



SARTREAN EXISTENTIALISM IN KATOUH'S *AS LONG AS THE LEMON TREES GROW*: THE INTERRELATION BETWEEN MAUVAISE FOI AND RADICAL FREEDOM

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to offer a philosophical character analysis by exploring the interrelation of the existential dilemma experienced by Salama and Kenan in Zoulfa Katouh's novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. The research adopts Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist framework, particularly the concepts of Mauvaise Foi (Bad Faith) and Radical Freedom, which are central to understanding the characters' internal conflicts. Salama and Kenan are both torn in a situation of Mauvaise Foi or a condition where they are struggling against the inner turmoil between remaining to stay in their homeland out of duty and patriotism or fleeing to seek refugee for the sake of future and safety. Initially, they deceived themselves by feeling that they had no choice but to stay, when in fact they had an alternative option to leave. This is particularly aligned with the concept of Mauvaise Foi, in which individuals reject the truth about themselves and are trapped in an illusion that they have imposed. Radical Freedom, on the other hand, is the decision and form of manifestation they finally make with full awareness and responsibility for their freedom. These two existential concepts dynamically interact to shape the character's existential journey throughout the novel. By analyzing how these two existential concepts operate and interact within the narrative, this study highlights the characters' philosophical journey and contributes to the broader discussion of existentialism in war literature.

Keywords: *Existential dilemma, Mauvaise Foi, Radical Freedom, Sartre's existentialism, Character's existential journey*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menawarkan analisis karakter secara filosofis dengan mengeksplorasi keterkaitan dilema eksistensial yang dialami oleh Salama dan Kenan dalam novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* karya Zoulfa Katouh. Penelitian ini mengadopsi kerangka kerja eksistensial Jean-Paul Sartre, khususnya konsep Mauvaise Foi (Bad Faith) dan Kebebasan Radikal, yang menjadi inti untuk memahami konflik internal para karakter. Salama dan Kenan berada dalam situasi Mauvaise Foi atau kondisi di mana mereka berjuang melawan gejolak batin antara tetap tinggal di tanah air mereka karena tugas dan patriotisme atau melarikan diri untuk mengungsi demi masa depan dan keselamatan. Awalnya, mereka menipu diri sendiri dengan merasa bahwa mereka tidak memiliki pilihan selain tinggal, padahal sebenarnya mereka memiliki pilihan alternatif untuk pergi. Hal ini sejalan dengan konsep Mauvaise Foi, di mana individu menolak kebenaran tentang diri mereka sendiri dan terjebak dalam ilusi yang mereka buat sendiri. Sedangkan Radical Freedom adalah keputusan dan bentuk manifestasi yang akhirnya mereka ambil dengan penuh kesadaran dan tanggung jawab atas kebebasan mereka. Kedua konsep eksistensial ini berinteraksi secara dinamis membentuk perjalanan eksistensial karakter di sepanjang novel. Dengan menganalisis bagaimana kedua konsep eksistensial ini beroperasi dan berinteraksi dalam narasi, penelitian ini menyoroti perjalanan filosofis para karakter dan berkontribusi pada diskusi yang lebih luas tentang eksistensialisme dalam literatur perang.

Kata kunci: *Dilema Eksistensial, Mauvaise Foi, Kebebasan Radikal, Eksistensialisme Sartre, Perjalanan Eksistensial Karakter*

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INTRODUCTION

Humans have long struggled with existential issues, including the challenges of freedom and the pursuit of meaning in a world that is often chaotic and uncertain. These conflicts intensify during periods of oppression, when humans are forced to face their sense of autonomy and purpose in life. This issue is also reflected in Zoulfia Katouh's *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, where characters strive for freedom amidst the brutal realities of war. Existentialism examines these conflicts as one of the most significant philosophical movements in the field of literary studies. Existentialism is a philosophical approach that emphasizes the study of humans and the meaning of their existence in the world (Akinbode, 2023), particularly through the lens of choice, responsibility, and the rejection of predetermined roles. As Sartre asserts in *Being and Nothingness* (1943) that existence precedes essence, emphasizing that individuals are not born with a solid identity or purpose, but rather, they will define themselves through the actions, choices, and responsibilities they take. He further explains in *Existentialism is a Humanism* (2007), "*He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself.*" According to Sartre, people are capable of both questioning themselves and rejecting outside influences. To put it another way, individuals are always questioning who and what they are meant to be as beings.

