

# THE POSSIBILITY OF AUTHENTIC AND HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS IN SARTRÉ'S PHILOSOPHIES

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46

**Abstract:** Dalam tataran relasi, filsafat Satre, pada umumnya dan tidak jarang, hanya memperlihatkan gambaran tentang konflik dan ketidakotentikan. Pemikiran ini tak terelakan bertentangan dengan pendapat umum dan sejumlah filsuf, khususnya dengan pemikiran Aristoteles dan Vernon. Keduanya menegaskan bahwa persahabatan yang sejati adalah hal mutlak bagi kehidupan, dan persahabatan yang ideal adalah hal yang tidak mungkin dalam kehidupan ini. Penyelidikan yang lebih holistik pada karya Satre memperlihatkan bahwa karakter yang penuh konflik dan ketidakotentikan bukanlah sesuatu yang tetap dan satu-satunya ciri filosofisnya. Melalui konsep-konsepnya tentang perubahan radikal, kemurahan hati dan kehendak bagi kebebasan yang lain diperoleh indikasi tentang kemungkinan relasi yang tanpa konflik dan otentik. Melalui kajian tentang novel dan dramanya juga diperlihatkan kecenderungan dalam aras ini. Perubahan dari konsep yang bernuansa konflik dan tak otentik ke yang non-konflik dan otentik memberikan gambaran yang cukup kuat bahwa konsep Satre tentang relasi persahabatan bahkan lebih otentik dari konsep persahabatan Aristoteles.

**Keywords:** relationship• authenticity• inauthenticity• bad faith• good faith• conflict• facticity•





## Introduction

Harmony and conflict, authentic and inauthentic behaviours occur in our relations with others. They are characteristic of the instability of all human relationships. How people describe human relationships may be biased, either in positive or negative ways. Sometimes, people describe human relationships in an extreme form, as either very positive or very negative. In this essay, I will concentrate on one apparently extreme position which states that human relationships are essentially conflictual and inauthentic.

Sartre, a French existentialist philosopher (1905-1980), is notorious for his controversial opinions about human relationships, summed up in such phrases, "hell is other people" (Sartre, 1989: p.190), "the other is my original fall" or conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others" (Sartre, 2003: pp, 286 & 364). These controversial opinions present a picture that Sartre lacks positive notions of human relationships. Although it is not as well-known as his controversial opinions, in his later writing, Sartre developed a new understanding of relationships which is more positive.

Through a study of Sartre's understanding of human relationships and the works of particular scholars on Sartre, I come to the conclusion that although, from the point of view of *Being and Nothingness*, inter-subjective relationships always end in conflict and fall into inauthenticity, Sartre steadily started discussing the possibility of radical conversion, generosity, and the will of the freedom of others and building them into his novels and plays, which open up possibilities and provide a ground for authentic and harmonious inter-subjective relationships. Therefore, authenticity and harmony are not impossible in Sartre's ideas of relations with others. The power of these ideas is quite significant and it seems that Sartre's concept of relationships permits more authenticity than Aristotle's.

The aim of this essay is to examine to what extent his account of relationships really ignores the reality of positive relationships such as friendship or love in human life, and to what extent his account of authentic relationships is sufficient. Here, I will compare Sartre's concepts with Aristotle's friendship. By doing this, I aim also to present a content to Sartre's philosophy and show a developing process in his ideas about relations with others. This essay will be divided in five main parts. After this introduction, I will elucidate, in the second part, Sartre's ontological exposition of relations with others and how this exposition presents limitations for human beings to build a genuine relationship with others. I

will start this part with Sartre's notion of the existence of others and then concrete relations with others. After that, I will show two fundamental barriers which stand in the way of the formulation of equal human relationships. The main point here is that human relationships could always be developed, but human beings are caught up in inauthenticity or self-deception. To close this part, I will discuss the idea that *hell is other people*, from Sartre's play *No Exit* to demonstrate how Sartre relentlessly works to develop his notion of conflict as the inevitable reality of human relationships.


Sartre's account of relations with others has hitherto been pessimistic and conflictual. By contrast, common sense and philosophical traditions reveal that positive human relationships are possible. Aristotle, for instance, gave a very influential description of friendship. A cogent argument about friendship from Aristotle will be employed in the third part in order to give an account of what authentic relationship might be. To be fair to the idea of friendship, I will discuss also the ambiguity of friendship. By elucidating these concepts, I aim at evaluating to what extent Sartre's account of conflict and inauthenticity provides an adequate account of human relationships.

In the fourth part, I will discuss the possibility of authentic and harmonious relationships in Sartre's philosophy. This part will begin by discussing three indications of positive relationships: radical conversion, generosity and the will to the others' freedom. Then I will concentrate on Sartre's effort to inject a new kind of relationship into his novels and plays.

Finally, I will give my critical analysis of his account of the difficulty of authentic relationships and of the possibility of it. I will evaluate his positive account of relationships in order to have an appropriate and representative conclusion of his account of authentic and non-conflict relationship.

### **Unbridgeable Relationships with Others**

Here I will discuss the impossibility of relations with others in Sartre's philosophy. Particularly, I will concentrate on two works of Sartre: *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre, 2003) and the application of the unbridgeable relationship with others in *No Exit* (Sartre, 1989). To elucidate this idea, I will divide this part into three main sections: an exposition of Sartre's account of our being for others and of relations with others; two



fundamental constraints on relationships with others; and a discussion of one issue which Sartre develops in his play *No Exit*.

### ***Sartre's Accounts of Relations with Others***

#### *The existence of others*

Sartre introduces the idea of *the existence of the others* by elucidating the feeling of shame. Shame has two structures, namely reflection and recognition. The first structure of shame is recognition. Shame is the recognition of being ashamed as the self appears to others, i.e., I am ashamed as the other watches me. Therefore, it is accessible to reflection, that is, I notice, myself, that I am ashamed of what I am [Sartre, 2003: III/1/1, pp.245-246].

