

Philosophy & Reason 2019 v1.2

IA2 High-level annotated sample response

December 2023

Extended response — analytical essay (25%)

This sample has been compiled by the QCAA to assist and support teachers to match evidence in student responses to the characteristics described in the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG).

Assessment objectives

This assessment instrument is used to determine student achievement in the following objectives:

1. define and use terminology associated with a selected philosophical school of thought in order to demonstrate an understanding of meaning
2. explain concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the philosophical school of thought
3. interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought
4. organise and synthesise ideas and information to understand, engage with and construct arguments supporting positions relating to the philosophical school of thought
5. evaluate claims and arguments inherent in theories, views and ideas relating to the philosophical school of thought
6. create an extended response (analytical essay) that communicates ideas and arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought.

Instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG)

Criterion: Defining, using and explaining

Assessment objectives

1. define and use terminology associated with a selected philosophical school of thought in order to demonstrate an understanding of meaning
2. explain concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the philosophical school of thought

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• astute understanding of meaning demonstrated by employing the terminology of the selected school of thought• consistent and appropriate use of the terminology of the selected philosophical school of thought• detailed descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the selected philosophical school of thought that are correct in all key aspects.	7–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• substantial understanding of meaning demonstrated by employing the terminology of the selected philosophical school of thought• generally appropriate use of terminology of the selected philosophical school of thought• detailed descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the selected school of thought that are correct in most key aspects.	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• basic understanding of meaning demonstrated by employing the terminology of the selected philosophical school of thought• use of the terminology of the selected philosophical school of thought is evident, but with lapses in its appropriate use• descriptions and explanations of concepts and principles of the selected philosophical school of thought are evident, but with some inaccuracies or omissions.	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use of the terminology of the selected philosophical school of thought is evident, but is not sufficient• identifies some concepts and/or principles of the selected philosophical school of thought• significant inaccuracies in descriptions and explanations relating to the selected philosophical school of thought are evident throughout the response.	1–2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Criterion: Interpreting and analysing

Assessment objective

3. interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• detailed and informed interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought• detailed and accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought• determination of relevant and significant relationships within and between ideas, arguments and theories of the philosophical school of thought.	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought• considered deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought• determination of most relevant and significant relationships within and between ideas, arguments and theories of the philosophical school of thought.	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• interpretation of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought• partial deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought• determination of some relationships within and between ideas, arguments and theories of the philosophical school of thought.	2–3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• simplistic interpretation of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought• ineffective deconstruction of arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought• determination of superficial relationships within and between ideas, arguments or theories of the philosophical school of thought.	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Criterion: Organising, synthesising and evaluating

Assessment objectives

4. organise and synthesise ideas and information to understand, engage with and construct arguments supporting positions relating to the philosophical school of thought
5. evaluate claims and arguments inherent in theories, views and ideas relating to the philosophical school of thought

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>coherent and thorough synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought in which all key aspects have been considered and resolved</u> • <u>insightful and justified evaluation of philosophical theories and views relating to the philosophical school of thought using well-chosen criteria</u> • <u>effective, thoroughly justified arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought</u> • <u>all relevant criteria used in evaluation of claims and arguments regarding the selected philosophical school of thought</u> • <u>discerning use of stimulus material is evident.</u> 	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • substantial synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought in which most key aspects have been considered and resolved • justified evaluation of philosophical theories and views relating to the philosophical school of thought using appropriate criteria • clearly structured and justified arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought • most significant criteria used in evaluation of claims and arguments regarding the philosophical school of thought • competent use of stimulus material is evident. 	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partial synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought in which some key aspects have been considered and resolved • evaluation of philosophical theories and views relating to the philosophical school of thought using appropriate criteria • structured arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought • significant criteria overlooked in evaluation of claims and arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought • use of stimulus material is evident but not effective. 	2–3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • superficial synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought • superficial evaluation of philosophical theories and views relating to the philosophical school of thought • unstructured arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought • unclear and/or simplistic criteria chosen for evaluation of claims and arguments relating to the school of thought • stimulus material is not used or its use is irrelevant. 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not satisfy any of the descriptors above. 	0

Criterion: Creating and communicating

Assessment objectives

6. create an extended response (analytical essay) that communicates ideas and arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought.

