks advice on any moral decision, the final choice is still his.

The thesis of Sartre's ethics is that the individual must not be enslaved to religious and societal ethics that limits or obstruct his capacity and desire to enjoy the best of world possible. Individuals can invent their own ethics and that conformity to societal moral code can be counterproductive. In this manner, individuals will overcome possible limitations that the society can force on them in their attempt to make the best use of the opportunities that the world provides.

This argument is however self-defeating and contradictory. He has through this argument slipped into Kant's categorical imperative which is the law of autonomous *will*. Its background is in the doctrine that a rational *will* must be regarded as free and independent in the sense of being the author of the law that binds it.³¹ Also, his argument for individual morality is the beginning of the failure of his thesis. There will be clashes of morality if we all choose our own morality. Another important concern is how and

²⁹Standard Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Kant Moral Philosophy." Revised July 7, 2016: <http://plato.stanford.edu> accessed on May 16, 2020.

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who is to adjudicate in the wake of conflict since everyone has his own morality. Sartre's ethics will be difficult to administer in any society. In fact, no society is known to be practicing such ethical system. Sartre has also being criticized in his presentation of morality as an all permissible argument. Is everything really permitted in practical sense? It is like saying no one makes a decision especially that he holds that every choice of the individual is done on behalf of others.

Africa and Sartre's World of Endless Possibilities

Africa is in a serious need of need of existential intervention for her to break away from poverty to prosperity, pitiable to qualitative human existence and hopelessness to hope. Philosophy has a great role to play if this must happen. Like any other branches of philosophy, Africa philosophy must play its reflective responsibility for human life to become meaningful within the continent.

The need therefore to consider how Sartre's world of endless possibilities can be of help to African existential challenge. There are many impediments to the struggle of the individual to achieve personal goals, self-actualization and transcend self. Paradoxically, Africa still struggles with existential issues addressed by Sartre and other existentialists. Some of these issues are even reflected in African proverbs and folktales. Such include the place of essence in existence, freedom, choice, responsibility, death and God. The point of relevance of existentialism to the African context is also that, Africa still struggles with existential issues of high rate of poverty, environmental degradation, corrupt leadership, terrible infrastructural facilities and social amenities just to mention but a few. These are issues that have negatively impacted on humanity in Africa.

Sartre's existentialism has implications for many existential challenges facing African countries. First, it implies that Africa must rise above the myriads of problems confronting her. African problems are surmountable because they are human problems essentially. This is more so in the light of the fact that some other parts of the world have overcome similar problems in the past. Crucial to the philosophy of Sartre are the issues of choice and responsibility. Africans must consciously choose to develop, improve leadership, commit to sincere restructuring, value democracy and honestly fight corruption in order to positively change the narrative of poor human existence. Kolawole opines that, "the more we blame our problems, mistakes, and failures on witches and wizards, or even other human agents, we shall never accept the challenge to overcome them."³² Making productive choices and taking responsibility for our choices is crucial to the achievement of an Africa of endless possibilities. There is no doubt that Africa is enormously blessed with both human and natural resources. Regrettably, this

³²Simeon Kolawole. "Existentialism and the African Challenge". International Journal of Innovative Development and Policy Studies. Vol.5 (4), 2017

has not translated to good human life to teeming population of Africans. So many reasons are responsible for this. One of the reasons is that Africa has not been able to translate her human resources to good leadership. Arguably, bad leadership is a major problem of the continent. Most African leaders are incapable or unwilling to use the abundant human and natural resources available in the land to bring about growth and development to their people. Many of them are also ill prepared for the task ahead. Additionally, some do not fully comprehend the nature of their responsibility, duties and obligations. It is obvious that many of them tends to display attitude of contempt and disregard for the people. It is therefore important for African leaders to intentionally choose to develop the political will that is needed to break the shackles of underdevelopment and human degradation in the continent.

To overcome the challenge of human existence in Africa, leadership must be interested in building lasting and effective administrative and political structure. Governance must be built on structural foundation and not on individual. There are African structural system that are inimical to progress. Most African countries still struggle with basic political virtues as separation of power and rule of law. Some of these systems encourage fragrant disobedience to the principle of rule law and other democratic values. Meanwhile, entrenchment of the rule of law is very important to guarantee the protection of human rights, ensure government predictability, create a climate conducive to private sector activity and domestic and foreign investment which are important for the achievement of a world of endless possibilities.

African countries must commit to the freedom of the individual. Factors that limit capacity of individuals to transcend themselves must be addressed. This includes cultural, environment, religious, educational and organization limitations. While absolute and excessive freedom is not an option, the individual must be free enough to achieve personal goals. Individual must also be willing to take responsibilities for their actions. Africa must be a place of multiple opportunities for the individual. A place where natural and human advantages are used in creating the best of the world possible. Sartre's theory further implies that the individual must be determined to explore the myriads of opportunities that the world provides. This is by being determined to free oneself from all limiting factors and pushing on despite the absurdity of life. The individual must also be willing to make productive choices and accepting that his/her destiny is in his/her hands. The individual person is thus responsible for his/her personal development. He or she must be willing to build global relationship as no one can succeed as an island.