Consciousness, according to Sartre (1943), is a form of existence that is conscious of its emptiness. People can rule out some possibilities and create lives based on denial related to this insight, which often leads to self-deception. At this juncture, Sartre introduced the concept of *Mauvaise Foi* (Bad Faith), a psychological condition in which a person denies the existence of freedom by leading an inauthentic life. He defines it as "*a lie to oneself, on condition that we distinguish the lie to oneself from lying in general*" (Sartre, 1943). As a form of self-deception, Sartre argues that people who live in bad faith embrace identities that are imposed by society, culture, or personal experience. This involves them denying their freedom by adopting socially expected roles and identities. (Das, 2024; Mawyer, 2001). In literature, characters with bad faith often appear to have no other option. In order to escape accountability for their acts, they craft stories that enable them to conceal themselves behind situations, portraying themselves as heroes or victims. Sartre's theory states that these people engage in "*a perpetual game of escape from the for-itself to the for-others and from the for-others to the for-itself,*" oscillating between facticity (the tangible conditions of life) and transcendence (the capacity to envision the future and make decisions) (Sartre, 1943)

In contrast, Sartre regards freedom as the essence of human existence. He points out that freedom is an essential aspect of being, rather than an added trait, as he stated that "*the act is the expression of freedom*". Therefore, one's freedom, which involves complete responsibility, is reflected in every human action. Insofar as "*man is condemned to be free,*" Sartre famously claims that "*he carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders.*" This condition forces individuals

to engage in constant decision-making and to bear the consequences of those decisions. Sartre refers to “*the twofold feeling of anguish and responsibility*” as the result of existential anxiety and responsibility brought on by awareness of this condition. Full awareness is marked by the realization that “*he no longer has remorse or excuse; he is nothing but a freedom which perfectly reveals itself.*” In *Existentialism is a Humanism* (2007), Sartre reaffirms the idea that humans do not have a predetermined nature at birth. Instead, they become something according to the choices and actions they take as a project of themselves.

The war-torn setting of the novel, where the main characters Salama and Kenan face existential questions about their freedom, made these ideas profoundly pertinent. *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* (Katouh, 2022) tells the story of Salama Kassab, a pharmacy student with limited medical training who has to become an emergency medic to help those adversely affected in the war. She can't be free until she keeps her promise to her brother to protect his wife, Layla. The only sensible option for her to do is to leave Syria and migrate to Germany to keep both Layla and herself safe. At the same time, though, Salama is having a hard time with her sense of duty as a citizen to stay still and save as many lives as she is capable of. Kenan, another main character, goes through a similar internal struggle. He uses the media to record the revolution and is a staunch opponent of the regime. In spite of the fact that he could escape, he chooses not to and fully embraces the role of the resistance. Salama and Kenan are both free in a lot of ways, but they are also trapped by the roles they have made for themselves. Salama and Kenan's internal conflicts are a reflection of the idea of *Mauvaise Foi* (Bad Faith), according to Cropper & Browne (2024), who claim that when people encounter existential emptiness, they frequently fool themselves by denying their freedom to escape the obligations that accompany it.

