The Ideal of God as an Escape from Freedom

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this work is to clarify and reclaim the concept of freedom from the perspective of Jean-Paul Sartre, as well as to disseminate the concept of secular morality, which is detached from the ideal of a guiding God, built and consolidated over the centuries.

Freedom, as presented by the existentialist author, is alien to all determinism; "man is freedom". Once he exists, he is responsible for what he does. A critical or analytical perspective is suggested on how the conception or belief in an "ideal of God" (not necessarily the existence of God itself, but the way humans construct and relate to this idea) can be used or function as a mechanism to evade the full assumption of one's own freedom and the responsibility that this entails.

Keywords: existentialism, freedom, God, responsibility, autonomy

INTRODUCTION

Let's consider responsibility as the value developed by individuals through education in the exercise of their freedom. This component allows them to reflect, guide, and assess the moral consequences of their actions, those that drive them to live a good life—that is, those actions that lead them to develop their potential, achieve a sense of satisfaction or self-realization, and be useful to their society.

Responsible is someone who acts consciously and is responsible for their actions. When an individual becomes aware of the implications of their actions, that it is through them that they construct their reality and choose based on previously understood values—those established by humanity—then they can consider themselves truly free.

By observing the facts of the world and the different circumstances of life, it is possible to realize that, as far as human beings are concerned, everything is subject to causality. It is the subject who, through his decisions and corresponding actions, or rather his inactions, establishes the world in which he lives. There are no rewards or punishments, only consequences. While an individual does not decide to be born in a slum or a privileged social sphere, when the time comes, he can decide what to do. He is not obligated to stay there or that way for the rest of his life. He does not necessarily have to commit a crime, even if he was raised in a hostile environment, or be a moralistic conservative because his family was built on those ideas. *Man is what he makes of what was made of him,* Sartre tells us.

At all times, the subject must choose, and through their decisions, they can become what they planned or cease to be what they have been. This is what Sartre considers *optimistic hardness*: that there is always a possibility of action, even if it stems from the anxiety of free choice.

To think that freedom is an illusion or the result of divine design would be equivalent to denying the human faculty of reason or an overly cowardly and irresponsible act, failing to recognize the weight of individual action in human and social construction.

In this sense, those who prefer to believe in determinism—be it biological, theological, or cultural—are excusing themselves from exercising their primary value, that of free choice. In this way, they try to alleviate the anxiety of choice, thus playing the trump card of evasion. For Sartre, it is impossible not to choose, since even inaction

is already a choice.

From the conception presented here, God is born from human misery. This happens both through psychological transference, which seeks a valid model to admire and guide us, thanks to which we can make the "heavy burden of existence" (all adversity and vulnerability) more bearable. Not finding it in humans, God transfers it to a divine entity, just as he would with animals ("I prefer my dog to my neighbor"). Or, responding to the need for transcendence—an evolutionary product of intellectuality—and/or the search for shelter and protection, framed within the most basic requirements of a living being. These needs have consolidated the largest global socio-economic-political-ideological institution in history, called religion. However, religion can be conceptualized as a symbolic element that acts as a collective foundation for moral conscience and social cohesion, according to Durkheim, who states, "What is sacred is not the object itself, but the system of beliefs and practices that surround it; society is, ultimately, the source of the sacred."

Since there is no god who governs the world or a pre-established plan, life, *a priori*, has no meaning; it is up to each individual to give it its own, as Sartre tells us. This is achieved through the exercise of freedom, considering ourselves as actors and makers of a given reality. This is the principal merit of humanism: to take man as the ultimate end and value, considering that, if God existed, this would not change, from the perspective of atheistic existentialism.

Development

As a context for Sartrean existentialism and his postulate of freedom, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) was a philosopher and literary artist born and died in France. He witnessed two unprecedented wars in history: the First and Second World Wars. The ideas proposed by the thinker are set in the context of a destroyed, shocked society that was experiencing a new way of seeing life. A population that witnessed the horrors of war and its economic, material, and emotional costs. A society that asked itself, "Where is God? Why does he allow this?" These events had nothing to do with a god; they were human coincidences.

It is in this setting where the philosopher sets forth his theories—in a so-called atheistic existentialism—based on his notions of being and freedom, based on his work *Existentialism is a Humanism*, published in 1946, after his best-known work, *Being and Nothingness* (1943).

