

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/370204306>

Ethics of Freedom: Comparing Locke, Sartre and Gandhi

Article · January 2022

CITATIONS
0

READS
114

5 authors, including:



Piyali Mitra
American Philosophical Association

17 PUBLICATIONS 33 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Ravichandran Moorthy
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

61 PUBLICATIONS 375 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics



EJAIB Vol. 32 (1) January 2022

www.eubios.info

ISSN 1173-2571 (Print) ISSN 2350-3106 (Online)

Official Journal of the Asian Bioethics Association (ABA)

Copyright ©2022 Eubios Ethics Institute

(All rights reserved, for commercial reproductions).



Contents	page
Editorial: Risks, wars and pandemics - Darryl Macer	1
Warrior's Bravery - Humitake Seki, Gestur Bjorn Christianson, Mikko Vilenius	2
Ethics of Freedom: Comparing Locke, Sartre and Gandhi - Ravichandran Moorthy, S. Panneerselvam, Saji Varghese, Piyali Mitra	3
Euthanasia in Japan as portrayed by Shichiri Nakayama's novel, The Legacy of Dr. Death - Atsushi Asai	6
Ethical Issues of COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement for On-Site Employees in Philippines - Laika Mae E. Timon and Rogelio P. Bayod	10
The Perpetuating Global Online Propaganda of the Anti-Vaccination Philosophy in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic - Dianne E. Loyola and Rogelio P. Bayod	16
Challenge of Legitimacy in the Implementation of COVID-19 vaccination requirements for on-site workers - Reyjane Mae P. Mercado and Rogelio P. Bayod	20
Utilitarianism and Compulsory Covid-19 Vaccination in Nigeria - Ikechukwu Monday Osebor and Marta Luciane Fischer	25
Allocation of Healthcare Resources During Public Health Emergencies Should Not Perpetuate Ageism - Czeazar Ianne E. Lupo and Rogelio P. Bayod	27

Editorial: Risks, war and pandemics

One of the critical pillars of bioethics as the love of life is the preservation of life. It is already difficult for living organisms including human beings to prosper without adding in gross human irresponsibility. As we start 2022 war has shattered the presumption of state sovereignty that is one of the bedrocks of modern human rights. At times there are demands of human rights to intervene across national borders to protect against cross human rights abuses, but the war in Ukraine is unethical. Although many countries have fought wars and abused human rights, there is no excuse for any of these kinds of interventions.

We start this issue with a reminder of some traits and examples of an honourable warrior in a samurai tradition,

as explored by one of my mentors, Professor Seki and two of his colleagues from Kashima Shinryū. As we recently met to discuss this article and life, we reflected on how timely it was that this paper submitted in 2021 was being published now. It was written prior to the war. There are age-old lessons, that apparently some of the modern generation have forgotten on the horrors of war.

The next paper is suitably entitled Ethics of Freedom: Comparing Locke, Sartre and Gandhi, contributed by Prof. Moorthy and colleagues. It is also timely to reflect on the philosophical foundations of the basis of human rights and how we should uphold the essence of nonviolence and protect human rights. These concepts are found not only in British, French and Indian traditions, but globally.

This is followed by a review of a novel of Shichiri Nakayama on euthanasia by Prof. Asai. Himself the author over the decades of a number of empirical studies of the topic, he has taken the time to explore how literature on this topic may also be shaping our perceptions of assisted suicide and euthanasia. What roles should doctors play? Certainly honorable ones, the same as samurai and all of us, as we exercise our responsibilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge us all and reform the way we consider development ethics. As vaccines have become more available, the obvious question that we can ask is at what stage should it become our clear moral responsibility to get vaccinated in order to protect others? There are four papers exploring this topic in this issue, including three from Prof. Bayod and colleagues in the Philippines and one from Nigeria. At what stage do we move from vaccine skeptics to enthusiasts? While my personal; and professional advice is to get vaccinated, it is up to each person. As discussed in the WeCope Committee report on COVID-19 vaccination, there are existing mandatory vaccinations, found in many countries.