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>succinct, with ideas and arguments related to the central thesis conveyed logically</u>• <u>genre and recognised referencing conventions are consistently adhered to</u>• <u>minimal errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation and referencing.</u>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• conveys ideas and arguments that are related to the central thesis• genre and recognised referencing conventions are generally adhered to• some errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation and referencing.	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• conveys ideas and/or arguments that are not related to the central thesis• significant errors in genre and/or referencing conventions• frequent errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation impede communication of ideas and arguments.	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Task

Context

You have been exploring how the fundamentals of reason are used to engage with and evaluate ideas associated with existentialism as a philosophical school of thought. Key philosophical concepts such as freedom and authenticity have been considered, as well as philosophical arguments, ideas and information about existential ontology and what it means to be an authentic human being.

In particular, arguments related to gender equality have been considered. These have centred on the claim that women continue to experience economic inequality and various forms of discrimination. As a result, gender equality and the ability of women to experience the kind of authentic freedom proposed by existentialists is restricted.

Task

Using the fundamentals of reason, evaluate the relevance of existentialism (as represented by Nietzsche, Sartre and de Beauvoir) to discussions about gender equality and the freedom of women to live authentically in the Australian context.

Present your response in the form of an analytical essay (1500–2000 words).

To complete this task, you must:

- use terminology relating to existentialism as a philosophical school of thought
- explain concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to existentialism and gender equality
- interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information relating to existentialism
- construct philosophical arguments relating to gender equality and existentialism
- evaluate philosophical theories, views and ideas to justify claims and arguments relating to existentialism, gender equality and the freedom of women to live authentically in the Australian context
- ensure that use of the provided stimulus material is evident in your written response
- adhere to
 - genre conventions of an analytical essay
 - language conventions
 - referencing conventions.

Note:

- 15 hours of the time allocation for Unit 3 has been allocated to teaching, learning and preparing a response in relation to this task.
- While some research may be undertaken, research is not the focus of the Extended response — analytical essay.

Stimulus

Source 1: What is existentialism?

Existentialism is a catch-all term for those philosophers who consider the nature of the human condition as a key philosophical problem and who share the view that this problem is best addressed through *ontology*^{*}.

...

Philosophy should not be thought of *primarily* either as an attempt to investigate and understand the self or the world, or as a special occupation that concerns only a few. Rather, philosophy must be thought of as fully integrated within life.

...

Freedom...is in part defined by the isolation of my decisions from any determination by a deity, or by previously existent values or knowledge. Many existentialists identified the 19th and 20th centuries as experiencing a crisis of values. This might be traced back to familiar reasons such as an increasingly secular society, or the rise of scientific or philosophical movements that questioned traditional accounts of value (for example Marxism or Darwinism), or the shattering experience of two world wars and the phenomenon of mass genocide. It is important to note, however, that for existentialism these historical conditions do not create the problem of anguish in the face of freedom, but merely cast it into higher relief. Likewise, freedom entails something like responsibility, for myself and for my actions. Given that my situation is one of being on its own — recognised in anxiety — then both my freedom and my responsibility are absolute. [I]solation...means that there is nothing else that acts through me, or that shoulders my responsibility. Likewise, unless human existence is to be understood as arbitrarily changing moment to moment, this freedom and responsibility must stretch across time. Thus, when I exist as an authentically free being, I assume responsibility for my whole life, for a 'project' or a 'commitment'. We should note here that many of the existentialists take on a broadly Kantian notion of freedom: freedom as *autonomy*. This means that freedom, rather than being randomness or arbitrariness, consists in the binding of oneself to a law, but a law that is given by the self in recognition of its responsibilities.

* *Ontology*: the study of the type of things that exist and what this means, including the type of thing human beings are, i.e. soul united to body; rational animal; free; determined; and so on.