Freedom understood from atheistic existentialism

Sartrean existentialism employed the phenomenological method derived from his teacher, the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), who proposed that the way to know the *logos*, the essence, is through the phenomenon (Chávez, 2008). Husserl's work consists of analyzing more and more deeply what intentions the human being has, what they are, and what they are like, because only in this way will it be possible to know what and how he knows. Before judging what is known, or what reality consists of, Husserl advocates suspending judgment and studying intentionality. He believes that by doing this, it will then be possible to judge what is known and what reality consists of (Chávez, 2008).

Returning to intentionality as a fundamental part of existentialism, consciousness is also intentionality. While objects in the world, such as a stone or a table, are *beings*-in-themselves, that is, they are closed in on themselves and have no intentionality, consciousness is *being*-for-itself: it consists of having the intention of something (Chávez, 2008). The rain that falls one afternoon does not do so because it has the intention to do so; it is simply subject to physical laws.

Of all beings, only humans, due to their consciousness, can act freely. A lion cannot decide to be a vegetarian, but humans can. Inert objects and animals, compared to the subject, do not have to consider what to do, because there are physical, chemical, and biological laws that govern their future. The subject, as a body, is governed by physical, chemical, and biological laws. It cannot decide that gravity does not affect it, nor can it decide to live without eating or drinking. Its task is to live its life as it sees fit. It all depends on its intention.

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), a disciple of Husserl, was the one who most influenced Sartre's understanding

of the human condition. In his existential analysis, this German philosopher sought to explain the human condition, and to do so, he developed special categories. For the purpose of this work, we will consider the category of *project*.

Human beings are not static but rather are made as they live, according to the plan they themselves make of their lives. Stones exist, period. Animals live according to their genetic patterns; they don't need to consider what to do. Only for humans is life an open question. Precisely because they alone are free, they have to decide what to do; things aren't pre-made for them, as they are for animals.

Understanding Sartre's ideological influences helps us better understand his ideas. Human beings are always a project: their freedom means the freedom *to* live as they wish, according to what they choose. The characteristic of Sartrean existentialism is that human beings have no guide for their choices; there is no God to guide them. There is no searchable meaning to life. The only meaning is the one each person chooses to give to their existence.

Taken in itself, life is absurd, Sartre would say; the subject is a "useless passion." Therefore, knowing and feeling that life has no meaning leads the subject, if they do not want to fall into despair, to give it one, according to Chávez (2008). Sartre (2014) argues that the individual is condemned to freedom. They have no choice but to choose a project, and they are the only ones responsible for the choice they make. Saying that they have chosen under pressure from circumstances is always a lie: they are radically free and should not blame anyone for the decisions they make. Anyone who does this shows *bad faith*: they attribute to circumstances or to others a decision that is solely theirs.

It should be noted that if Sartre's positions differ throughout his life, it is because circumstances are not the same, and a conceptual dynamism occurs. On the other hand, freedom is part of deciding what to do and when to stop doing it. For the Parisian author, the concept of freedom has several implications, such as the possibility of self-determination, the possibility of choice, voluntary action, spontaneity, and a margin of indeterminacy. Thus, "freedom exists as long as we act as we are and as long as our actions contribute to making us" (Sartre, 2014).

The human being is a *being for himself* who projects his own goals and strives to achieve them. Although the individual cannot modify his environment or distance himself from it, he can choose to change the way he sees it, its meaning. The subject is a consciousness, but he can also choose to deceive himself and decide to place his responsibility on something outside of him—such as God, his heredity, his upbringing, his origin, or his environment—but this is also a choice, even if he tries to evade it.

Since Sartre first expressed his ideas, he has had many detractors, and even today, the concept of freedom he proposes is capable of generating discontent and criticism. More than six decades later, what the Frenchman proposed continues to resonate, and, as he noted, "What is frightening about this doctrine is the fact that it leaves man a choice?" (Sartre, 2014).

Sartre's position on freedom implies recognizing that there is no theological, biological, or social condition that irremediably determines each individual's behavior. Neither has God given human beings a precise destiny, nor do nature or society absolutely determine their possibilities or their behavior. Each individual is what they have chosen to be and can always cease to be what they are or have been. This is the philosophical perspective of the human being as a project, not with a fixed essence but in constant construction and development.

General Exposition of the Idea of God

It is in the face of need and in moments considered to be moments of human misery that the idea of God comes alive. The need for comfort, shelter, and permanent happiness; the need to believe that there is something beyond existence. Generally, human beings prefer to believe they are not organic matter headed for decomposition and require an ideal world where everything is eternal, perfect, and wonderful—unlike the world they live in, which is subject to suffering, deprivation, hardship, and fleeting joys. Love and protection, primordial human needs, are projected by humans onto the figure of God, infinitely and infallibly.