The final paper explores ageism which is an interesting issue for COVID-19, given that in general the mortality associated with COVID-19 doubles every 6 years of age. EJAIB does not endorse any particular policy but we welcome discussion of the science and associated ethical issues in these pages, and in the frequent International Public Health and Bioethics Ambassador Conferences.

- Darryl Macer (darryl@eubios.info)

When Sakata Kintoki was asked how to become a brave warrior, he instantly replied "You must know cowardice". One should bear this in mind always.

References

- Kanō Jigorō (1929): *Tanryoku, Shūyō Zjenshū Daikyūkan* (pp. 61-63), Dai Nippon Yūbenkai Kodansha, (Editor and Publisher: Noma Seiji). 804 pages.
- Shimozawa Kan (1977): *Shinsengumi Monogatari* (pp. 55-63), Chūōkōronshinsha. 376 pages.

Ethics of Freedom: Comparing Locke, Sartre and Gandhi

- Ravichandran Moorthy, Ph.D.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Email: drravi5774@gmail.com

- S. Panneerselvam, Ph.D.

Chennai Philosophical Forum, India

- Saji Varghese, Ph.D.

Lady Keane College, India

- Piyali Mitra, Ph.D.

University of Calcutta, India

Introduction

What is *freedom*? The contemporary history of humanity is a quest for enduring human freedom over oppression, subjugation and tyranny of many forms. In that pursuit, many wars have been fought, and millions of lives have perished, and many ideologies were born. In simple terms, freedom is the ability to act or change without being constrained. Freedom manifests when obstacles to initiate change or to express free will are removed. From a *needs* perspective, freedom is when an individual can pursue his or her needs, wants and aspirations freely. However, freedom may not be absolute; some constraints or caveats can manifest from personal ethics and morality, family, cultural, faith systems and governance structures. It may also differ from one society to another. From a religious or philosophical perspective, freedom is often associated with *liberty* and *autonomy*, and only exist in a human realm. This type of freedom is also known as political freedom expressed in the forms of human rights and civil liberties, which are often legislated and protected by laws. Nonetheless, the limits and depths of political freedoms such as freedom of choice, assembly, association, and freedom of expression are often debated and sometimes challenged through modern history.

As previously said, freedom is a regulation, and self-determination can be described as the human capacity to act (or not act) as we choose or like, without being compelled or restrained by external forces (Cevizci, 1996:408). Further, it also refers to a presumption of moral responsibility, in which actions have the consequence of being favoured or desired and receive praises, or it may be something which is undesirable or disfavoured and receives disapproval and punishment. Whatever the intentions and responses, those actions are performed freely, as a rational human being. Individuals are presumed to act morally and rationally based on their

own choices and reasonable decisions. As such, human freedom is considered as an inherent and inalienable right, which exist within the framework of human knowledge (Gokalp, 2012). Individuals are regarded as moral agents, acting voluntarily in accordance with their personal preferences and rational choices. As moral agents, individuals take into account the *Self* and others in making decisions based on individuals' free will. Individuals should be aware that their freedom to create a foundation for moral considerations is a fundamental feature of human beings.

This paper seeks to compare the *thoughts of freedom* from three imminent philosophers and social thinkers of modern human history: John Locke, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Mahatma Gandhi. John Locke's theorizes based on *freedom of action* and *freedom of will* that has had an impact on the philosophy of action and moral psychology. Locke provides unique explanations of action and forbearance, will and willing, voluntary (in contrast to involuntary) acts and forbearances, and freedom (in contrast to necessity). Jean-Paul Sartre is a key figure in the philosophy of existentialism and phenomenology. "*For Sartre, existence precedes essence, freedom is absolute, and existence is freedom. It has been made clear that Sartre does not believe that any essence or substance can be attributed to individuals prior to their existence. Individuals, first of all, exist, and there is no 'human nature' which exists outside or inside beings. Freedom is therefore limitless, but the physical limitations of the world are taken into consideration*" (Manzi, 2013). Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Indian independence struggle, is seen as a proponent of freedom from colonial oppression throughout the world. According to Gandhi, freedom refers to some total of self-respect, self-restraint and maturity, which can alone be attained through non-violence. He claims that "*no society can be built on the denial of individual freedom.*" It goes against man's very nature. Deprivation of liberty is the equivalent of death. True freedom is one that can be attained solely through one's own efforts, with no outside assistance. Freedom is always necessary because a nation or an individual cannot fully develop without it (Bhardwaj & Basumatary, 2013). The following sub-sections discuss the views of these philosophers.