From these structures Sartre wants to affirm that the other is inseparable from my consciousness of myself as an object in the world. I need the other in order to realize fully all the structures of my being. To develop this notion, Sartre starts with the question of the existence of the other and the fundamental relationship between the other and me. Sartre answers this question through elucidating the weaknesses of realists, idealists and of three philosophers Husserl, Hegel and Heidegger. According to Sartre, realists use analogy to prove the consciousness of others. Idealists do not deal with concrete individuals but universal human beings. Then, the three philosophers still make the relation between the self and the other operate on the level of knowledge. Actually, the relation should be the relation between two concrete beings in concrete experiences.

Sartre, then, affirms that we cannot abstractly prove the existence of the other. We just affirm that the existence of the other touches my awareness when I am being observed by the other. What it is needed is not the knowledge of others, but concrete experience of them, from which I cannot doubt of the existence of others [Sartre, 2003: III/ 1/III, p. 274]. The other must be demonstrated as a concrete being which involves my being, but the other, who has an internal relation with me, is not me. In other words, "the very best one can do in proving that I have a certain relation with others is to say what it is like being set down among them; how it seems , that is, from behind my eyes" (Warnock, 1965: p.72). This means to describe the other from my actual experience with the concrete person through experiences such as shame and the look, which express the internal relation.


From that point Sartre describes his concept of the other through "the look". At the first time, the other may be nothing more than an object, such as a tree, an animal, or a stone. Yet, I become aware that the other is a person who can organize material objects according to his purpose and can look at me. These are the clues to the existence of another subject. The other becomes a threat to my hegemony.

Then, Sartre paves the way for the look of the other. He describes the famous incident of the keyhole: "moved by jealousy, curiosity, or vice I have just glued my ear to the door and looked through a keyhole... All of a sudden I hear footsteps in the hall. Someone is looking at me [Sartre, 2003: III/I/IV, pp. 283-284]". His looking collapses myself and turns me into an object. I find myself, the self which the other refers to me. Thus, the foundation of me is not inside but outside of myself. The other is the master of my situation and I am enslaved. At this moment, the self is being defined as "a being seen by the other" and the other as "the one who looks at me". The self is a pure object and the other is a pure subject. It is because in looking, the self could not look back at the other, and the self knows neither his self nor the other. The other has an infinite freedom which kills my possibilities.

Sometimes, the other does not actually exist. Probably it is just a cat that is walking by or the rustling of branches. However, they represent the eye, the support for the look. It does not matter that the other is not present or that it is just an object without eyes, "I am vulnerable, ... I have a body which can be hurt, ... I occupy a place and ... I can not in any case escape from the space in which I am without defense [Sartre, 2003: III/1/IV, pp. 303-304]".

Through the look, the other becomes the master of my situation. The other can transcend me, alienate me and put me in time and space. He alienates my possibilities and removes objects that surround me and makes me one of the objects. My possibility is transcended by his freedom. Although, my possibility still belongs to me, the other could see the possibility which appears in my deeds. Furthermore, by looking, the other organizes things around him and absorbs me as a part of the objects surrounding him. By looking, the other simultaneously puts me in time. At the same time, the other forces me to exist with him. In fact, I want to be solitary, to face the objects around me.

Being for others makes me into an object. It is experienced in the three forms of affection, namely fear, shame and pride. "Shame, fear, pride



are my original reactions; they are only various ways by which I recognize the other as a subject beyond my reach, and they include within them a comprehension of my selfness which can and must serve as my motivation for constituting the other as an object" [Sartre, 2003: III/1/IV, p. 315]. Fear puts me in the world and ruins my end to be for-it-self. Yet, I can escape from fear by making myself as not for the other. I overcome them by my possibility to surpass them. Shame, which is the state of being the object for others, can be overcome by looking at him again. However, in the face of God, the absolute subject, my existence is as an object. By intelligence and beauty, a being gets its pride. Pride might put me as an object of the admiration of others.

By looking at me, the other becomes a concrete subject. He is the centre but I try to cease his hegemony by objectifying him. Yet, "one look on the part of the other is sufficient to make all these schemes collapse and to make me experience once more the transfiguration of the other"(Sartre, 2003: p. 320). Only death can stop this situation.

All of these examples aim to explain that we cannot abstractly prove the existence of the other. The other presents himself as a concrete experience which comes to my consciousness by his looking. The look creates a concrete relationship between the other and me. The other is not the object of knowledge but the concrete being which is factually experienced. The relation between the self and the other happens internally where it comes from the consciousness of the experience of the look. Through it, the self obtains its being as consciousness before the other while the other is a being which is not me.

#### *Concrete Relationships with Others*

There are two modes of concrete relationship with others. The first is an attempt to assimilate the freedom of the other, while at the same time preserving the freedom of the other and our otherness. This relation consists of love, language and masochism. The second is to objectify and to remove the other's freedom. This relation consists of indifference, sexual desire, hate and sadism. According to Sartre, these relationships will end up in failure because it is impossible to preserve or to objectify the freedom of the other.



### Love, Language and Masochism

For Sartre, love, language and masochism aim to let the other conquer me and enjoys my objectivity. After that I can capture the freedom of the other. The first is *love*. To love is to treat the beloved both as, and not as, a thing or to overcome the freedom of the beloved in order to cure the lover's freedom, i.e., the lover tries to get back his freedom and at the same time to respect the freedom of the beloved. The beloved does the same thing. To do this, the lover should appear as an object which attracts the beloved so he could give his freedom to the lover. At the same time, the beloved manages the same thing to be the centre of seduction. The lover knows that the beloved could use the look to subordinate him, but he tries to become the only thing absorbing the beloved. When they unify, there are double negations. The look of one of them separates the relation and then, the love disappears. The beloved has a look to objectify and never wants to be dependent. But, the lover still wants to influence the beloved in many ways.


That action supposes *language*. It is used to gain advantages over the other. One sort of language is seduction. It succeeds when the lover could affect the beloved to unify with him. Once again, the look of one always destroys this effort and returns to the original attitudes to objectify the other.

The failure of that ways leads to *masochism*. Masochism, which is the way to let the other inflict pain on the self, is the way to be an absolute object in the face of the absolute subject. It also fails because masochists are aware of their own subjectivities, as persons who are doing this.