Seeing that the precarious and adverse conditions of reality offer no incentive, when human vices and atrocious

acts committed by them bewilder and terrorize the population, what or whom can they turn to? Where can they find solace? This need for protection creates the ideal of God. The search for certainty or relief in a perfect and immutable being, possessing qualities that a human cannot possess or that do not exist in their reality, constitutes the incentive for their vital unease and anguish. A being from whom "truth" emanates and in whom one can find life or eternal happiness.

Many people need the belief that all virtues, abilities, and possibilities reside in a being who is not human but who is above the humanity they know. This can help ease their conscience when they fail to achieve a goal, face life frustration, or face the inevitable consequences of wrong decisions.

In contrast to the existentialist interpretation that considers God as an object of evasion or projection of the self, there are approaches such as scholasticism or German idealism that approach God as the absolute foundation of being and constitute a possibility of transcending contingency.

The question of the existence, or lack thereof, of a creator god and ruler of life and existence (or gods) has been present throughout human history. From ancient Greek tradition, with the poet Homer's Odyssey, in which he creates a world of anthropomorphized gods with human vices and virtues, to the evolution of the concept of "God" over the centuries, largely driven by great philosophers, both for and against, or remaining on the sidelines, giving rise to so-called agnosticism, which broadly postulates that understanding the existence of a divine being escapes human faculties.

Postulates of Sartrean Existentialism

Based on the concept of freedom already presented, nine considerations stand out in Sartre, according to Monzón and Perea (2014): *Existence* precedes *essence*; the subject is fully responsible; the human is a project that is lived subjectively; the subject is condemned to be free; there are no signs in the world; there is no human nature; the subject is a *being in* a situation; existentialism is not a philosophy that promotes quietism; and the starting point is human *subjectivity*, that is, it is existential.

Atheistic existentialism declares that *existence precedes essence*; this being is the human, or as Heidegger says, human reality. The subject begins by existing, arises in the world, and then defines itself (Monzón and Perea, 2014). Since there is no God, there is no human nature (because there is no God to conceive it). The subject is the only one who is not only as he conceives himself, but also as he wants himself to be. In the words of Sartre (2014): “Man is nothing other than what he makes of himself.”

Significant contributions were made by Ayn Rand in the United States, Bertrand Russell in England, and Ludwig Feuerbach in Germany—thinkers who, while not considered *existentialists,* from the perspective of the history of philosophical doctrines share a very similar position to what is presented here regarding the ideal of God, basing their arguments on reason, which they emphasize is what is inherent to the human being.

In order to complete the humanist approach, that is, to give a rational meaning to the life and existence of individuals from the anthropocentric conception (the human being as the measure and center of all things) that breaks with medieval scholasticism—*God is everything*—and from the concept of freedom developed here, the ideas of these philosophers are briefly presented in which the ideological convergences are appreciated regarding the responsibility that the subject has when choosing his acts and that the fact of believing in God, from an existential perspective, restricts man from exercising his freedom, as Sartre proposes.

Ayn Rand

Ayn Rand (1905–1982), the pseudonym of Russian-born Alisa Zinovievna Rosenbaum, became famous for her controversial views in her works and, particularly, for her atheistic stance. Rand, a proponent of objectivity, posited that she cannot believe in anything she cannot verify (Rand, 1979).

She also points out that being guided by emotions is a mistake; it means "going against reality." It's assuming an irrational existence is a personal decision, and it's wanting to believe something that compensates for what doesn't

happen and what human beings don't like. The thinker believes that “Man is afraid to rely on his own mind and his own responsibility” (Rand, 1979). This argument bears great similarity to the Sartrean proposal previously presented.

From the perspective of this article, the arguments presented here gain even greater importance in the face of the argumentative synergy surrounding the delegation of responsibility for life by attributing what happens to a divine entity. This, in addition to a renunciation of freedom, is a degradation of humanism, which is what concerns us in this material, "mundane" existence, not of omniscient beings but of the human as the greatest creation of civilization.

Bertrand Russell

Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) was an English philosopher who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1952 and who moved from idealism to realism, establishing, according to Chávez (2008), that “reality is constituted by facts.” In an interview conducted in 1959, Russell declared that he was not a Christian because he had not seen any evidence for the dogmas. Regarding the belief that many hold about the existence of God because they need or want to believe it, Russell finds it fundamentally dishonest and damaging to intellectual integrity to believe in something just because it benefits him and not because he thinks it is true.