John Locke on Freedom

John Locke (1632-1704) is celebrated as the founding father of liberalism who proposed his ideas about freedom in response to the 17th-century political environment in Europe and particularly in England. He was a strong critique of the theories of absolute monarchy as mainly advocated by Thomas Hobbes, R. Filmer, Tully and many others. Scholars believe that Lockean freedom is a single power, the power to do one's will (Locke, 1975:96). Locke describes freedom as a "two-way" power, really a combination of two conditional powers belonging to an agent, that is, to someone endowed with a will. Human beings or agents are free with regard to a specific action or forbearance inasmuch as if the individual wills to do the action and then the individual has the power to do the action and if she wills to forbear doing an action. Locke notes that agents who are unfree to take some

action as acting under, or by, necessity. So freedom, according to Locke conception, is a property of substances meant as persons, human agents.

Locke does not find "freedom of will" meaningful but allows that "freedom to will" could mean that, when any action in a man's power is proposed to his thoughts as something to be done by him, the man is free either to will or not-will on the matter (Moulds, 1961). Lockean scholar, LoLordo (2012) holds that Locke conceives of active power not as the underlying source of the ability to make changes, but has the capacity to make changes by one's own power (rather than by the power of another); that active power is not unique to the soul and should not be identified with the will, which is merely one among many active powers that Locke's conception of freedom of action is merely the ability to do as one's will. Freedom of action, properly conceived, includes neither a voluntariness condition nor a counterfactual condition; that although (non-human) animals have many active powers, they do not possess wills or freedom of action, and hence animals provide no reason to think that something in addition to freedom of action is required for moral agency; that there is indeed only one notion of liberty, namely freedom of action. The capacity to suspend is merely a species of this freedom. That what differentiates moral agents from beings who are not morally bound is freedom of action which includes the power to suspend and that suspension of desire can and indeed must be voluntary. Locke may be agnostic about the metaphysical grounds of moral agency, but he is not thoroughly agnostic about all metaphysical aspects of his theory of freedom.

It is to be noted that Locke's conception of freedom as the power to perform what one's will is held to be only incidental to the real problem of the freedom of the self. His theory is criticized as minimizing man's rational and spiritual nature, and that they exclude freedom of thought and choice, they make God responsible for all human's acts even for the evil acts and thus smudge the differences between good and evil, thus failing us to see that ideas frequently determine desires. Locke's views pertaining to incoherent hedonism is inconsistent with his objective altruism. He admitted that no man's knowledge could go beyond experience, so the principle of necessity is not necessary knowledge, and the adequate grounds of moral judgment are destroyed. As a result of his narrowly empiricistic interest in what men can know, his concept was not successful enough in determining how and why men can know. Despite the various inconsistencies, his theory of freedom supports an enlightened pursuit of happiness and moral responsibility for avoidable ignorance and inadvertency for thinking and choices.

Sartre on Human Freedom

How to define freedom? Strictly speaking, a formal definition of it is not possible. It is because human reality, being free, is continually making itself. The past can be defined, but the present cannot be defined but only be described. Freedom though indefinable, is describable. Man learns his freedom through his action; therefore, freedom can be best understood by describing the structure of human actions. Sartre says that freedom has

no essence and hence cannot be defined. For Sartre, nihilation, temporalization, freedom and choice are one and the same. He further says that consciousness has appeared to us as freedom. Freedom is not a property of subsisting in consciousness but rather the inner structure of consciousness. In Sartre's play, *The Flies*, when Orestes realizes his position among his people of Argos, he becomes a "freedom-conscious consciousness". To be free, he does not mean to obtain what one has wished, but rather to project towards specific goals.