### Indifference, Sexual Desire, Sadism and Hate

All of these are the ways to control and to subordinate the freedom of the other as an object. *Indifference* is not the way to capture the freedom of others directly. It merely ignores the other and chooses to be a solipsist. I concentrate on myself as a subject. However, in forgetting the other, and facing perpetually my own freedom, it becomes a permanent duty for me to carry this load alone.

*Sexual desire* originally comes from the existence of the for-itself for others. Desire refers to external objects. It is found in the body of their desired objects. It is also the way to establish subjectivity. A body plays the central role as the target of sexual desire. Desirer and desired try to reduce the for-itself to the body. 'Through caress' one attempts to make, treat,



desire the other as the flesh for both. One seizes the other's freedom and body. The motive of the desire is to subjugate one's own self to the degree of the body in order to make the other does the same thing for him or her. It is, nevertheless, a failure because at the peak of desiring, they do not care for their partner. Each turns to the property of themselves which does not have a conscious contact to each other. There is no desire as a relation.

The aim of *sadism* is to manipulate the other not only as the other-as object but as a pure incarnated transcendence (Sartre, 1943: III/3/II, p. 421). To fulfill this purpose, sadists use violent ways to control and to manipulate their victims so that their pain leaves them as a body which has no freedom. It will fail because sadists have never entirely controlled the freedom of the other. The victim's glance to the sadists indicates the endless freedom of him and the beginning of the alienation of the sadists.


*Hatred* is the way to escape from the presence of the other in order to prevent once and forever all-being-object and all forms of alienation (Desan, 1960: p. 90). Hatred could come from a moment of kindness. In this moment, the other appears as a free person doing a good thing which I can not ignore. Hatred is an activity which points to all others. The basic will behind hatred is to annihilate the existence of the other through the other. My project of suppressing him is a project of suppressing others in general (Sartre, 2003: III/3/II, p. 434). Their existence enslaves me. It is, however, unsuccessful. The existence of the other could not disappear by hating, and my being is still the perpetual being for others.

## ***Two Fundamental Constraints of Relationships with Others***

### *Relationships as Conflict*

Sartre, in the beginning of the description of *concrete relations with others* states "Everything which may be said of me in my relations with other applies to himself as well. While I attempt to free myself from the hold of the other, the other is trying to free himself from mine, while I seek to enslave the other, the other seeks to enslave me. We are by no means dealing with unilateral relations with an object-in-itself, but with reciprocal and moving relations. Concrete relations with others must be envisaged within the perspective of conflict. Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others (Sartre, 1943: III/3/I, p. 386)."

The grounds of conflict derive from the state of human beings as subjects. As subjects, human beings are conscious beings. Conscious beings






are not things but nothingness. We are both body and consciousness. Sartre's formulation of this *is that I am what am not and I am not what I am*. It means I am not a definitive body but a free being. As a free being, I have to negate everything in order to escape myself from every definitive modification. Here, I am the master of myself and the situation around me. However, from the look, it appears that the other is also a subject. The appearance of the other sets up a new structure of being-for-the-other. Then, the relation turns from a subject and an object to a subject and a subject. Yet, basically, the nature of the for-itself is still to objectify everything. As a subject I try to set up the other as an object. Yet, the other's look is sufficient to make all these schemes collapse. That is the beginning of conflict.

The existence of the other through his look reveals to me that the foundation of my being is not in me but in the other. They are the master of the situation where I could be enslaved. Since the other is the free being, I have no security. The other confers value upon me and removes my being (Sartre, 1943: III/3/I, p. 388). He could turn me into an object and place me among objects which I used to organize around myself. Thus the other significantly haunts and threatens my subjectivity. The existence of the other is a perpetual obstacle to my freedom and a cause of my danger. In response to it, I try to recover my being. Consequently, a perpetual conflict is unavoidable.

Sartre states that concrete relations with others should be understood within this framework (Sartre, 1943: III/3/1, p. 386). *Love, Language and masochism*, on the one hand, seems to be a compromised way both to interact with others and to respect the freedom of others. Yet, actually these are modes of bad faith or self-deception. The aim of these concrete relationships with others is to capture the freedom of the other. Since the other is a free being, conflict is unavoidable. *Indifference, sexual desire, sadism and hatred*, on the other hand, lead directly to conflict. They are the efforts to remove perpetually and totally the existence of the other. I try to possess the other as an object in order to prevent him from ever threatening my own sovereign subjectivity (Barnes, 1973: p.75).

All of these describe that ontologically and pragmatically, relations with the other are conflictual. Conflict means that two free beings cannot exist together without one being transcendence-transcended or the other being objectified. Harmonious relations might be attempted but conflict



will haunt them and they will end in failure. We can never get outside this circle (Sartre, 1943: III/3, p. 385).

### *Relationships as Inauthenticity*

In concrete relations with others, Sartre states that concrete relations with the other will be either in bad faith or good faith (Catalano, 1983: p. 180). Generally our relationships with others easily fall into bad faith. Bad faith is the name for self-deception or inauthenticity. It is regarded as a false relation to oneself and to others which happens when choices are represented as something other than what they are (Olafson, 1971: p.138). Bad faith results from the nature of human beings: facticity and transcendence. Facticities are bodies and the fact of ourselves and actions. Transcendences are what might be doing, happening or choosing. Bad faith is done by taking the facticity as transcendence and vice versa.

There are two forms of bad faith. The first is to pretend one's self is not a free being but a thing. For example, a woman is falling in love with a man. They are walking and holding each other's hand. She likes him very much and wants to express her feeling in loving words but she is afraid of the consequences of it and tries to avoid it by talking about abstract things. She does not care about holding hands anymore and considers it as nothing. Here, she pretends to consider her love as a possibility and abstract conversation as a fact. It is then called self-deception.

The second is to pretend to be one's facticity and to be a being-for others. In society, people play many roles, such as teacher, tailor and policeman. They do much in order to coincide with those roles. Actually, they know that the roles are not them, or they are more than the roles but they pretend to be their roles. For free beings who always become, whatever labels that come from the roles or community damage their nature of consciousness. To retain those labels indicates their avoidance of perpetual obligation of becoming and their wish to stay in the condition of stability (Catalano, 1983: 85). It is against Sartre's definition of self as a being which is what it is not and which is not what it is. It is the way to be permanent objects. Consciousness and freedom are forced to wear beings that are not them.