From: Burnham, D and Papandreouopoulos, G 2017, 'Existentialism', *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, www.iep.utm.edu/existent. Used with permission.

Source 2: Existential authenticity

...the norm of authenticity refers to a kind of 'transparency' with regard to my situation, a recognition that I am a being who *can be* responsible for who I am. In choosing in light of this norm I can be said to recover myself from alienation, from my absorption in the anonymous 'one-self' that characterizes me in my everyday engagement in the world. Authenticity thus indicates a certain kind of integrity — not that of a pre-given whole, an identity waiting to be discovered, but that of a project to which I can either commit myself (and thus 'become' what it entails) or else simply occupy for a time, inauthentically drifting in and out of various affairs. Some writers have taken this notion a step further, arguing that the measure of an authentic life lies in the integrity of a *narrative*, that to be a self is to constitute a story in which a kind of wholeness prevails, to be the author of oneself as a unique individual (Nehamas 1998; Ricoeur 1992). In contrast, the inauthentic life would be one without such integrity, one in which I allow my life-story to be dictated by the world.

...

Authenticity defines a condition on self-making: do I succeed in making *myself*, or will who I am merely be a function of the roles I find myself in? Thus to be authentic can also be thought as a way of being autonomous. In choosing 'resolutely' — that is, in committing myself to a certain course of action, a certain way of being in the world — I have given myself the rule that belongs to the role I come to adopt. The inauthentic person, in contrast, merely *occupies* such a role, and may do so 'irresolutely', without commitment. Being a father authentically does not necessarily make me a better father, but what it *means* to be a father has become explicitly *my* concern. It is here that existentialism locates the singularity of existence and identifies what is irreducible in the first-person stance. At the same time, authenticity does not hold out some specific way of life as a norm; that is, it does not distinguish between the projects that I might choose. Instead, it governs the manner in which I am engaged in such projects —either as 'my own' or as 'what one does', transparently or opaquely.

Thus existentialism's focus on authenticity leads to a distinctive stance toward ethics and value-theory generally. The possibility of authenticity is a mark of my *freedom*, and it is through freedom that existentialism approaches questions of value, leading to many of its most recognizable doctrines.

From: Crowell, S 2017, 'Existentialism', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Winter 2017 Edition), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/existentialism>. Used with permission.

Gender Equality

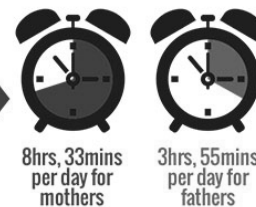


In 2009-2010, average superannuation payouts for women were **just over half (57%)** those of men.



Australian women account for:
▶ **92%** of primary carers for children with disabilities
▶ **70%** of primary carers for parents
▶ **52%** of primary carers for partners

Mothers spend more than twice as many hours each week looking after children compared to fathers



Domestic and family violence is the leading preventable cause of death, disability and illness in women aged 15 to 44 yrs.

© Australian Human Rights Commission 2018

From: Australian Human Rights Commission 2014, 'Gender Equality', 2014 *Face the Facts*, www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/FTFGender-large.jpg. Used with permission.

Source 4: Various extracts from Nietzsche's writings on master morality, freedom and women

- a. The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. 'Whither is God?', He cried; 'I will tell you. *We have killed him* — you and I. All of us are his murderers...Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever is born after us — for this sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto'.

From: Nietzsche, F 1882, *The Joyful Wisdom*, trans. T. Common, Book III, Section 125. (Public Domain in Australia)

- b. Every elevation of the type 'man' has been the work of an aristocratic society — a society believing in gradations of rank and differences of worth among human beings, and requiring slavery in some form. Let us acknowledge how every higher civilization has originated! Men with a natural nature, barbarians in every terrible sense of the word, still in possession of unbroken strength of will and desire for power, threw themselves upon weaker, more moral, more peaceful races. The noble caste was always the barbarian caste: their superiority did not consist first of all in their physical, but in their psychological power — they were more complete men (which implies 'more complete beasts').

