

## **A Critical Study of Influence of Women on Sartre's Existentialism Philosophy: A Classic Example of Gender Equality**

**Dr. Drashti Purohit**  
**Assistant Professor**  
**Atmiya University, Rajkot**

### **Abstract:**

By its very nature, existential philosophy is a male-dominated discipline of philosophy. However, it would be a mistake to overlook the role that women played in shaping the philosophy that is now associated with selfish authenticity, independence, and freedom, as well as the languishing associated with discovering the true meaning of life, given that we are born into nothing with only one certainty: death. To properly comprehend and explain these gender interactions, psychologists must combine a broader range of studies. Willy Apollon's *Four Seasons in Femininity or Four Men in a Woman's Life* (1993) and David and Brannon's *Four Rules for Establishing Masculinity* (1976) are projected onto Sartre's connection with women and position on and within existential philosophy in this critical review.

**Key Words:** Gender Equality, Existentialism, Satre, Simon de Beauvoir, Influence

### **Lead In:**

Several thinkers have proclaimed gender to be a performative word in light of society's dominant patriarchy. According to a psycho-social study, women are more prone than men to adapt and construct alternative gender identities to suit the context, such as muting one's femininity at work while emphasising it socially. In postwar Paris, the cradle of Existential Philosophy, Jean-Paul Sartre was heading a predominantly male-dominated school of thinking. However, one female figure may be discovered in the salons of Paris. This woman was, of course, Simone de Beauvoir, a fixture of the Paris café scene and co-founder of existential philosophy with Jean-Paul Sartre, a position that made her both influential and reviled. Her role was unusual in that she was not only his coworker, but also his fiancée and, more importantly, his equal. One name comes to mind when it comes to existential philosophy: Jean-Paul Sartre.

Despite the fact that he was constantly mocked by his fellow compatriots for not only his work, but also his appearance, his incredible intellect combined with an impeccably perfected dulcet manner caused his colleagues to respect him unconditionally and many women to fall into a hypnotic trance of admiration. Sartre triggered a large discussion over how we should regulate morality in modern society when he lived his life as a womaniser, a heavy drinker, and an individualist under the pretence of a frustrated writer attempting to live 'authentically.' Authenticity is a fundamental theme in Sartre's landmark essay, *Being and Nothingness*. This philosophy asserts that before doing anything else for another person or allowing another person to affect one's life, one should live for oneself by pursuing one's actual (often selfish) aspirations. But how honest could Sartre be if his existence depended around the woman who gave him solace? Sartre and his 'unmarried wife,' Simone de Beauvoir, were equals, according to Appignanesi (2005), but it was de Beauvoir who painstakingly edited all of Sartre's manuscripts, and de Beauvoir who accepted that his life would be one of fleeting liaisons and wild, wondrous, promiscuous, and at times scandalous adventure. Their positions as academic colleagues and domestic partners were constantly at odds, but it was de

Beauvoir who had the extra burden of serving as Sartre's editor while still working on her own and engaging in their home life.

### **Influence of Women on Sartre's Existentialism Philosophy**

In some cases, the existential circle's private life in wartime Paris are more well-documented than the philosophy they wrote about. Their complex and complicated writings are significant, yet one might argue that great works like de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* are nothing more than well-encrypted memoirs and, in certain circumstances, a platform to communicate deep-seated emotions. The period's austerity had never been seen before, and a new source of optimism was needed. Existentialism gave the conquered survivors of the global war a sense of autonomy, but only by pushing Nietzsche's notion of God being dead and man murdering Him to the point where there was no God and man was free to choose his own fate. Our bodies are our property, and our choices shape our life.

Viviani remarks that the body may readily affect the social culture in which it is placed, and this philosophical approach has pervaded many disciplines of human studies, most notably Anthropology. When we engage in social liaisons, our material bodies can influence how people interact with us and how our bodies are received. When it comes to women, Sartre is viewed as a man who stares and is manipulative. Not only did he establish the foundation for European Philosophy, but he was also a superb manipulator of the image of himself he presented and the women he seduced in his local social surroundings.