Love and masochism as assimilation to the other's freedom present one form of bad faith. Here, a person pretends that he is a thing or does not want to acknowledge his freedom. To love is to objectify myself in

order to be loved. The other will do the same in order to be loved in return. This way of loving falls into bad faith because it is against their existence to be loved as a free being. Moreover, it is not an authentic love because the lover and the beloved propose to capture the freedom of the others. In masochism, there is a perfect resistance of the freedom of self. One denies that one is a free subject which is responsible for one's being (Barnes, 1973: p 75).

By indifference, hate and sadism, one affirms that he is the only one that exists. A human being is not only a being in-itself and being for-itself, but also being for others. Indifference, hate and sadism contradict against the fact that human beings are being in the world together. By doing so, human beings live in pretence and deny the existence of others.

### ***Hell is other people***

*Hell is other people* is the most famous utterance of Sartre in his play *No Exit* (1944). *No Exit* is a play with hell as its setting. There are three characters, Garcin, Inez and Estelle. All of them are trapped together for eternity in hell, and they are prisoners in an endless love that forms their own private hell.

Garcin, as the main character, could not cope with the presence of others. He finds an inability to form his original self if others are also existent. Consequently, he could not be otherwise but just copies the idea of others and applies it on himself. While others in the character of Inez responds that she needs the suffering of others in order to exist. That is why Garcin is angry and says, "Hell is other people".

There are two interpretations of this statement. Firstly, since existence, for Sartre, is the will to create one's future, the opposite of existence, where man has no power to create his future, is his hell. "*Hell is other people*" refers to the other who creates what you are because you have no power to fulfill your own project. It is your fate to be what the other has created. Hell is the proper description for that kind of existence (<http://www.theaterhistory.com>).

Secondly, in an interview with *Playboy* magazine, Sartre explained that 'hell is other people' is about social situations ascribed to us and from which we have no exit. It is like past situation which is irreparable. He points to several facts determining human fate: our origin, our parents, social institution and type of work (Barnes, 1973: pp. 104-105).



These statements indicate that in some situations there is no originality in self-invention. Consequently, human beings have to face the dilemma, "Either I just copy the characters of others or I have to find my originality by removing the others". Tension between the wish to find my original self and the impossibility to invent amongst others explains the heart of endless conflict. It becomes difficult because Sartre, through the character of Inez claims that "You are nothing else but yourself " This indicates that the other should be excluded from one's self-invention. All of these end up in *no exit*.

*No Exit* is an alternative description of the idea of conflict and inauthenticity in human relationships. It is also consistent with Sartre's idea in *Being and Nothingness* that the other's freedom is the foundation of my being. Yet, there are existential project in which I have to consruct my being. That is why being for others is perpetual conflict. As a free being. I stand in the middle of free beings which have the same project with me.

### **The Authentic Relationship in Friendship**

I have discussed Sartre's arguments about the unbridgeable relationships with other due to conflict and inauthenticity. Doubtless, these arguments are controversial. They overturn common sense, common perception that they could get along really well with others despite the possibilities of conflict in relationships. Theoretically, some philosophers, such as Aristotle and Vernon, strongly argue that harmonious and authentic relationships are important, and they are possible in our lives (Broadie & Rowe, 2002, and Vernon, 2005). Here, I will compare the idea of friendship in Aristotle and Vernon with Sartre's notion of relationship. In the first and the second parts, I will elucidate the concept of friendship from Aristotle and Vernon. Then, I will compare these with Sartre's notions.

#### ***Aristotle on Friendship***

In his book, *Nicomachean Ethics, Book VI and IX*, Aristotle discusses the idea of friendship. The word "friendship" is used not only in the context of friendship but also in a broader sense of relationships. The essence of this word is "to get on well with" (Hughes, 2001: p. 168).

Aristotle argues that friendship has two fundamental meanings. It is a virtue which is worthy to be pursued as an end in itself, and it is also




indispensable for life. Life cannot grow well without friendship. Actually, all human beings need friends and even a group of animal from the same species tends to make friend. Naturally, friendship is useful for offspring. Politically, friendship is a means to strengthen the bond between members of a city and between cities. Friendship is not only necessary but also a noble thing. Usually, human beings praise those who love their friends, and the possession of many friends is thought of as a noble thing. Generally, a good human being is automatically a good friend (Broadie & Rowe, 2002: pp, 208-209).

Friendship, according to Aristotle, can be explained from the perspective of love. Something is lovable, because it is good, useful and pleasant. Likewise, friendship occurs because of the very same things, but friendship is limited to animate objects for there occurs reciprocal loving and wishing for the other's good. It is called goodwill. Thus, friendship occurs when a person deals well with his friend and wishes the other well; when there is reciprocal affection and love, when they know and understand their friends and the nature of friendship (Broadie & Rowe, 2002: p. 210).

Lovable things form three modes of friendship: utility-based friendships, pleasure-based friendships and friendships of excellence. The utility-based friendship generally takes place in workplaces. It is not a permanent form of friendship. When the ground of the friendship has ceased to exist, the friendship passes out of existence as well. Each person just absorbs good things from the other. Those who base their affection on utility do not love one another (Broadie & Rowe, 2002: pp. 210-211). Commonly, the pleasure-based friendships exist in young generations. It lasts and finishes quickly. As the pleasure changes, the friendship changes as well. To secure their pleasure, they have to change their friendships. This is also a passionate friendship for it depends on emotion and lacks permanence.

The third kind of friendship, the excellence one, is a relation between human beings who have virtue. The existence of a person drives me to make friend. The orientation of it is to wish goodness for the friend. This friendship can last longer than they could be in the two previous forms because there is virtue which is the basic element. It has qualities just as they have in the two former friendships but the quality and the purpose belong to each party. The goodness and the merit are employed mutually. In this kind of friendship, Aristotle notes, "Those who are friends because



of excellence are eager to do each other good. There are no accusations and battles for no one objects to someone's loving and doing him good (Broadie & Rowe, 2002: VIII, 13 1162b5, p. 223). However, this perfect friendship is hard to achieve. It needs time, intimacy and the mutual knowledge.