A large number of individuals are motivated to pursue theological explanations because a large part of the community in which they belong does so. Acting in a contrary manner could generate controversy and questions that the individual may not be willing or able to address. Therefore, it is more comfortable, and even desirable, to follow a belief out of tradition, even without certainty or true conviction, driven by the opinion (pressure) of those close to them or ministers of various religions who argue mystical experiences derived from ritual and creed.

According to Russell (1959), throughout history, some religious philosophers have attempted to argue for the existence of God, even using reason. The most notable arguments are those from the First Cause, Natural Law, and the Plan, all of them predominantly medieval (the hegemonic historical moment of the Christian empire) and which seek to justify or validate the existence of a supreme being.

The position expressed here that *reality is facts* could perfectly be compared to Sartre's existentialism and its consideration of freedom. Facts are what create reality, and behind each one lies the intention and decision of the person who executes it. It is not necessary to wait for goodness and moral norms to come from a higher power if human beings freely and responsibly commit to doing what is good for themselves and their community. Just as love is built rationally and by will, so any norm can be established and respected, aiming for good, if that is truly what one wants and one acts accordingly. But perhaps one does not want it.

Ludwig Feuerbach

Feuerbach (1804–1872) was a German philosopher considered the intellectual father of contemporary atheistic humanism, also known as *anthropological atheism*. His philosophy seeks to redirect the idea of God and other spiritualizations to the reality of physical man, with his feelings and concrete needs. Feuerbach conceives religion as an alienation and *objectification* of human properties and of a supernatural being to whom these are also attributed. It is as if man duplicated himself and contemplated his own essence in the image of God (Feuerbach, 2018).

Feuerbach, considering God a human creation, denies his existence, as well as that of any other god, and thus denies theism. For the German philosopher, "it is not God who created man in his image, but man who created God, projecting his idealized image onto him" (Feuerbach, 2018). Human beings attribute their qualities to God and reflect their desires in him. Thus, by alienating themselves, they give rise to their divinity. His critique is, perhaps, an excuse to propose a philosophical anthropology conceived from the perspective of autonomy.

In contrast to what was stated by the philosopher, and in order to conceive religion as a constitutive mechanism of meaning, Eliade proposes that religion fulfills a cosmogonic and existential function that allows the subject

to emerge from existential chaos through ritual, constituting a symbolic center of meaning because, in his words, "Religious man wishes to live in a sacred world because only there can a real existence be realized" (Eliade, 1998, p. 21).

A key point of the German philosopher's approach is the attribution to God of human aspirations and its best feelings and qualities, "linked to the consciousness of being and existing," as he calls it, and he projects these attributes onto the ideal of God. His thinking coincides with the perspectives of Rand and Russell, as well as with Sartre's considerations, since for these thinkers the idea of God is the human being's aspiration for goodness, for love, for order, and for wisdom. And he explains, "God is everything the heart yearns for. God offers all things, all good things. If you seek love or fidelity, truth or consolation, or constant presence, you find everything in him without limit and without measure" (Feuerbach, 2018).

Existentialism as the Exercise of Freedom

Determinism derived from theism and the moral responsibility of man—freedom—are absolutely incompatible, since such responsibility always ends up being traced back to the creator of the being in question and leads to the belief that we are subject to a divine plan.

Alonzo mentions:

There is no doubt that the doctrine of predestination is set forth in the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, since all the biblical citations speak to us of terms such as "determined counsel," "those who were ordained to eternal life," "prepared beforehand," "which God predestined before the ages," and "to be according to the good pleasure of his will"... These passages suggest to us that even sinful works are foreseen, permitted, and controlled so that they result in the glory of God (Alonzo, 2000, p. 15).

Sartre (2004) states that the human being is above all a project and constitutes himself responsible for what he is. This theory is the only one that gives dignity to man, the only one that does not turn him into an object, like a set of determined reactions. The first step of existentialism is to place on the subject the total responsibility for his existence and that of all others. Because by choosing himself, he is also creating an image of the human being as he considers he should be. And since he is not determined, everything that happens will be the result of his decisions; in this way there are no excuses, "even if man does not choose, he is already choosing," says Sartre (2014).