As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow was chosen as the object of this study because it offers an exploration of existentialism in the context of war and refugees. This piece of literature eloquently illustrates how decisions involving life and death give the idea of freedom an urgent and concrete meaning. The novel, which is set in a war-torn setting, demonstrates how the characters' perceptions of freedom and their capacity for decision-making are impacted by their actual circumstances. The purpose of this study is to examine the ways in which Katouh's novel employs Sartre's existential concepts of *mauvaise foi* and radical freedom, as well as to explore how these philosophical ideas influence the psychological and moral development of the characters. By analyzing the characters' negotiations between self-deception, responsibility, and authentic choice, this research aims to demonstrate how existentialist themes operate within wartime literature to illuminate the inner struggles and ethical dilemmas experienced by individuals in extreme circumstances. Accordingly, the study seeks to address how *mauvaise foi* and radical freedom, as articulated in Sartrean existentialism, are embodied by the protagonists in *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, and how the transition from self-deception to authentic agency shapes their existential transformation throughout the narrative.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several previous studies have examined this novel from various perspectives. Nopriyanto (2024) identified Salama's trauma symptoms, such as panic attacks and hallucinations, as a response to the violence of the Syrian Civil War, while Marantika & Grace (2024) Analyzed her experiences as manifestations of PTSD. Both studies highlight how psychological suffering shapes Salama's character. From a different perspective, Latumeten & Nofansyah (2024) Use ecocriticism to show how nature in the novel symbolizes belonging and survival. Similarly, Aliyya (2024) Applies Freud's psychoanalytic perspective to examine Salama's inner conflict, emphasizing her struggle between the id, ego, and superego. Despite the various approaches, none of the studies mentioned engage with Sartrean existentialism, particularly the concepts of Mauvaise Foi and Radical Freedom, to explore the philosophical depths of the characters' struggles in the novel.

Beyond this novel, existentialism has been widely applied in literary analysis. Peng (2021) offers a new perspective on freedom in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, through Sartre's philosophy that despite biological and situational determinism, Tess exercises freedom by consciously making choices and striving towards the natural flow of life which highlight themes of consciousness, alienation, fear, and free will. Moslehuddin (2021) presents Samsa and Meursault as symbols of existential alienation, stressing the enduring relevance of characters who reject societal norms and confront meaninglessness in *The Metamorphosis* and *The Outsider*. Nurbudhiati (2015) reveals that Scout Finch's resistance to authority in *To Kill a Mockingbird* illustrates an existential pursuit of authenticity, where asserting one's freedom against social norms becomes a form of self-definition. Arafat et al. (2022) find an existential void in Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which contrasts post-war despair with the modern human experience. Sartre's philosophy has also been applied to this fiction. Kondragunta (2017) critiques Amir's inauthenticity in *The Kite Runner*, while Das (2024) compares social conformity and personal meaning through Sartrean and Camusian perspectives. Akinbode (2023) emphasizes freedom and moral responsibility as inseparable in Sartre's thought, while Shiota (2023) describes guilt as a suppressor of freedom in Sartre's play *The Flies*.

Similarly, Mawyer (2001) applies Sartre's ideas to *Invisible Man* to show how existential freedom shapes identity formation. Campbell (1977); Ebo & Okewu (2024) argue and criticize that Sartre's total freedom without external considerations can lead to ethical relativism. Both emphasize that authentic freedom must include responsibility and recognition of social context. While this research has explored Sartre's existentialism thoroughly in the literature, no research has specifically applied Sartre's ideas, especially Mauvaise Foi and Radical Freedom, to Katouh's novel. This study addresses this gap by examining how these concepts shape the existential struggles of the characters in *As Long As the Lemon Trees Grow*. In doing so, this study seeks to explain how Sartre's ideas can illuminate the struggles of the characters in the novel.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach to examine the existential struggles of characters in *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, applying Jean-Paul Sartre's framework of Mauvaise Foi (Bad Faith) and Radical Freedom. Qualitative research refers to an idiographic style of analysis that uses natural language, small and purposeful samples, and focuses on specific individuals, events, and contexts rather than patterns that can be generalised across large populations. (Gerring, 2017).

Data Collection

Data collection involves close reading of the novel to identify existential themes, particularly Sartre's Mauvaise Foi and Radical Freedom. As Brummett (2019) Explains, close reading critically analyzes texts: written, oral, or visual, to uncover deeper meanings, rhetoric, and ideology. The study also integrates secondary sources, such as journal articles and books on existentialism, to support theoretical analysis. These secondary sources are used to explain abstract existential concepts as a basis for justification, to validate interpretations and clarify theoretical terminology, and as context, to situate the novel within the broader tradition of existentialist philosophy and literary studies.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using the Interpretive Description method, which is descriptive and interpretive, focusing on how the main character's decisions and self-perceptions reflect the existence of Mauvaise Foi (bad intentions) and the emergence of radical freedom. As (Thorne, 2016) Explains, this approach aims to answer real-world questions by looking at what is known and unknown from the available evidence, and how relevant it is to the context where the research findings will be used. The analysis also highlights how the characters' existential conflicts and changes develop gradually, from the denial of freedom to the realisation of responsibility and self-freedom.