Thus, friendship is a relation between people where they love one another. Friendship assumes a mutual character where the virtue of loving is maintained in them. The existence of the other is the motivation to have a relation.

### ***The Ambiguity of Friendship***

Although Aristotle describes friendships in positive way, Vernon in his book *Philosophy of Friendship*, takes a moderate concepts. For Vernon, friendship has ambiguities. It has advantages and disadvantages. As for advantages, friendship is the place where people get support, companionship and affection. It is also a place where people counter their stress and depression. However, friendship has many disadvantages: it can not fulfill intimacy; it is weaker than biological and marital relations; and it is the second priority compared to family and love interests. Friendships do not have clear and distinct rules of management and organisation (Vernon, 2005: p. 2).

Ambiguity also appears in the way we deal with friends. It is suggested that a person should be honest to his or her friend, but sometimes it is indispensable to dissimulate to a friend. For example, you know that your friend's father has an affair. You do not want to tell your friend for it may make him feel embarrassed. It is done for the sake of the friend drawing upon an understanding of the complexity of human beings. Also, sometimes, the burden of honesty is heavier than the value of friendship.

From these ambiguities, Vernon categorises friendship in three sorts. One is common, mundane and passing, though warm-hearted, honest and friendly as a result. Another is rare, divine, and demands a searching integrity and immediacy of encounter. In the middle of the two lie a third and arguably the worst friendship that hopes or pretends (Vernon, 2005: p.157). The second form of these friendships is called spirituality of friendship or soul friendship. In this kind of friendship, a friend is another self. It constitutes a degree of intimacy and the capacity to discover a similar person in mind, belief and feeling. Yet, it also constitutes recognition that a


friend is different from me. From these conditions, the essence of the soul friendship is the capacity to perceive, willingness to respect, and the desire to understand the difference between people. They never aim at consuming each other. It differs from lovers. A soul friend does not mind being physically apart for sometimes, but a lover always hopes that his or her partner will reunite again. (Vernon, 2005: p. 146).

However, the capacity of people to conduct and preserve the soul friendship is not great. Vernon suggests several ways to overcome the scarcity of soul friendship. Each person should attempt to know the other. Friendship should derive from self-knowledge. To build soul friendship, people should become good by relating well with others in daily life and fulfill their obligations in society. Thus, soul friendship grows from the bottom level to the top one. Finally, it demands personal change, discernment, patience, personal struggle and gratitude. Basically, it requires the capacity to perceive, willingness to respect and desire to understand the difference between them (Vernon, 2005: p. 147).

### *Evaluation*

Sartre's concrete relationships with others, on the one hand, and Aristotle and Vernon's friendship, on the other hand, provide two contradictory descriptions. Since two contradictory descriptions can not be right or wrong at the same time, one must be right and the other must be wrong. I will discuss this problem later in the critical analysis after the whole concept of relations of Sartre is elucidated. Here I just evaluate the idea of concrete relationships with others in the light of Aristotle and Vernon's notion of friendships.

Sartre, on the one hand and Aristotle and Vernon, on the other hand have different opinions about "the other". Aristotle and followed by Vernon state that the other is another self. Consequently, I should respect the other as I respect myself and admit him as the one who is different from me. This respect should derive from a good relation to one's self and self-knowledge (Broadie & Rowe, 2005: IX.4, 1166a1, p, 230 & Vernon, 2005, p. 154.). This argument seems to take the existence of the other as certain. It is not clear how they know of the existence of the other. Sartre, through his long discussion, presents a strong argument that the existence of the other cannot be proved but experienced through my pre-reflective cogito. It is the immediate consciousness of the other from which we do not have to conceptualize who or what the other is. Thus, Sartre does not



take for granted that the other exists as I exist or that I have knowledge of them.

Sartre, on the one hand, and Aristotle and Vernon, on the other hand, seem to approach the relation between the other and me from different angles. The former is ontological, and the latter is ethical. How can we evaluate or assess both of them? I think the idea of Sartre about conflict and inauthenticity in relationships enters the ethical realm. Therefore, both arguments can be evaluated together from an ethical point of view.

Aristotle and Vernon affirm that goodwill is an important aspect of friendship. This means that doing a true, honest and good thing to others is possible. By contrast, goodwill, which is the heart of friendship, seems to be in vain in Sartre, because it is under the whole project of me to recapture my freedom from the alienation of others. If there was goodwill, it would be a deception. However, if there is no goodwill but a deception, how could we explain the fact that people make a contract or agreement with others in their relationships or honesty and faithfulness empowering our continuous relationships such as marriage and friendship in our lives? In addition, relations with others are not entirely a fate from which human beings cannot escape. Relations with others are the part of the effort of human beings which can be well-cultivated.

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre divides two modes of concrete relationships with others. In the first mode there are love, masochism and language. The aim of them is to absorb the benefit from the other. Each person puts himself as an instrument in order to satisfy the other. While indulging the "goodness" of his friend, the other loses his freedom, and his friend could recapture his freedom. From these points, it seems that this mode of relationships is similar to the utility based-friendships or Vernon's hope and pretend friendship. Also it could be categorised as inauthentic relationships because there is no genuine goodwill and honesty in those relationships.

As for dissimulation, Vernon holds that it has a positive aspect, which Sartre seems to oppose. Sartre seems not to compromise that kind of inauthenticity, despite it being deliberately done for the sake of friendship. Authenticity is true fidelity to ourselves, our freedom and our reality. It involves consciousness and responsibility for our situations (Santony, 1995: pp, 94-96). Authenticity consists in the avoidance of that false relationship to one's self and to others conducted when choices are represented as something other than what they are (Olafson, 1971: pp.138) " By elucidating



bad faith in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre indirectly considers friendship in the context of total honesty. In this context, there is no place for dissimulation nor the positive aspect of it. Since human beings cannot totally conduct honesty in their lives, this probably drives Sartre to conclude that relationships with others are all about conflict and dissimulation”.