In other words, for Sartre, every human consciousness is a free choice from which it acts to express itself. Man is condemned at every moment of his life to create himself. Sartre defines consciousness as "a being such that in its being, its being is in question insofar as this being implies a being other than itself." (Sartre, 1963:23) Sartre spoke extensively on the doctrine of non-egology. For him, consciousness is non-egological. Sartre rejects the doctrine of the transcendental ego of Husserl. Sartre claims that there is no permanent self or ego within or behind the stream of consciousness. This means that consciousness is egoless or not-self. For Husserl, the transcendental ego is important for unifying the stream of experience. One can say that this is the subject-pole of experience. In other words, the ego here is nothing but the epistemological self. In the transcendental ego, there is something permanent residing in the stream of ever-changing conscious acts. This permanent thing in consciousness is known as the "transcendental ego", which is rejected by Sartre.

Freedom is identified with the human consciousness. For Sartre, human freedom is neither a quality gained by an individual through his experience; nor is freedom something a man lacks within his human constitution. Freedom is the human being itself. For Descartes, consciousness is identical to thought, but for Sartre, it is identical to freedom. For Sartre, it is not possible to distinguish between human reality and freedom because freedom is a human reality. In *The Flies*, Sartre shows that Orestes does not exist first in order to be free later. There is no difference between his being and his being free. This means that freedom constitutes the existential structure of man. Sartre argues that a man is ontologically free, which cannot be taken away from him. He is of the view that man is free even in the hands of the executioner (Sartre, 1963:25)

In *Existentialism and Human Emotions*, Sartre says that to exist is not merely to determine the relationship between my for-itself and my in-itself, but to determine my existence with respect to others. He talks about the abstract possibility that there could be an isolated human being for whom others would not exist, but such a possibility is meaningless for us. He says: "It would perhaps not be impossible to conceive of a For-itself which would be wholly free from all For-others...But this For-itself simply would not be 'man'" (Sartre, 1963:376) Just as the for-itself stands in a relation of "internal negation" to the in-itself, so it stands in a comparable relation to the Other. Insofar as it discloses the existence of another person, this second negation has a radically alienating effect on the for-itself. Sartre says that the relationship of the for-itself to the Other as one of

irreducible conflict. This relation is conflictual in nature because it is impossible for each of the two to recognize the other as a for-itself at the same time.

Is there anything called "omnipresence of freedom"? Sartre answers this by saying that first of all, the omnipresence of freedom does not mean that it is always possible to resist the red-hot pincers "but simply that the very impossibility...must be freely constituted". His example of the torture victim points to the relationship between facticity and freedom. His existentialism deals with the constituting freedom of consciousness. In *Search for Method*, Sartre says that when the bare constituting freedom of consciousness and real possibility coincide, a new philosophy of freedom will emerge. *"As soon as there will exist for everyone a margin of real freedom beyond the production of life, Marxism will have lived out of its span; a philosophy of freedom will take its place. But we have no means, no intellectual instrument, no concrete experience which allows us to conceive of this freedom or of this philosophy,"* says Sartre (Sartre, 1944:34).

Gandhi on Freedom

Gandhian ecologism emphasizes the importance of living a life of concern and care, applying ethical and spiritual principles to all aspects of nature. The importance and functions of ecosystems are central to human ecology. It is a clearly value-laden topic. Life becomes much more meaningful when lived from within, more self-consciously, deliberately, in perfect harmony with spiritual values—and the process of transformation is never exclusive, but always inclusive. The Gandhian philosophy of development should be studied alongside the philosophy of happiness. It arose as a critique of the dominant western-centric approach to development, with its misplaced emphasis on promoting individual growth and self-advancement, harnessing nature, attaining technological sophistication, accelerating urbanization, and increasing the use of marketplaces for the distribution of economic goods and services. A human ecology viewpoint is comprehensive and holistic. Gandhi did not advocate separate rules for different aspects of human life, but rather treated all aspects as a whole, which best exemplifies the human ecological perspective.