Operational Definition and Coding System

To organize and present the findings systematically, each quote is coded using a specific format that indicates the character, the existential concept being analyzed, and the page number from which the quote is taken. The coding format is as follows: **[Character Initial]/[Concept Code]/[Page Number]**. For instance, the code **S/SR/8** refers to a quote from *Salama* (S), related to the concept of *Social Role Adoption* (SR), found on page 8 of the novel.

The codes are defined as follows:

- **S:** Salama
- **K:** Kenan
- **SR:** Social Role Adoption
- **DF:** Denial of Freedom

- **FT:** Facticity vs. Transcendence
- **RF:** Radical Freedom

This coding system allows for clear identification and categorization of textual evidence related to each existential concept and character, facilitating a more focused and structured analysis.

FINDINGS

To answer the research question, the following section presents excerpts from the novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, analyzed using the Sartrean approach. The findings are categorized based on the manifestations of the concept of Mauvaise Foi-i.e., Social Role Adoption, Denial of Freedom, and Facticity vs. Transcendence, as well as Radical Freedom.

a. Social Role Adoption

Social Role Adoption is a condition in which an individual takes on a social role imposed on him/her to avoid responsibility for personal choices. The following quotes illustrate this tendency.

Table 1. Quotations of Salama and Kenan Indicating Social Role Adoption

Code	Quotes
S/SR/4	<i>Having spent one year at pharmacy school, I was the equivalent of a seasoned doctor, and after their last pharmacist was buried under the rubble of his home, there was no other choice. (Katouh, 2022, p. 4)</i>
S/SR/8	<i>Layla, I'm the only pharmacist left in three neighbourhoods. If I leave, who will help them? The crying children. The sniper victims. The wounded men. (Katouh, 2022, p. 8)</i>
S/SR/17	<i>I am needed. 'I couldn't. (Katouh, 2022, pg.17)</i>
S/SR/18	<i>I need the hospital. I need it to forget my pain. To keep my hands busy so my mind doesn't scream itself hoarse. To save lives. (Katouh, 2022, pg.18)</i>
S/SR/29	<i>I'm not a surgeon. I wasn't made to cut into bodies, stitch wounds, and amputate limbs, but I made myself become that person. (Katouh, 2022, pg.29)</i>
K/SR/91	<i>This is my country. If I run away – if I don't defend it, then who will? (Katouh, 2022, pg.91)</i>

K/SR/92	<i>I record the protests. "I lose all feeling in my knees, and my stomach plummets. "You... you what?" I whisper. He shudders and his hold tightens on Lama's hand. "It's why I can't leave. (Katouh, 2022, pg.92)</i>
K/SR/95	<i>I'd be cutting out my heart by leaving. This land is me and I am her. (Katouh, 2022, pg.95)</i>

b. Denial of Freedom

Denial of Freedom is an individual's denial of his/her freedom, often by blaming external circumstances. The following quotes reflect how the characters suppress their ability to choose freely.

Table 2. Quotations Indicating Denial of Freedom

Code	Quotes
S/DF/4	<i>This wasn't supposed to be my life. (Katouh, 2022, pg.4)</i>
S/DF/11-12	<i>There's nothing to fight for because we can't fight. No one's helping us! I volunteer at the hospital because I can't stand seeing people die. But that's it. (Katouh, 2022, pg.11-12)</i>
S/DF/13	<i>There are people suffering, and I can help. It's the reason I wanted to be a pharmacist. But I refuse to think about why they end up in the hospital. Why all of this is happening. (Katouh, 2022, pg.13)</i>
S/DF/226	<i>We are stripped from our choices, so we latch onto what will ensure our survival. (Katouh, 2022, pg.226)</i>
K/DF/91	<i>"Wouldn't you leave, given the chance?" He has two very malnourished siblings under his care as reasons to leave, so what's stopping him? The hospital is the only thing holding me back. "No," he says without hesitation, looking me straight in the eye. (Katouh, 2022, pg.91)</i>
K/DF/167	<i>He shakes his head. "Salama, please. Please don't ask me to leave. I have to show the world what's happening." His words are certain but his face has settled on one emotion. Fear. [...]. He wants to</i>