### **The Possibility of Authentic and Non-Conflictual Relationships with Others**

How is it possible to conduct authentic and harmonious relationships with others in Sartre's philosophy? In this part I will show those possibilities deriving from Sartre's own philosophy. Here I will discuss three indications and efforts that support those possibilities.

#### ***Three Indications***

##### *Radical Conversion*

To build authentic and harmonious relationships, where there is no deception and objectification, requires radical conversion. It is a point of departure to view Sartre's philosophy, particularly relations with others, in a new paradigm. The question is what does radical conversion mean? Before answering the question, we need to look at several places where Sartre mentions it. In one footnote in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre states that to overcome bad faith one needs self recovery (Sartre, 2003: I/2/II, p. 94). Also, Sartre mentions it in *Notebook for an Ethic*. Here is some part:

"the advent of a concrete ethics that would advance human freedom can only occur after a radical conversion, and we must undergo conversion in order to achieve authentic consciousness. Conversion is characterized as the rejection of the negative appropriation of others "( Sartre, 1992: p. 472 &.455).

Moreover Warnock in *The Philosophy of Sartre* states that the book *Critique of Dialectical Reason* has to be understood as an attempt to justify radical conversion (1965: p. 135).

Those quotations imply two significant facts about radical conversion: authenticity and rejection of appropriation. In the context of concrete relations with others, radical conversion, then, means removing domination and simultaneously accepting my conditions as subject and



object. Thus, my objectivity would not be the cause of conflict and alienation. If the other and I conducted a conversion and choose our mutual freedom, our objectification would not be oppression or a source of conflict but a positive enhancement of our existence. In *Critique of Dialectic Reason*, Sartre points to the place and the form where radical conversion could take place. Radical conversion requires objective changes in society. Combating injustice and oppression are constitutive efforts to help people live in equality (Anderson, 1993: p. 66). Without objective changes in society, it is impossible to treat others well.

### *Generosity*

The possibility of practicing radical conversion is supported by the idea of generosity. Sartre in *Notebook for an Ethics* discusses generosity and love in positive ways which are in contradiction with those in *Being and Nothingness*. The idea behind generosity is the acceptance of self and the world. Simply, generosity refers to an open attitude toward one's surroundings —an attitude of willing malleability. A generous person does not approach the world with the purpose to mold it to his predetermined ideas but is instead receptive to all the positive influences surrounding him. From a synthesis of these influences, he forms his own actions and presence in the world (Condie, 2003: p. 2). In the context of Sartre's ontology, generosity means accepting myself not only as being for-itself but also my-being as in-itself. It proceeds to the acceptance of my being as an object before others. It is an action to create what did not wait for it to be. I do not wait until others objectify or fix me but proactively I set myself up as being for, or as a gift for, others. As a gift, I will not mind how others treat my gift and I will not expect special treatment. On the other hand, this gift could be placed in the light to help the other to fulfill his project and his facticity in a particular situation. In an interview, Sartre stated,

"Reciprocity is not possible, but kindness is. The waiters in the cafe appreciate the fact that I give them big tips, and repay me in kindness. My idea is that if a man lives off tips, I want to give him as much as I can, because I think that if I contribute to til livelihood of a man, he would live weil" (Sartre and Contat, 1975: *An Interview*).

Generosity pertains to authentic love. For example, I see a man from the back, that is from a dimension of his body that he cannot know and through which he is exposed to the in-itself in a certain way. A stone is falling from a slope behind him and will hit him but I prevent this. Here



there is love because I save someone from some particular danger in and by my freedom. If I left it to the other, this would be loss of his being in the world. It is love because I save him for himself (Simont, 1992: p. 180).


Generally speaking generosity creates a new dimension to view our facticity. The new dimension is that I accept my facticity as part of my condition as a human being but not because others fix upon me. Also I do not passively wait it to be fixed by others but attempt to transform it as a gift. Conflict and inauthenticity, thereby, could be eliminated because my facticity is not the result of objectification or alienation from others.

#### *Advocating the Freedom of Others*

Besides radical conversion and generosity, authentic and harmonious relationship finds its ground on the argument "willing the freedom of others". In *Existentialism is a Humanism* Sartre considers that we have an obligation to will the freedom of others. To will the freedom of others supposes choosing and deciding acts. For Sartre to choose means to create a certain image which is an ideal image of what human beings should be (Sartre, 1975: pp. 52 & 30). Moreover, to choose means to act or put something, for instance justice' into practice. In this act, there is recognition of the worth of something. In the relation with others, it requires acknowledgment of the freedom of the other and to make it real. If we arbitrarily identify choosing to value something with choosing to make that something real, we can claim that willing freedom entails acting in the situation to increase or expand that freedom (Anderson, 1993: p. 72).

The problem is why choosing the freedom for me involves choosing it for others? To answer this, firstly, it is good to use an approach of oppression. If I will the freedom of others and wish their freedom as values, I should will that they act in accordance with their choice. It supposes that they have the power to act freely I should, thereby, rule out my control oppressing them. It seems contradiction to wish the freedom of others and to oppress them.

Secondly, I should will the freedom of others because of the reality of human interdependency of freedom. I depend on others to acknowledge my freedom as value and to help me to achieve my goal. I cannot attain any truth whatsoever about myself except through the mediation of the other. Self consciousness to some extent depends on others. In *Materialism and Revolution* Sartre states that one's freedom can be asserted only by the recognition bestowed upon it by others' freedom (Anderson, 1993: 75). To recognize, here, means to consider it to be valuable. People need to be



valued and approved. The basic needs of human beings are to have valuable and meaningful lives. In this context, it is significant that someone receives positive evaluation from others. Of course, it is more worthwhile if I get the recognition from people who give it freely to me.

These three indications do not provide ontological grounds to embody authentic and harmonious relationships with others, and there are still many critics for these, but as I said before, they are the point of departure to consider Sartre's philosophy in a broader sense. These show several signs of change in Sartre's philosophy in which there is the way to consider relations with other in a positive form. Radical conversion, generosity and the will for the freedom of others reveal that relationships with others will be meaningful as human beings practice them. People could act otherwise than in conflict, because their generosity makes it possible to love and to will the freedom of others.