To understand a little more how the subject is defined through his actions, it should be noted that:

The coward is defined by the act he performs. What people feel obscurely and find horrifying is that the coward we present is guilty of being a coward. What people want is for someone to be born a coward or a hero. If you are born a coward, you are perfectly at peace; there is nothing you can do; you will be a coward your whole life, no matter what you do. If you are born a hero, you will also be perfectly at peace; you will be a hero your whole life. What the existentialist is saying is that the coward becomes a coward, and the hero becomes a hero; there is always a possibility for the coward to no longer be a coward and for the hero to cease being a hero. What is important is total commitment, and this is not a particular case (Sartre, 2014, p. 51).

At all times, there is the possibility of becoming, as well as of ceasing to be. In this sense, existentialism is an optimism, a doctrine of action and possibility.

Freedom as Ethics and Human Development

In a general sense, it can be said that freedom is one of the most transcendent values of the human condition. It allows individuals to grow and develop fully and to function in society with a broad awareness of the reason for existence, enabling them to act, communicate, feel, and discern in order to live happily, in constant interconnection with those around them.

Regarding morality and its relationship to freedom, a personal and social commitment is involved. Acts can be considered appropriate or inappropriate, but, regardless, the individual is solely responsible for those actions.

"Morality arose from human efforts to safeguard some things that are not strictly moral, such as life, happiness, the stability of the community, and all those treasures of the spirit that a disciplined society is capable of producing" (Skutch, 2020, p. 168).

Likewise, according to the Socratic approach, a life that we do not govern rationally is not even, strictly speaking, our life. Each individual is master of his or her life and is, therefore, free when reason imposes its dictates on the will. The Socratic vindication of knowledge can be considered a vindication of freedom. For Socrates, knowledge is a condition of freedom, and ignorance, on the contrary, enslaves, makes the subject dependent, and binds him or her inextricably to something or someone.

Considering that morality deals with human conduct, insofar as it seeks to achieve goodness and freedom, it is the ability to choose without internal or external constraints. However, freedom has two sides: on the one hand, *negative freedom consists of not being subject to constraints, of being freed from them, both those of our most pressing impulses and those imposed on us by our fellow human beings. On the other hand, so-called positive* freedom consists of choosing what is best for each individual; it is a "freedom to" choose the conduct that will provide us with a good life.

One aspect worth highlighting in this section is Sartre's argument regarding morality and commitment, establishing that *man is made*; not everything is made from the beginning; he is made by choosing his morality, and the pressure of circumstances is such that he cannot help but choose one. "We define man only in relation to a commitment" (Sartre, 2014).

When freedom is understood as the capacity and requirement to fill one's life with *a good life,* then one is seeking freedom as an ethic, a positive freedom that drives human beings to seek the good, thus contributing to building a common good.

Emphasizing the distinction between "freedom from" and "freedom to.*" Freedom from* means the absence of obstacles, ties, or restrictions, whether physical or moral. On the other hand, *freedom to* is understood as the ability to achieve an objective, realize a value, or reach a goal. This potential is internal; it resides in the will and is much more valuable than freedom from; it is an axiological freedom (Gutiérrez, 2000).

In any circumstance, it is possible to find at least two options. Even if life is at stake, one can always choose how to act or what decision and attitude to take. When a person realizes that their real possibilities are diminishing, they will always have two options: saying yes or no to the only path being offered. This is the extreme case at the moment of death. Accepting one's own death with dignity is the last opportunity an individual has to express their freedom to do so. Gutiérrez (2000) explains that "when freedom from is reduced to a minimum, freedom to do so always remains." As in the case of Socrates and his attitude upon realizing he was condemned to death.

By attributing one's current state to external forces, the subject surrenders the ability to modify one's reality, at least from a state of mind of freedom and satisfaction, remaining resigned and passive in the face of the situation in which one finds oneself, while evading the burden or anguish that comes with freely deciding and acting accordingly. Sartre (2014) states that "man will be above all that he has projected himself to be. Not what he will want to be." Therefore, involvement and an active attitude are required, not just a collection of good intentions.

The Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955) maintains that "the life that is given to us is not given to us ready-made, but rather we need to make it ourselves, each one of us his own. Life is a matter of doing" (2007, p. 1). Sartre's declaration that man is "condemned to be free" bears great similarity to Ortega y Gasset's postulate on the subject:

Man is free, and… not by chance. He is free because, not possessing a given and perpetual being, he has no choice but to seek it out. And this—what he will be in every immediate or remote future—he must choose and decide for himself. Thus, man is free… by force. He is not free to be free… (Ortega y Gasset, 1965, p. 645).