Consumption and sustainability are intertwined. While neoliberals advocate a consumerist trend, ecologists emphasize the type of development that allows future generations to meet their basic needs. An ideal discourse on sustenance should cover a wide range of topics, including the nature of human need, the social, cultural, and ethical influences that shape consumption patterns, and the most important question of 'sufficiency.' The question of how much is enough, however, remains relevant. The instrumental view of nature is frequently contrasted in this debate with a "deep ecology" perspective, which sees the preservation of ecological integrity as an ultimate necessity. The preservation of ecological integrity carries a sense of obligation. The instrumental viewpoint can accommodate a view of nature as serving many different purposes for humanity. This reflects the anthropocentric aspect once more. Given that we do not have a universally agreed-upon understanding of either the functioning of nature or the

dynamics of human society, uncertainty is a significant complicating factor. There is considerable disagreement about the risks involved in either disturbing nature or foregoing economic development. Thus, the Gandhian Philosophy is concerned with the question of what value pattern to follow for the sustenance of earth's resources.

Human ecology is associated with the ecological consequences of everything humans do. We are also interested in resource generation, sustainable use, and human adaptive growth and development. All of this occurs in an environment in which the critical interconnections between humans and nature are recognized and reinforced. This entails refraining from doing anything that may harm our fellow beings, nature, or future generations. At its heart is a profound sense of responsibility for other humans and the environment, as well as love for all living things. Gandhi's daily life included conservation. He would be extremely frugal with water. The same could be said about money and other personal assets. He also discovered the need to save his sexual energy for bigger goals. They could be dismissed as austere practices associated with him on a personal level. Gandhi emphasized the importance of conserving resources for future generations. In all of this, he embodied a true ecologist, whose practices were models of ecological living worthy of imitation.

Gandhi's concept of swadeshi, or self-reliance, has many implications for the creation of a non-exploitative society. According to Johan Galtung, the father of modern peace research, self-reliance is inextricably linked with ecological balance. *"When ecological cycles contract the consequences of production and consumption, in terms of depletion and pollution, will be not only more visible, but also more direct. The farmer who by and large produces what he consumes and consumes what he produces has the gut knowledge that pollution and depletion will be detrimental to him and his off-spring, and this very knowledge initiates the type of negative feedback that may prevent ecological problems from surfacing at all. Depletion cannot be relegated to some far-off corner of the world, because in that corner they are also practicing self-reliance and do not let raw materials out except to neighbours at the same level"* (Galtung 1976).

It reaffirms Gandhi's belief that everyone has equal capabilities, while also emphasizing the importance of having governance through elected representatives. In the modern era, Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, advocates of development ethics, emphasize on the goal of development as the development of human capabilities. In response to the question, "What is development?" Sen and Nussbaum's response is – the improvement of certain human functions and the expansion of human capabilities to such functions. Freedom and capability expansion are well-known definitions of development (Sen, 2008). Nonetheless, there are a variety of ways to become free, and emphasizing economic freedom does not serve the post-scientific conception of development well.

Conclusion

The notions of freedom developed by Locke, Sartre, and Gandhi appear to converge at some points while diverging in other areas of study. Nonetheless, all of them appear to

extrapolate the idea of *freedom* based on the philosophies, trends, geography and experiences of their times. In analyzing *freedom*, they seek to explain the fundamental principles such as the nature of human existence, rights and justice as human beings, and societal and governance structures that influence human actions. One of Locke's most novel ideas was that all people are born equal and endowed with the same right to seek self-preservation and happiness. This is a widely held belief today, but it was a revolutionary idea in Locke's time because it contested the belief that there is a certain natural hierarchy of individuals. Finally, Locke's perspectives on freedom and rights set the groundwork for modern societies with equal rights for all. Sartre had a different take on the notion of freedom. He argues that *existence precedes essence*, which means God did not have a grand plan when he created humans. As such, by just existing, humans have absolute freedom of choice and actions. In fact, human is condemned to be free because he did not create himself. The only option we do not have is not to have options. Freedom is absolute, and existence is freedom. It has been made clear that Sartre does not believe that any essence or substance can be attributed to individuals prior to their existence. Individuals first must *exist*, and there is no 'human nature' outside or inside beings. Freedom is therefore limitless, but the physical limitations of the world are taken into consideration. On the other hand, Gandhi broadened the concept of freedom from intrinsic individual freedom of expression and choice to a nationalistic and patriotic quest for self-rule in the face of colonialism. According to Iyer (2000), freedom is also the notion of obligation to others as well as to oneself while retaining the element of voluntariness that is the very foundation of freedom.