### ***Efforts to Build Harmonious and Authentic Relationship with Others***

In his novels and plays Sartre seems to put some efforts into showing the possibility of positive relationships with others. I want to frame them in two interviews with Sartre. The first is his interview with Francis Jeanson in 1965. In this interview Sartre expressed his new concept of love which is a bit different from his former concept developed in *Being and Nothingness*. There, love was just the desire to be loved but in *Saint Genet* he has a chance to describe the positive aspect of love. Love is an acceptance of a total person –including viscera. Then, in his interview with *Playboy* magazine in 1977, Sartre told about his relationship with de Beauvoir. According to Sartre it was the best and the most complete relationship compared to the relation he had with anyone else. It was not because there was sexual or intimate relations but because there was conversation about vital decisions and the appreciation of equality (Schilpp, 1981: p. 232). These two things show a new approach in dealing with others. There is a possibility to live with others as subjects without losing our subjectivity. We do not need to manipulate relations in order to obtain benefits.


From those points, now I will focus on Sartre's novels and plays. According to Linda Bell, there is misinterpretation of Sartre novel and plays. Critics consider them as a part of the concept of being for others in *Being and Nothingness* (Bell, 1989: p. 154). For example, many characters refuse positive relations, and then replacing them with sequestering or isolating. Isolation has several forms and reasons. In *Condemned Altona*, there

are characters deliberately sequestering themselves. Also, there are characters forced by others to live in this situation which is against their will, for example prisoners in *The Wall* or *Genet* in the prison. Also, there are some who are in isolation with others.

It presents in *No Exit* where Garcin and Estelle are isolated together. In isolations, characters, generally, reject the freedom of them and others. In *No Exit*, two people refuse their freedom but they are threatened by the freedom of others. Hugo, in *Dirty Hands*, rejects his and the other's freedom. In *The Wall*, there is another example where characters isolated by others do not want to embrace their own freedom. In *Men without Shadow*, Lucy, the character rejects her freedom and threatens others. These are strong evidence to depict perpetual conflict and inauthenticity in which others and I cannot harmoniously co-exist, and also in which people attempt to escape from their freedom (Bell, 1989: pp. 156-158).

By contrast, there is plenty of evidence referring to the possibility of authentic and harmonious relationships. Here are some examples: Firstly, *the relation between Genet and his readers* describes Genet's project of writing as an instrument of changing. Genet's explanation of about human beings is an effort to convert his readers to this idea. The purpose of conversion is to gain his freedom and to let the others have their freedom. It is recognition of equality of freedom in which my freedom can survive before others' freedom. Secondly, in *The Chips Are Down*, Sartre reveals a relentless effort of Pierre and Eve to cultivate harmony and unity for authentic love. Their efforts fail with their death, but then there is a young couple who is in common with Pierre and Eve stands up for a loving relationship. Piene and Eve encourage them to try. Here, there is affirmation and confidence in the possibility of loving and positive relationships, even though their efforts may not have gained positive results (Bell, 1989: p. 161).

Also, Sartre demonstrates a change in his concept of love. In *Dirty Hands*, Hoederer sacrifices his life for Hugo so that Hugo can complete his mission to kill him. When Hugo is shooting Hoederer, Hoederer embraces Hugo's wife and then lies in that he has slept with Hugo's wife in order to save Hugo. Similarly, in *Kean*, Ana falls in love with an actor Kean. Ana continues loving him, even though she knows that Kean has cheated her and they remain living together with Kean's second partner. She acknowledges that Kean does not love her but she does not want to force him to love her. She respects the freedom of Kean. These two stories present unconditional love. Nothing is left for the sake of one's own self.




The other is the end of loving. I love the other without hoping he loves me in turn (Bell, 1989: pp. 161 & 165). Those examples demonstrate a broader picture of Sartre's concept of relationship with others, particularly in loving relationship. There is recognition of the freedom of the others and me, and there is authentic effort to love the other. Moreover, Sartre injects the idea of treating the other as an end particularly in the love of Hoederer to Hugo and Ana and Kean.

There are two challenges to develop positive relationships. Firstly, sometimes to love involves oppression and violence because in some cases they are the ways to support others to obtain their freedom. It appears in parent-child relationship. Sartre claims that oppression or violence, however, should be removed from love because it is unjustifiable (Bell, 1989: p. 169).

Secondly, for Sartre, transparency is a vital element of authentic relationships. It is important to set up an authentic social life. Each person must be visible for others. Yet there is an ethical problem because human beings are determined by others and, therefore, cannot fully disclose themselves. Although total transparency is unobtainable, it gives effects to compose harmony and unity. It could be mildly addressed by reciprocal aid relationships. On the one hand, to help the other, a helper should know the end of the other and assimilate himself into it. Yet, the helper should be aware that it is not his end. On the other hand, the helped should realize his end. The helper is not a person who threatens the freedom of the helped, but accompanies him to fulfill his end. In the relation of appeal and aid, each discovers and wills the other's freedom (Bell, 1989: p. 173). Here, they understand their ends and mutually function as an instrument to one another. By doing it, the helper and the helped proceed to their ends without feeling being objectified by one another.

From this part I want to extract three key points:

*Firstly*, there is recognition of the freedom of others and the will to free others. This recognition creates tension. On the one hand, Sartre still preserves the power of conflict in loving relationships and friendship. It appears in many failures in true relationships. On the other hand, Sartre keeps the spirit of those kinds of relationships. It is like a turning point of his argument on the concrete relationship with others. Actually, he has planted the seeds of authentic relationship. He has also been taught by his



own friendship and the work of others which illumines the way to genuine relationships without bad faith.


*Secondly*, the concept of the other has been changed from an instrument to an end. The other is the orientation of love. Love is not possessive. Love is to love without hoping to be loved in return. To create it requires transparency. Each person should disclose himself or herself to one another. Through helping each other, they could be visible to each other. They should know the other so that their help is acceptable and effective. Others should know their helpers so they understand the aim and the motive of the help. Transparency is the key of authentic love and friendship. If it existed then bad faith would turn to good faith.

