

Thesis Title: SARTRE ON FREEDOM: A DEFENSE

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ABSTRACT

The problem of freedom is possible to be the basic problem of human beings. The interest on this problem is not caused by doubting on their fatality but it is caused by their desire about the questions what freedom is. And whether human actions are caused or not. The problem of human freedom seems to be unaccepted by some philosophers who mention that in fact, human actions are not free. The cause of this mention is the belief in the laws of nature and it was limited to the possibility of free-will. When all the natural events are caused, man is a part of the nature; therefore, his actions are caused. Human understanding on the problem of freedom is described by (in this research) 3 schools of philosophy, namely Determinism, Libertarianism or Free-willist, and Soft-determinism or Compatibilism.

Determinism asserts that every event is caused, that freedom is an illusion, and that it does not really exist. Human actions and natural events are the same things and must have a cause or causes. Human heredity and the environment can describe the cause of his actions at least. The determinist presentation is conflict to the libertarianists or free-willists who believes that man is free, that man is freedom and that human freedom is not an illusion. In fact, freedom really exists, it is the core of human being. The philosopher of this school said that man cannot be sometimes free and sometimes unfree, he is wholly and forever free or he is not free. When man is free then, it is necessary for him to be responsible for the consequence(s). For the free-willists, in every situation man can choose and freedom is the ability that only man has. The conflict between determinist and free-willist school on the problem of freedom, is solved by the other school called compatibilism or soft-determinism which tries to compromise that both determinism and free-will can go together in logic because human freedom is not opposite to causation but it is opposite to compulsion. The natural events and human actions are not different in kind but different in degree. The root of its difference is freedom. The soft-determinists try to compromise by suggesting that the determinists should have right attitude toward the meaning of the word "necessary", and "the distinction conjunction' or the relation between cause and effect. At the same time, the free-willists should change their attitude on the meaning of absolute freedom. The soft-determinists continue to explain their attitude by separate the difference of free action and unfree action.

The argumentation among the philosophers (in this research) on the problem of freedom is centered on Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre's philosophy emphasizes freedom

as the nature of man. He says that man is free, that man is freedom, and that man is condemned to be free. His philosophy guarantees human free-will, especially freedom of choice. Still, Sartre continues to explain the relation between human freedom and other issues such as responsibility, ethics, literature and art, and with other persons. Sartre also gives credit to human ability of creation in changing the world. According to Sartre, to face with the real situation man can always choose at least, one thing.

Sartre's philosophy of freedom is disputed by both determinism and soft-determinism. According to the determinists, past, present, and future are the same event. Present is caused by the past, and future is caused by the present. This is the continuation of an event that cannot be denied because, if the past is denied then, people will have no memory. The soft-determinists hold, on the other hand, that the causes of human actions are his inner desires, decisions, choices, and volitions. When man chooses to do some actions by following these causes it is necessary for him to be responsible for the consequence(s) thereof. If man is compelled or forced by external things or other cause(s) it is unnecessary for him to be responsible for the consequence(s) because he is no free.

To argue against determinism and soft-determinism, Sartre and the free-willists assert that freedom is the ability to define and assign meaning to things and events. Sartre used the word "freedom," as the ability in choosing to do some activity according to one's own will. For Sartre, freedom is the behavior of spirit in the environment-as he says that there is freedom only in a situation, and there is a

situation only through freedom. The determinists hold that all human actions are caused and freedom is illusion. Sartre and the free-willists argue that human actions and natural events are not the same things. But in fact, human actions are absolutely different from natural events because all human actions are based on his free-will. Man is free, man is freedom, and man is being which is not what he is, and which is what he is not (Sartre, 1956, p. 127). The soft-determinists hold that all natural events and human actions are similar in the sense that both are caused. However, human actions are different from natural events in the sense that they can be free or unfree actions. The free human actions are caused by man's own internal states while the unfree ones are caused by external forces or compulsion. To argue against the soft-determinist, Sartre and the free-willists maintain that if soft-determinism is true, man will not be responsible for all consequences caused by external causes. According to Sartre and the free-willists, man is free in the situations; therefore, he must be responsible for all his decisions and actions no matter what.