	<i>leave but the guilt is what's holding him back. His duty to his country. (Katouh, 2022, pg.167)</i>
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c. Facticity vs. Transcendence

Facticity vs. Transcendence is the tension between the unchangeable facts of life (such as the past or social status) and the individual's ability to imagine the future and make choices. The following quote reveals how the characters struggle between accepting their limitations and imagining other possibilities.

Table 3. Quotations Indicating Conflict Between Facticity and Transcendence in Salama and Kenan

Code	Quotes
S/FT/8	<i>Hamza's voice whispers in my mind, tinged with worry. Salama, promise me. Promise. (Katouh, 2022, pg.8)</i>
S/FT/9	<i>This...this is wrong. She shouldn't be here. (Katouh, 2022, pg.9)</i>
S/FT/37	<i>No. No. How can I think of my safety when I vowed to heal the sick?. (Katouh, 2022, pg.37)</i>
S/FT/43	<i>That I'm torn between my duty to my brother and to the hospital, the ropes holding me on each side both fraying at the edges. (Katouh, 2022, pg.43)</i>
K/FT/95	<i>He shrugs. "I guess I love Syria so much that the consequences don't matter." (Katouh, 2022, pg.95)</i>
K/FT/104	<i>But it's clear from the flickering flames in his eyes and the suppressed agony in his words: He knows that a desolate future awaits him if he doesn't leave. He's not a fool. But his heart overflows with so much love for his country he's willing to let it drown him and his loved ones. (Katouh, 2022, pg.104)</i>

2. The Manifestation of Radical Freedom in Salama and Kenan

Radical Freedom is the full acceptance of one's freedom and the responsibilities that come with it. The quotes below show the moments where the characters begin to assert this freedom.

Table 4. Quotations Indicating Radical Freedom in Salama and Kenan

Code	Quotes
S/RF/93-94	<i>I have to leave. I have to take Layla and leave, or she won't survive this. Not the pregnancy, but me. She won't survive my death. And I won't survive hers. (Katouh, 2022, pg.93-94)</i>
S/RF/94	<i>I have to leave. The decision blooms an ache inside my heart and the backs of my eyes burn with tears that refuse to fall. How did I not see it? (Katouh, 2022, pg.94)</i>
S/RF/112	<i>I take a deep breath, steeling myself for the words that will be my undoing. "I've decided we're going to leave. I'm going to talk to Am and I'm going to find a way to pay for that boat." Layla stops short, her mouth dropping open. "What—what changed your mind?" she whispers. I scratch at a stain on my sleeve. "Reality set in." (Katouh, 2022, pg.112)</i>
S/RF/113	<i>I let out a choked laugh. "I'm... not doing anything wrong by leaving." (Katouh, 2022, pg.113)</i>
S/RF/115-116	<i>As soon as I allowed myself to think about leaving, seedlings of hope grew in my brain, taking over my imagination. Not a might life, but a real life with Layla and an apartment in Germany. It's cramped but that's okay. We heal and fill it with laughter and Baby Salama's drawings. And one day, I find the will to pen the magical stories I have long buried deep in my mind. She and I, we make a home from what's left of our family. (Katouh, 2022, pg.115-116)</i>
K/RF/91	<i>Kenan's jaw is tight, his shoulders shaking silently. (Katouh, 2022, pg.91)</i>
K/RF/229	<i>A strangled sound escapes his throat. "You're right. I promised my father I'd take care of them. That I'd carry them in my eyes. I can't guarantee they'll find my uncle when they land in Italy. I can't even guarantee that Lama will survive being dehydrated. But—I also have a duty to my country." He threads his hands through the dirt, and the dull red-brown stains them, smearing itself into his nailbeds and the cracks in his skin. (Katouh, 2022, pg.229)</i>