*Thirdly*, it is obvious that Sartre does not have a construction of authentic relationships like that of inauthentic relationships he had in *Being and Nothingness*. His idea of authentic relationship is not as clear as that of the impossibility of inter-subjective relationship in *Being and Nothingness*. Most of them have to be interpreted from his novels and plays which lead to both critics and admiration. However, existentialist writing requires particular and concrete descriptions. That is why it is plausible to use novels and plays to convey philosophical doctrine (Warnock, 1965: p. 73). Therefore, what Sartre develops in his novels and plays mirrors his philosophy of relationship with others that could be harmoniously and authentically cultivated. Moreover, Sartre's own relationship and acknowledgment are strong and vivid evidence that point out that the seed of authentic relationship which he spreads here and there are the sign of his authentic relationship. It exists but is less strong. It is a small appearance which is far from common attention.

### Critical Analysis and Conclusion

In *Being and Nothingness*, concrete relationships with others fall into conflict, for each person attempts to rule over the other in order to protect their own freedom and to end the danger of the freedom of the other. Furthermore, relations with others will end in inauthenticity in which those who are in relationships do not want to acknowledge their own freedom which always transcends social definitions. They also do not accept the reality of their facticity when they relate with others. For Sartre concrete relationships with others are trapped in these two situations.

While elucidating his long and solid argument Sartre mentions briefly the possibility of conducting radical conversion. It is interesting



because Sartre uses the word "self recovery" for radical conversion. Since the self is free, self-recovery is the recognition of freedom and responsibility. Then, radical conversion means to convert from inauthenticity or bad faith to authenticity or good faith. Then, to be authentic is to embrace the freedom and the fact of ourselves and to stay firm on that without choosing something other than what they are. Moreover, radical conversion also means to remove conflict, oppression and to will the freedom of others.

To remove oppression and to will the freedom of others requires generosity. A generous person will admit the reality of conflict, but he could transform conflict toward a new dimension. Firstly, generous people are aware of the fact that becoming subjects and objects is an integral reality of being human beings. Secondly, in relations with others, generous people do not wait until the other labels them but actively give themselves as a gift. Here, to be a generous human being is to act as a subject but admit that one does not have power to determine how the other treats this gift.

In the light of generosity, an authentic person is the one who chooses to give the self without denying that the self is an object for the other. It is quite different from lovers and masochists in *Being and Nothingness*, where each attempts to gain something by their relationship. Actually, a true lover is the one who offers himself for the goodness of the beloved and will not demand reciprocity. The only thing he wishes is that the beloved could enjoy and fulfill their freedom even though it could be the death of him. This is the solid argument which Sartre presents in some of his novels and plays which seems different from what he discussed in *Being and Nothingness*, but he anticipated it through radical conversion. Therefore, to build an authentic and harmonious relationship is to love in the light of generosity.

The problem is that generosity is not compulsory but voluntary. Often there is a situation where we are in oppression for instance in the case of *Anti-Semitism*. Here, we could suggest that perhaps oppressors need to learn how to be generous people. Yet it is hard to put this into practice. Oppression is a part of a social problem which involves many people. In *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, Sartre seems to see the meaning of social change in order to establish equality where society is the place for people to have the same benefit and to live equally. Furthermore, equality has to be put as a primary communal project where people cooperate to achieved it. The aim, here, is not the union of subjects but a mutual respect as subjects.




Therefore, inter-subjective relationships require the equality which a community needs to work together to fulfill.

From previous explanations, I need to address two more questions: compared to concrete relationships with others in *Being and Nothingness*, is Sartre's idea of authentic and non-conflict relationship adequate? From Sartre's point of view of positive relationship, is Aristotle's friendship authentic?

It is admitted that conflict and inauthenticity are developed widely, structurally and strongly in *Being and Nothingness*. In contrast, the new concept starting with radical conversion and then developed in his novel and plays is not as strong and well-structured. In his novels and plays, Sartre seems standing in between. He does not entirely leave his concept in *Being and Nothingness* and also does not totally embrace his new idea. It is like a period of transition. However, it reveals that Sartre is a bit aware of a new possibility beyond what he discussed in *Being and Nothingness*, and he starts to welcome the new idea that authentic and harmonious relationships are possible. The new possibility supported by three conditions of radical conversion, generosity, and the will for the freedom of others demonstrates an ideal concept of relationship which is rare but not impossible. Through descriptions of his relations with others, his novel and plays, Sartre offers room for the reality of authentic and harmonious relationships which pepper human life. Of course they are not as structurally and strongly developed as concrete relationships with others in *Being and Nothingness*, but they are no less fundamental concepts. From these three indications and the efforts he makes in his novels and plays, the idea of authentic and harmonious relationships is quite sufficient.

From the point of view of Sartre, is Aristotle's friendship authentic? Aristotle states that friendship is a virtue and a necessity. Then, he argues that there are some conditions to be a good friend. Human beings must deal well with their friends. They must wish one another well. These arguments indicate that a friendship becomes a moral obligation and it demands reciprocity. In contrast, by presenting generosity and the will of the freedom of others, Sartre indirectly implies that friendship is voluntary. The aim of it is that the other could enjoy and fulfill their freedom without any conditions and without the use of any kind of oppression. Therefore it seems more authentic than Aristotle's friendship, for friends are the prime focus, not me nor communal interests. An authentic person is the one who



is addressing self-interest in his relationship with others but the one who give himself as a gift for the good of others.

In conclusion, Sartre's philosophy demonstrates that authentic and harmonious relationships are possible. In *Being and Nothingness* and *No Exit*, Sartre strongly argues that concrete relationships with others will always end in conflict and inauthenticity. It is because the nature of being-for-itself often objectifies the other. Also, many people do not admit their freedom and bear the responsibility of it. Moreover, social conditions trap people in oppressive conditions. However, that is not all there is to Sartre's philosophy. He has hinted that radical conversion, generosity and the will of others are possible. They are points of departure for a new positive relationship with others. It is more authentic than Aristotle's friendship, but it is not easy because authenticity is an ideal concept to which not many people could make progress. It is not many but not none.




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