It is unthinkable to consider a world without God in Africa. Hence Sartre's atheism has no place in Africa. However, religion as it is being practiced in some part of Africa can truly be an obstacle to the world of endless possibilities that Sartre's projected. Religion could however be an advantage if it practiced properly. This is because there are more

possibilities with God than humanity can imagine. While man is limited, God is without limitation and can solve human limitations. That is why existentialism talk of facticity in discussion about man. Additionally, the church in Africa must not just preach Christ, she must act Christ. The church should epitomize the freedom that Christ modeled. For example, the church should not just affirm Christian morality, she should in her governance and activities practice Christian morality. This is a panacea for overcoming many existential problems that confront Africa. True practice of Christian and Africa ethics will surely reduce the problem of corruption, kidnapping, human trafficking and many other vices that have impacted humanity negatively in the continent

The Church is not only a spiritual organ, she is also a social body because she relates with people both inside and outside of the church. The Church in Africa must therefore fulfil her social responsibility in order to make more opportunities available to the people. The Church cannot shed herself of her social responsibility by delegating it to others or by leaving it to government and governmental organizations alone. Christ came so that all may have life and equal opportunities. The bible says that Christ came to give abundant life. This suggest that there are many possibilities in Christ which include eternal life, fulfilled life here on earth, healing, blessings, security and many more. The Church must truly represent Christ in all of these. The oneness of humanity as exemplified in the creation story makes it important for the Church to be concerned about her social environment. This involves feeding the poor, the beggars, and members and non-members of churches that are deprived. Others include visiting the sick, opening medical centres, orphanages and other charities. Another area in this regard is practical involvement in addressing systemic injustices of the society. The evangelistic zeal of the Church should also be harnessed to a passion for social outreach. Through this, the Church in Africa will emancipate people from hunger, injustice, and sickness.

It is important for religion to have practical effects on people's life. It has been noted that contrary to Sartre's existentialism, the spiritual dimension takes pre-eminence in Africa's discussion about man and his existence. Man cannot be the beginning point when we discuss his existence, since he did not bring himself into existence. This provides the basis to evaluate contemporary religions in Africa. The situation today is the springing up of many religious centres with less godliness. In many parts of Africa the situation is that the more religious centres we have, the more the level of evil and immorality in the system. Many practitioners of religion in the contemporary world are the ones involved in large scale corruption, abuse of leadership positions and similar practices that dehumanize humanity.

Kolawole argues for a balance between the spiritual and physical dimensions of life, and the need for the people to relate better with their environment and the physical world as a way of religion having impact on humanity,. African religion should promote responsible stewardship of God's resources emphasizing creature's care rather than

reckless usage of the earth's resources.³³ He also points out the need to nourish the spiritual dimension of life, especially the relationship with God. We must however translate the dominant religiosity to true spirituality characterised by godliness. African God-consciousness must reflect in people's daily lives and activities. The irony of religiosity on Africa is that “in spite of religious houses preponderant in Africa, wickedness, injustice, corruption, armed robbery, violence and many other vices abound in Africa.”³⁴ In fact, many are using religion to oppress and subjugate others.

Religion in Africa, among other things, should promote sound moral standard since God in African understanding is responsible for moral order. Africans view morality as an authoritative code of conduct directly sanctioned by God. The failure of religions in Africa to promote moral standard is, therefore, an aberration and it has a direct relationship with negative human existence in Africa. Sartre's existentialism has implication for Africa to look inward in addressing her numerous problems. She must look within for solution to her challenges. While Africa should be open to help, she may get from outside, she is the one who can solve her problems. Africa must therefore, take her destiny in her hands and take practical steps to come out of her present state. Africa is surely not destined for bad human condition, but she must be willing to activate her productive choices if she must overcome her present predicaments. Africans must begin to have a new orientation and determination to change and do things differently from how they have been done before. Africa is a continent of great potentials, and she must look to the multitudinal possibilities that are available to her. The continent needs to harness her abundant human and natural resources for the benefits of her people. This is why good and competent leadership is imperative in Africa. We need leaders who will help the continent overcome her challenges and facilitate the emergence of a new Africa. There should be an end to the Westernized thinking of looking for solutions to African problems from Europe, America and also recently Asia.

This study also charges Africa to focus on individuals, responding to their yearnings and aspirations, meeting their needs and addressing their problems. African countries must have people-oriented policies and embark more on projects that will empower the people, improve quality of life and standard of living and deliver people from illiteracy, poverty and disease. African people must also have active engagement with life as they must resolve to live with great sense of meaning and purpose in spite of their problems and challenges.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Africans are in need of better human existence. It is also true that philosophy has a great role to play if this must happen. The need therefore for African philosophy to rigorously engage in philosophical activities that will turn the tide of

³³Kolawole,

³⁴Ibid.

hopeless human existence in Africa into that of hope. African philosophy as a result must rigorously engage philosophy of human existence from other clime. This is to discover things that can be learnt from other nations of the world especially those that have gone ahead in the achievement of qualitative human existence for their people. The Western world surely belong to this category and in-depth study of Western philosophy of human existence can be a great help in this regard. This is not a suggestion that every aspect of Western thought is beneficial but a form of social critique that will tap good things from other culture while retaining and reviving productive culture of the African people.

It is incontrovertible that Sartre's philosophy is a leading light in Western philosophy of human existence and Africa must learn from him. This paper has considered his idea of endless possibilities for the individual. It is that the world has unlimited possibilities for the individual to achieve personal goals, transcend self and make existence qualitative and functional. It has also exposed specific areas of African life, culture and system that must change in line with Sartre's suggestion in order for existence to be made better for an African individual. It also highlighted areas where the individuals must rise up to the occasion, taking responsibilities for their own destinies. It is hoped that leaders and individuals in Africa will perform their roles in making Africa a better place to live.

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