From: Nietzsche, F 1886, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. H. Zimmern 1909, Section 257. (Public domain in Australia)

- c. A virtue must be *our own* invention, *our* most necessary self-expression and self-defense: any other kind of virtue is merely a danger. Whatever is not a condition of our life harms it: a virtue that is prompted solely by a feeling of respect for the concept of 'virtue' as Kant would have it, is harmful...The fundamental laws of self-preservation and growth demand the opposite — that everyone invent *his own* virtue, *his own* categorical imperative...Let us not underestimate this: *we ourselves*, we free spirits, are nothing less than a 'revaluation of all values'.

From: Nietzsche, F 1888, *The Anti-Christ*, trans. H.L. Mencken, Sections 11 and 13. (Public Domain in Australia)

- d. Active men are usually lacking in higher activity — I mean individual activity. They are active as officials, businessmen, scholars, that is, as generic beings, but not as quite particular, single and unique men...Today as always, men fall into two groups: slaves and free men. Whoever does not have two-thirds of his day for himself, is a slave, whatever he may be: a statesman, a businessman, an official, or a scholar.

From: Nietzsche, F 1878, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. H. Zimmern, Section 5 Part 283. (Public domain in Australia)

Can women be at all just, when they are so accustomed to love and to be immediately biased for or against? For that reason they are also less interested in things and more in individuals...Thus there arises a danger, by no means small, in entrusting politics and certain portions of science to them (history, for instance).

From: Nietzsche, F 1878, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. H. Zimmern, Section 7 Part 416. (Public domain in Australia)

In the three or four civilised countries of Europe, it is possible, by several centuries of education, to make out of women anything we like,— even men, not in a sexual sense, of course, but in every other. Under such influences they will acquire all the masculine virtues and forces, at the same time, of course, they must also have taken all the masculine weaknesses and vices into the bargain ...But how shall we endure the intermediate state thereby induced, which may even last two or three centuries, during which feminine follies and injustices, woman's original birthday endowment, will still maintain the ascendancy over all that has been otherwise gained and acquired?

From: Nietzsche, F 1878, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. H. Zimmern, Section 7 Part 425. (Public domain in Australia)

Stimulus

Source 5: Sartre's justification for human freedom and responsibility

This source has been redacted due to copyright restrictions.

Sartre's philosophical arguments on human freedom and responsibility may be accessed from:

Sartre, JP 1957, *Existentialism and Human Emotions*, trans. H Barnes, Citadel Press, New York, pp. 12–16.

Stimulus

Source 6: de Beauvoir on the conditions that constrain the freedom of women

This source has been redacted due to copyright restrictions.

de Beauvoir's philosophical arguments on the conditions that constrain the freedom of women can be accessed from:

de Beauvoir, S 1949, *The Second Sex*, trans. C Borde and S Malovany-Chevallier, Vintage Books, New York, 2011, https://ia600307.us.archive.org/13/items/1949SimoneDeBeauvoirTheSecondSex/1949_simone-de-beauvoir-the-second-sex.pdf, pp. 29, 37, 816, 860.

Source 7: Comments on Beauvoir and situated freedom

Beauvoir would have appreciated the fact that her current philosophical status reflects our changed understanding of the domain of philosophy and the changed situation of women, for it confirms her idea of situated freedom—that our capacity for agency and meaning-making, that whether or not we are identified as agents and meaning-makers, is constrained, though never determined, by our situation. She would also have appreciated the fact that while her works were instrumental in effecting these changes, their lasting effect is a tribute to the ways that others have taken up her philosophical and feminist legacies; for one of her crucial contributions to our ethical and political vocabularies is the concept of the appeal—that the success of our projects depends on the extent to which they are adopted by others.

From: Bergoffen, D 2018, 'Simone de Beauvoir', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2018 Edition), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/beauvoir>. Used with permission.