K/RF/230	<i>He blinks a few tears before wiping them with his sleeve. "I can't believe I'm going to do this," he whispers. My heart softens, breaks. "Kenan. Syria isn't just what we're standing on. It's Lama growing up, reaching her teens with her two big brothers right there with her. It's Yusuf getting the highest grades and telling everyone about the lemon trees in Homs. It's you, making sure we never forget our reason to fight. It's you and—" I stop, catching myself before I say something stupid. Something about a might life. A small smile finally settles on his lips, and I feel myself blush. "You're right," he whispers. I sigh with relief. (Katouh, 2022, pg.230)</i>
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DISCUSSION

Salama and Kenan's journey in *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* illustrates multiple forms of Mauvaise Foi manifestations that occur to them, wherein they denied their own freedom to be able to save themselves by leaving their homeland, Syria, by hiding behind due to external pressures or moral obligations that bind them. The following section explores three main manifestations of Mauvaise Foi in Salama and Kenan: Self-deceptions are depicted through social role adoption, denial of existential freedom, and conflict between facticity and transcendence.

Self-Deception Through Social Role Adoption

In the context of Sartre's existentialism, Mauvaise Foi (Bad Faith) is a form of self-deception, where one denies their freedom by hiding the truth from oneself. Sartre stated that, *"bad faith then has in appearance the structure of falsehood. Only what changes everything is the fact that in bad faith it is from myself that I am hiding the truth"* (Sartre, 1943). This indicates that a person living in Mauvaise Foi (Bad Faith) is aware of their freedom; however, to feel secure or important, they act as though they have no alternative to it. It is evident from the passages (S/SR/4), (S/SR/8), and (S/SR/17), that Salama chose to become a doctor in crisis because she believed *"there was no other choice"* rather than out of free will. To those around her, she seemed to be the only hope. In actuality, Sartre argues that meaning is created by human choice, not by circumstances themselves. Salama, however, conceals the fact that she had the option to leave and rejects this independence. In (S/SR/18), Salama utilizes her position in the hospital as a means of escape from her own trauma as well as a societal duty. A person who relies on roles imposed by society, instead of facing one's inner reality, is another form of Bad Faith.

The high point occurs in (S/SR/29) when Salama declares that she has never envisioned herself as a surgeon and that she is "not one of them", yet she pushes herself to "become" one. This reflects Sartre's statement that *"bad faith is a lie to oneself,"* and that *"judgments which all aim at establishing that I am not what I am."* Salama constructs assumptions about herself in order to try to fit into social expectations rather than her own self. Kenan also demonstrates Mauvaise Foi by taking up a social role as a historical observer and nationalist. Since he believes his identity is tied to documenting the war, he sees no option but to stay in Syria, is shown in (K/SR/91) and

(K/SR/92). He does not realize that he still has the option to escape because he associates his identity with that duty. The phrase "This land is me and I am her" from K/SR/95 suggests that Kenan has fully assimilated into his country. He blurs the lines separating himself as a free individual and as a symbol of national duty. In this instance, he rejects the idea of himself as a "subjectivity" who is capable of making choices apart from his position. In Mauvaise Foi (Bad Faith), this type of self-disguise is prevalent when a person would rather hide behind a social identity than confront the fact that he is truly free to choose.

Despite coming from diverse backgrounds and situations, Salama and Kenan both have a propensity to adopt social roles to exist in Mauvaise Foi (Bad Faith). They disguise their fear of freedom and the prospect of alternative options by adopting these personas as saviors, doctors, patriots, or documentarians. (Perna, 2003) Reminds us that bad faith is rooted in the natural attitude of humans towards reality, namely the relationship between Being-in-itself (reality without consciousness) and Being-for-itself (human consciousness). This attitude makes it difficult for individuals, including Salama and Kenan, to sometimes escape from social roles that limit their choices and freedom, because they are still trapped in a consciousness that has not fully accepted its existential responsibilities.