According to Martin (2012), existentialism would be demonstrated to be alive and operating if the now middle-aged Sartre could seduce Wanda Kosakiewicz after years of rejection from her older sister Olga Kosakiewicz.

Sartre was actually living his life, taking what he desired (in this case, the lady) to fulfil a completely selfish need (here, the accomplishment of yet another sexual relationship). Sartre's existence had been defined by women, particularly sexual liaisons, and here, being distracted by the constant rejection of a woman he loved and believed he might have, is additional evidence that women created Sartre's reality, rather than Sartre being an authentic existential person. Sartre saw women as a commodity to be enjoyed as part of an existential existence, but his persistent pursuits and subsequent rejections prevented him from living a genuinely honest life, and his sadness was communicated in his philosophical writings (e.g. in Sartre, 1938/2014). In "Nausea" (1938/2014), Sartre's character, Antoine Roquentin, is baffled by his futility and loneliness, which is only ever relieved by a woman, and with each woman who enters and then leaves, be it Anny, Françoise, or any other, Sartre's character, Antoine Roquentin, is baffled by his futility and loneliness, which is only ever relieved by a woman.

Although the women in this novel are significant, one must wonder if the protagonist's tragic search for meaning in life reflects, and thus closely parallels, Sartre's own frustrations with a world that has no meaning and in which he has no real purpose other than to live and die, as documented in his seminal "Being and Nothingness." Sartre certainly battled with his own view of the cosmos, and it's reasonable to assume that socialising did not help him. The literati with whom he adorned the world's intellectual hotspots brought even more fractious behaviour and confrontation, particularly with Algerian-born Albert Camus, the man behind the radical ideologies of absurdism and anti-nihilism, and there appeared to be no solace in the countless women he pursued. Later

evidence, such as their letters to each other (de Beauvoir, 1990/2011; Sartre, 1983/1992), show that only de Beauvoir, as his longtime friend and perhaps the only one who genuinely understood him, was able to soothe Sartre and intimately comprehend his worldly ideas. Women are commonly disadvantaged and oppressed in the subject of gender formation. Making males more available, according to Beauvoir, is one form of female slavery. By dismissing women as figures, women's resistance to marginalisation may be overcome. Refusing to be created as an object necessitates the abandonment of the other. As a result, women may be free of any marginalisation that labels them as "the other." In terms of women's participation in public life, Beauvoir believes it should be a friendly atmosphere. Women's engagement in public places is prohibited, which limits attempts to learn women's identities. Women's engagement in the public sphere may imply a break in the socially enforced chain of women's freedom. This study looks at the presence of Indonesian women in the public sphere, as typified by Simone de Beauvoir's feminist ideology. The information is acquired through a review of scholarly articles as well as statistical data pertinent to the study's problems. Furthermore, the material is treated in accordance with Simone de Beauvoir's feminist concept, which entails reading, sorting, and assessing the information. Conclusions are drawn based on the results of the data analysis and processing.

#### **Sartre and Gender Equality**

According to Butler's theory of gender narratives and performance, as well as David and Brannon's four masculinities, Sartre weakened his ideology and increased his (gender) identity to correct the imbalance in his own Psychology.

When he was younger, Sartre, for example, appears to have epitomised machismo by adhering to the "No Sissy Stuff" masculinity while living in a country on the verge of war and wooing a large number of women. After developing a long-term connection with de Beauvoir as the face of Existential Philosophy, his gruffness was restricted because he was now on the public stage in a "Big Wheel" manly style. Sartre's students, coworkers, friends, lifelong associates, and the rest of the world watched as he grew increasingly incensed by his contemporaries' triumphs, counter-arguments, and new philosophical approaches in a "Give 'Em Hell!" type of machismo. He embodied the ultimate hyper-masculine role in society, cementing his position as the premier intellectual figure of the postwar era. However, as he neared his solitary goal: death, his faith in his own intellectual system began to crumble. Sartre toned down his ideas in his hundreds of letters to de Beauvoir (see Sartre 1983-1992), making it clear that they should only ever preserve a pragmatic and enduring 'basic love' between them, while pushing them both to continue pursuing 'contingent liaisons.' He was constantly attracted back to de Beauvoir, the non-wife, no matter whose masculinity he represented or for whose women he embodied it.