Sample response

Criterion	Allocated marks	Marks awarded
Defining, using and explaining Assessment objectives 1, 2	8	8
Interpreting and analysing Assessment objective 3	7	7
Organising, synthesising and evaluating Assessment objectives 4, 5	7	7
Creating and communicating Assessment objective 6	3	3
Total	25	25

The annotations show the match to the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG) performance-level descriptors.

<p>Defining, using and explaining [7–8] consistent and appropriate use of the terminology of the selected philosophical school of thought</p>	<p>Existentialism, a key philosophical movement of the early 20th Century, is deeply concerned with human freedom. Existential thinkers, such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir examined this concern against the backdrop of a declining metaphysical justification for a Judeo-Christian God (Burnham & Papandreopoloulos, 2017). While these philosophers provide some grounds for a theoretically coherent account of human freedom and authenticity, it is only de Beauvoir who fully engages with problems associated with human autonomy arising from power disparities. de Beauvoir does this by introducing the idea of 'situated freedom' (Bergoffen, 2014). Overall, I find that none of the philosophers are able to provide a sound or strong account of how, precisely, an existential approach to gender disparity could achieve authentic freedom for contemporary Australian women. Hence, existentialism, as exemplified by the work of three of its key practitioners, does not provide a fully well-argued account of authentic freedom.</p>
<p>Interpreting and analysing [6–7] determination of relevant and significant relationships within and between ideas, arguments and theories of the philosophical school of thought</p>	<p>Nietzsche developed an idiosyncratic theory of human authenticity and freedom that posited the existence of a class of people who, in the absence of God, would be able to overcome the limitations of human existence. They would achieve this by creating an entirely new morality premised on the will to power, the instinctual motivating force in all animate beings (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 181; 1990, p. 92; 1976, p. 579). With regard to the equal capacity for women to experience authentic freedom, Nietzsche is problematic in two ways. First, he does not provide specific conditions under which a person can experience freedom. Second, he posits an essentialist characterisation of women that circumscribes the ability to qualify for authentic freedom.</p>
<p>Defining, using and explaining [7–8] astute understanding of meaning demonstrated by employing the terminology of the selected philosophical school of thought</p>	<p>Nietzsche's argument for freedom through dominance would be as follows:</p>
<p>detailed descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the selected philosophical school of thought that are correct in all key aspects</p>	<p>1. If there are intrinsic intellectual differences between those who are stronger and those who are weaker, then it is pre-determined that stronger individuals will dominate weaker, subservient individuals (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 92; 2004, p. 171)</p>

Interpreting and analysing [6–7]

detailed and informed interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought

detailed and accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought

determination of relevant and significant relationships within and between ideas, arguments and theories of the philosophical school of thought

Organising, synthesising and evaluating [6–7]

all relevant criteria used in evaluation of claims and arguments regarding the selected philosophical school of thought

Interpreting and analysing [6–7]

detailed and informed interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought

Organising, synthesising and evaluating [6–7]

insightful and justified evaluation of philosophical theories and views relating to the philosophical school of thought using well-chosen criteria

effective, thoroughly justified arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought

2. There are intrinsic intellectual differences between those who are stronger and those who are weaker (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 171; 1990, p. 92; 1976, p. 580)

C1. It is pre-determined that stronger individuals will dominate weaker, subservient individuals.

3. One has the freedom to authentically create their own values if and only if one is a dominant individual (Nietzsche, 1976, p. 577-578)

4. If one is a dominant individual, then one is not a subservient individual (by C1; also Nietzsche, 2004, p. 171).

∴ If one is a subservient individual, then one does not have the freedom to authentically create his or her own values.

Further, Nietzsche's argument for female autonomy would be as follows:

1. If one is a woman, then one is naturally subservient to one's feelings. (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 201)

2. If one is naturally subservient to one's feelings, then one is a subservient individual (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 201).

3. If one is a subservient individual, then one will not have the freedom to authentically create his or her values (by the conclusion of the first argument).

∴ If one is a woman, then one will not have the freedom to authentically create her values.

These arguments are valid; thus we turn our attention to the truth of his premises to determine whether the argument is sound.