References

- Bhardwaj, B. and Basumatary, I. (2013). Gandhian Concept of Freedom and Non-Violence and Its Viability in Today's Society. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 16(3), 42-44.
- Cevizci, A. (1996). Felsefe sozlugu. Ankara: Ekin.
- Galtung, J. (1976). Trade or Development: Some Reflections on Self-Reliance. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 11, 207-215.
- Gokalp, N. (2012). Philosophy Education and Human Freedom, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 47, 477-479. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.683>.
- Iyer, R. (2000). *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*. Oxford University Press.
- Locke, D. (1975). Tree Concepts of Free Action, Part 1. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society (Supplemental Volume)* 4, 5-112.
- LoLordo, A. (2012). *Locke's Moral Man*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Manzi, Y. (2013). 'Jean-Paul Sartre: Existential "Freedom" and the Political'. Available at <https://www.e-ir.info/2013/01/23/jean-paul-sartre-existential-freedom-and-the-political/>
- Moulds, H. (1961). John Locke's Four Freedom Seen in a New Light. *Ethics*, 71(2), 121-126.
- Sartre, J. P. (1963). *Search for a Method*. Trans. Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Vintage Books.
- Sartre, J.P. (1944). *Being and Nothingness*. Trans. Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Sen, A. (2008). 'The Economics of Happiness and Capability'. In Bruni, L., Comin, F. and Pugno M. (Eds.) *Capabilities and Happiness*. OUP Oxford.

Euthanasia in Japan as portrayed by Shichiri Nakayama's novel, The Legacy of Dr. Death

- Atsushi Asai, M.D., Ph.D., M.Bioeth

Department of Medical Ethics, Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine 2-1 Seiryō, Aoba-ku, Sendai, Miyagi, 980-8575, Japan

E-mail: aasai@med.tohoku.ac.jp

Abstract

Over the past several years in Japan, cases of voluntary euthanasia or assisted suicide, rarely disclosed until recently, have occurred in close succession. The purpose of this short essay is to examine euthanasia-related issues considered important in modern-day Japan by presenting and analyzing a novel by Japanese novelist Shichiri Nakayama, *The Legacy of Dr. Death*. This novel was made into a commercial film by director Yoshihiro Fukagawa, entitled *The Legacy of Dr. Death: Black File*, which was released in 2020 (5). I also compare the novel with the film and discuss the ethical significance of some of the differences between the two works. Euthanasia-related issues to discuss include perception of oneself as a burden on others as a primary reason for requesting euthanasia; relationship between law and ethics; and ethical implications of differences in Dr. Death's depiction in the two works. Fiction works such as novels and films can mirror real social situations from which they are produced. I feel that this novel teaches us that we need to keep thinking about euthanasia issues, difficult as they are.

Keywords: Japan, Euthanasia, Fiction, Burden, Law, Ethics, Jack Kevorkian, Medical assistance in dying

1 Introduction

Over the past several years in Japan, cases of voluntary euthanasia or assisted suicide, rarely disclosed until recently, have occurred in close succession (1-3). Inspired by these events, ethical, legal, and social debates about a patient's right to self-determination of death—in other words, their right to die—have arisen in Japan, as has happened in many other countries. The purpose of this short essay is to examine euthanasia-related issues considered important in modern-day Japan by presenting and analyzing a novel by Japanese novelist Shichiri Nakayama, *The Legacy of Dr. Death* (4). This novel was made into a commercial film by director Yoshihiro Fukagawa, entitled *The Legacy of Dr. Death: Black File*, which was released in 2020 (5). I also compare the novel with the film and discuss the ethical significance of some of the differences between the two works. Below, I present a spoiler-free essay that will not reveal to the reader the identity of Dr. Death in either the novel or the film. For the purposes of this paper, euthanasia is defined as the act of killing an individual who is suffering severely in a peaceful