When it came to Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre or her "Dear Little Being," as she referred to him, couldn't, or maybe wouldn't, clear his thoughts. Obviously, they were smitten. They started off as two academicians who admired one other's work. They spent their lives attempting, in their own distinctive manner, to right the wrongs that had occurred during the Nazi occupation. After abandoning God and society, these Existentialists found themselves alone, without the safety net of norms or the comforts of a bigger and more powerful authority that come with our religious and cultural institutions. And, maybe more than the idea of unending loneliness, the possibility of death is terrible. Despite the fact that neither side of the partnership was monogamous, and despite the countless women

with whom Sartre sought consolation, de Beauvoir remained his constant companion. She'd been there when he was rejected, when his existential outlook sparked exponential interest, and when he faced adversity. The woman had had the greatest impact on his life and accomplishments. Sartre's ravenous womanising was a product of his desire for existential authenticity, but once everyone had fled him and only de Beauvoir remained, his dogmatic principles had to be tempered to reflect what he now knew to be true: life could not be lived completely independently. People needed other people, and Sartre realised he needed a woman, and that woman was Simone de Beauvoir, his in-all-but-name marriage (Sartre 1983-1992).

We might compare what we see in their connection to Apollon's "Four Seasons of Femininity or Four Men in a Woman's Life" (1993). Sartre's work plainly demonstrates that he "loved" de Beauvoir at one point or another, but as he pursued his Existentialist road, this season had to end, and he imposed the second season on their relationship: "Law." To assuage his sense of abandonment in a world where he was free, his law was to "be anything he wanted to be." Then followed a period of "loss," in which Sartre spiralled out of the normal realm, abandoning normal behaviour in the hopeless hunt for meaning, ending in the event (season) that de Beauvoir had most feared, yet expected: his death. With that, he left nothing but a poor name behind. Sartre's death was followed by a trail of documented events that revealed his anguish.

#### **Conclusion**

Reading Jean-Paul Sartre's work through the lens of his fleeting meetings with women and his long-term relationship with Simone de Beauvoir, according to this study, can be helpful. The researcher claims that Sartre, his work, and the women who shaped it may be framed across time using David and Brannon's *Four Rules for Establishing Masculinity* and Apollon's *Four Seasons in Femininity*. While studying and seducing women, he embodied machismo masculinity in a "No Sissy Stuff" construction of masculinity; however, after meeting and falling for de Beauvoir, and thus entering their first season of femininity: "Love," when his work began to gain international attention, he became a more refined: "Big Wheel." After years of rejection from younger women he pursued, Sartre demonstrated toxic masculinity, and he and de Beauvoir entered a season of "Law," with him informing her they could only have "basic love." Sartre's relationship with women altered again as he grew older and neared death, becoming the more reserved "Sturdy Oak," and he and de Beauvoir's contemplation of life's purpose became more agonising as they entered a season of "loss." De Beauvoir was in her final "anguish" season when he died, having lost the person she both loved and adored. While most individuals would not want to be like Sartre in terms of psychology, one thing is clear. His brain's inner workings could never let go of his interaction with women, and one lady in particular, Madame Beauvoir, shaped his vision of what the world may be in actuality. And it wasn't only for the sake of dying. Gender issues have grown into a debate over the advantages and disadvantages of historical events, both recent and millennia ago. Due to the continuous prevalence of patriarchal culture in the social order, gender issues have become a serious concern in Indonesia. Patriarchal society, for example, presents women as "the other," according to Simone de Beauvoir.

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