It is clear that for Nietzsche, to be authentically free is defined as the ability to create one's values apart from the norms set up by society. The first argument sets up Nietzsche's division of men into the stronger and the weaker (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 171; 1990, p. 92; 1976, p. 579). The stronger are free men; the weaker are slaves lacking authentic freedom. This conclusion is needed to establish a premise in the latter argument, which specifically references women.

The second argument reconstructs Nietzsche's argument against the possibility of women experiencing authentic freedom. Firstly, by virtue of the conclusion of the first argument, a slave is subservient and cannot be authentically free. By Nietzsche's premises in the second argument, women are in a position of slavery because they are subject to their emotional responses rather than reason.

The first problem with Nietzsche's position is that he does not establish any clear, necessary and sufficient conditions for freedom and subservience other than, in *Human, All Too Human*, where he stipulates that a free man has more time to himself (2004, p. 171). The majority of his claims about free men are both stipulative and rhetorical, lacking substantive evidence, for instance, when he states: 'Let us acknowledge how every higher civilization has originated! Men with a natural nature, barbarians in every terrible sense of the word, still in possession of unbroken strength of will

all relevant criteria used in evaluation of claims and arguments regarding the selected philosophical school of thought

Defining, using and explaining [7–8]

consistent and appropriate use of the terminology of the selected philosophical school of thought

detailed descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the selected philosophical school of thought that are correct in all key aspects

Interpreting and analysing [6–7]

detailed and accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought

detailed and informed interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought

Organising, synthesising and evaluating [6–7]

all relevant criteria used in evaluation of claims and arguments regarding the selected philosophical school of thought

coherent and thorough synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought in which all key aspects have been considered and resolved

insightful and justified evaluation of philosophical theories and views

and desire for power...” (Nietzsche, 1976, p. 579-580). The second problem is Nietzsche’s categorial position on women. Based on the stipulation that women are more emotional than rational, he posits that they currently do not possess “male virtues and strengths” (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 201). As such, women, for Nietzsche, do not even exist on the same level of the division of people into ‘free men’ and ‘slaves’. Given that Nietzsche’s essentialist claim – that there are essential differences in female intelligence and the capacity to reason – has little to no merit in contemporary scientific research (Chamorro-Premuzic, Stumm & Furnham, 2011), the argument fails in terms of both deductive soundness and inductive strength.

Sartre provides a parsimonious account of the possibility of authentic human freedom in the absence of a deity by drawing on the philosophical distinction between essence and existence. However, he fails to engage with impediments to freedom that concern arguments over positive and negative liberty.

Sartre’s argument for human freedom would be as follows:

1. If God does not exist, then humans are not given essential qualities by a God
2. If humans are not given essential qualities by a God, then they are free to escape preconceived notions of what it means to be human
3. If humans are free to escape preconceived notions of what it means to be human, then they are capable of authentic freedom to create themselves
4. If humans are not given essential qualities by a God, then they are capable of authentic freedoms to create themselves (by 1 and 2)
5. God does not exist

∴ All humans are capable of authentic freedom to create themselves.

(Sartre, 1957, pp. 12-16)

Given that this argument is formally valid, we must decide whether the premises are capable of being found certain. Whilst premise 2 could be said to be an analytical truth, based on the definitions of God, essence and existence, premise 3 is a claim that can be disproved by a plausible counter-example.

The major problem with premise 3 involves the absence of a discussion of necessary and sufficient conditions associated with the capacity of humans to be authentically free. That there is no theistically preconceived notion of what it means to be essentially human does not mean that other factors will preclude a human being from developing an authentic approach to life. Impacts on negative liberty – the absence of obstacles to human action, whether physical, emotional or psychological – can come from a range of domains (Carter, 2016). For example, education, family dynamics and other forms of socialisation could plausibly have an impact on the way a person thinks of her or himself ontologically. This counter-example to premise 3

relating to the philosophical school of thought using well-chosen criteria

discerning use of stimulus material is evident

Defining, using and explaining [7–8]

consistent and appropriate use of the terminology of the selected philosophical school of thought

detailed descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the selected philosophical school of thought that are correct in all key aspects