Human beings are autonomous when they are reasonable and consider what they should do with all the data, elements, and resources at their disposal; they are truly autonomous when they use their moral conscience. By

doing this, it is possible to understand the causal connection between actions and the effects they produce. This awareness of this interdependence leads them to the concept of responsibility: being responsible for what they have generated and assuming the consequences. An individual who is not responsible will never experience themselves as truly free (Chávez, 2008).

The individual faces a plurality of possibilities, and when he chooses one, he realizes that it only has value because it has been chosen. It could not be otherwise; as long as a decision is not executed, it has no value. It is only by acting that the subject can appreciate the value of his decision, after evaluating its consequences, as "good" or "bad." It is clear that freedom is not the responsibility of anyone other than the individual.

Critique of Sartre's radical freedom and the relevance of existential responsibility today

The main criticism of Sartre's contribution regarding freedom as the absolute self-determination of the subject lies in its failure to consider the material, historical, and psychic conditions that influence choices, leading the subject to an idealist abstraction. Consider here the critique developed by Merleau-Ponty, who expounds a more situated phenomenology of existence, considering intersubjectivity and historical conditions. The author considers freedom not as an absolute but as a movement between the given and the possible. "We are free in relation to a situation, but not free from every situation" (Merleau-Ponty, 2005). In this way, freedom can be perceived as a constant negotiation with the possible, incorporating meanings, intentions, habits, language, and history.

For the purposes of this text, it is necessary to highlight Sartre's postulate of freedom as the self-constitution of the subject in the absence of a prior essence. Sartre postulates individual choice, but also the choice of the human species. Faced with realities such as artificial intelligence and climate change, the former as a phenomenon that could tend toward the automation and standardization of "human thought," the latter as an ecological collapse that generates collective and global tensions. Although both phenomena exceed the individual, the subject remains responsible for their existential project, their being-in-the-world, and their co-construction of reality, and it could be considered bad faith or evasive to delegate responsibility for human choices to algorithmic systems or global dynamics.

CONCLUSIONS

The concept of freedom has always been a topic of debate, with its respective arguments for it and objections. It is possible to tend to believe that such a value does not exist, given social restrictions. Even the influence of so-called conditioning or determinism, whether biological or social, has been argued against the real existence of freedom.

It is after thoroughly analyzing the arguments and foundations of freedom from an existentialist perspective that we can understand that this human characteristic is real and present in the world. Through freely chosen actions, human beings construct their reality. While obstacles to the exercise of this freedom may arise, this does not relegate or nullify it, since in every circumstance, it is always possible to choose, at least between two options.

The true importance of freedom lies in its axiological and ontological value, in the constitution of the human being as the true author of his existence, determining his actions based on the values he has previously assimilated and his free choice. Hence the importance of educating the individual in the exercise of his freedom and inherent responsibility, aiming to consolidate mature individuals capable of facing the consequences of their actions and thus being free, since an irresponsible individual is not truly free.

By letting go of the idea of divine plans, human beings can recognize themselves as the author of their reality; they are the ones who freely decide. Neither God nor destiny, but free actions and the consequences that follow. While this situation can generate anxiety in the individual, it also provides an incentive. It's a positive attitude; they can cease to be what they have been or try to become something different. They don't resign themselves and justify themselves; rather, they recognize their power and exercise it.

If humans choose to be governed by the belief in an ideal God who establishes a divine order, a master plan,

moral rules, the meaning of life, or a predetermined destiny, they might feel less compelled to create their own values or to assume or take full responsibility for the consequences of their actions. The freedom to decide and to be the author of one's own existence is delegated or dissolved into a divine will.

When freedom is not used as a means to fulfillment, there is a risk of resorting to a mental mechanism to escape the commitment to human existence, which is self-definition and self-responsibility, preferring the security of a dogma to a heteronomous morality, out of fear of punishment or hope of reward. Thus, adhering to an ideal of God could constitute a way of avoiding a personal ethical construction based on critical reflection and individual commitment; in other words, it would represent an evasion of freedom.

Thinking about freedom requires an ethical and ontological rethinking in which the subject assumes their role as co-author of the world, based on their choices and actions. Let us not consider choice as an abstract affirmation but as a possibility for reinventing meaning in the face of the current dynamics of technological alienation and ecological degradation. Let us not conceive freedom as voluntarism but as an engagement with life, existence, and the world.

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