Interpreting and analysing [6–7]

detailed and informed interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought

detailed and accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought

determination of relevant and significant relationships within and between ideas, arguments and theories of the philosophical school of thought

Organising synthesising and evaluating [6–7]

discerning use of stimulus is evident

coherent and thorough synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought in which all key aspects have been considered and resolved

substantially weakens Sartre's argument by breaking the inferential chain leading to the conclusion.

de Beauvoir engages most fully with the problem of human autonomy that arises from power disparities in society, with what has been called her notion of 'situated freedom' (Bergoffen, 2014). That is, while putting forward the idea that human beings have the capacity and responsibility for creating themselves by transcending the facts of any particular existence (de Beauvoir, 2011, p. 37), there are still major social constraints that structure the opportunities of women (de Beauvoir, 2011, p. 29, 816).

de Beauvoir's argument for situated freedom would be as follows:

1. If economic and social factors characterise women as Other, transcendence that leads to authentic freedom for women is circumscribed (de Beauvoir, 2011, pp. 29, 37).
2. Economic and social factors do characterise women as Other (de Beauvoir, 2011, p. 29).

∴ Transcendence that leads to the possibility of authentic freedom for women is circumscribed.

In response, de Beauvoir's argument for autonomy through revolt can be reconstructed in the following way:

1. If women revolt against the dominant caste, women will attain greater economic and social equality (de Beauvoir, 2011, p. 860).
2. If women attain greater economic and social equality, women will attain the possibility of autonomy leading to authentic freedom (de Beauvoir, 2011, p. 29, 37).

∴ If women revolt against the dominant caste, women will attain the possibility of autonomy leading to authentic freedom.

Given that both arguments are formally valid, we must consider whether or not the premises can be taken as certain. Insofar as the premises are drawn from historical, scientific and psychological data, it is not possible for them to attain a level of analytic certainty. However, with regard to the argument for situated freedom, there is consistent data that shows social and historical factors asymmetrically impact outcomes according to gender in contemporary Australia (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2014), lending the premises of this argument substantial plausibility.

In contrast, with regards to the argument for autonomy through revolt, whilst there are numerous historical examples that show revolt leading to the emancipation of particular groups, the type of revolt that would effectively restructure the economic and social constraints de Beauvoir is concerned with is left unclear. It is also unclear whether revolt, in and of itself, is a necessary and sufficient condition in all instances where greater autonomy was achieved by groups experiencing similar levels of disempowerment. Thus, the plausibility of the premises of the argument for autonomy through revolt are qualitatively weaker than the argument for situated freedom.

Existentialism provides provocative positions on the nature of human freedom in response to the declining faith in a Judeo-Christian God.

insightful and justified evaluation of philosophical theories and views relating to the philosophical school of thought using well-chosen criteria

effective, thoroughly justified arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought

Creating and communicating [3]

Throughout:

succinct, with ideas and arguments related to the central thesis conveyed logically

genre and recognised referencing conventions are consistently adhered to

minimal errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation and referencing

However, as has been shown, the mere absence of God is not sufficient to provide human beings with the ability to experience authentic freedom. Whilst Nietzsche and de Beauvoir engage with potential reasons why authentic freedom is more difficult to achieve for a particular group in society, Nietzsche's characterisation of the problem is beset by contradiction and a lack of justifiable conditions. Sartre, whilst providing a valid and compelling argument about the nature of human ontology, does not appear to consider socio-historical power disparity an impediment to the experience of authentic human freedom and, thus, does not provide us with a particularly useful contemporary perspective on how to address this issue. de Beauvoir's first argument is nuanced, engaging with impediments to negative liberty caused by the social and historical power disparity. However, she ultimately fails to provide a strong argument for the amelioration of this lack of opportunity for authentic freedom. As such, this essay finds that these major thinkers of the school of existentialism lack a fundamental capacity to engage fully with the problems of authentic freedom created by gender inequality in contemporary society.

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