Denial of Existential Freedom

The concept of the denial of freedom in Sartrean existentialism is the core of bad faith. Sartre asserts that "*one does not undergo his bad faith... but consciousness affects itself with bad faith*" (1943), emphasizes how Mauvaise Foi (Bad Faith) is not a passive condition but a deliberate act of self-deception that occurs when someone consciously limits their freedom to avoid bearing the consequences of that freedom. In the quote (S/DF/4), when Salama says "This wasn't supposed to be my life," she shows her rejection of the reality of her current life. She seems to believe that all of the things that happened to her were unintentional rather than the result of her conscious decision. Sartre argues that even in the direst circumstances, people always have a choice. However, Salama decides not to view herself as a free subject but rather as a victim of fate. Then, in the quote (S/DF/11-12), she says, "There's nothing to fight for because we can't fight." In this instance of Mauvaise Foi (Bad Faith), Salama persuades herself that she is powerless to do anything but provide hospital patient care. As Sartre once remarked, "*Bad faith is a lie to oneself*," and Salama is deceiving herself by believing that she is incapable of doing anything more than surviving. It is also shown from the statement in (S/DF/13) how Salama deliberately refuses to confront reality and the causes of all of this. She expresses a kind of flight from existential responsibility when she adds, "I refuse to think about why all of this is happening."

Sartre calls this condition "*a perpetual game of escape from the for-itself to the for-others*," which is an escape from the authentic self into a role determined by others or circumstances. The quote (S/DF/226), where Salama firmly feels that she has lost her freedom, is the pinnacle. According to Sartre, this is a rejection of responsibility for freedom itself, not because she has lost her freedom, but rather because she would rather think she is not free for the reason that to avoid having to deal with the pressure of having to make tough decisions. Kenan also shows Bad Faith

by denying his freedom. In (K/DF/91), when asked if he would leave if given the chance, he replies, "No." Although his answer seems firm, it masks an internal conflict. He conceals his internal struggle and reduces the nuanced aspects of his decisions to simple binary responses. This conflict is made more apparent in (K/DF/167) when the story shows Kenan's terrified look despite the firmness of his statements. "Please don't ask me to leave. I have to show the world what's happening." Yet, his expression, tense emotions, and stormy eyes, reveal hesitation and fear.

Though the plan of staying is his only option, his body language shows the desire to escape. This demonstrates how, following Sartre, Kenan's consciousness causes him to descend into Mauvaise Foi (Bad Faith). Kenan and Salama both exhibit Mauvaise Foi (Bad Faith) by denying themselves their freedom. They act to indicate that they have no alternate possibilities, but according to Sartre's existentialism, we are at all times free. Here, denying it becomes a form of self-protection from the harshness of reality.

Conflict Between Facticity and Transcendence

Sartre distinguishes between facticity (the realities we cannot change) and transcendence (the ability to transcend that reality through choice). 'Facticity' refers to the truths of our existence up to this moment, and which we cannot change, whereas 'transcendence' here is understood to describe our attitude towards these truths (Waldron, 2023). The experiences of Kenan and Salama eloquently demonstrate this existential duality. While transcendence is the ability to overcome these constraints by free will and conscious choice, facticity refers to tangible reality and one-sided limitations (such as prior obligations, physical conditions, and social duties). This conflict plagues both characters, who are torn between using their radical freedom to remake themselves and accepting the constraints placed upon them. For Salama, the evidence clearly illustrates her entrapment in fact and her simultaneous desire for transcendence. Her mental and emotional attachment to a promise made to Hamza is evident in the quote (S/FT/8), which restricts her ability to escape the conflict area. The factual requirements imposed by prior commitments are exemplified by this pledge.

Similar to this, Salama's realization that "this is wrong" in (S/FT/9) highlights her existential conflict between facticity and her inability to accept it, particularly in light of Layla's danger on the outside. The tug between Salama's factual ties and her transcendental freedom to choose between duty and survival is further highlighted by (S/FT/37), which depicts her internal struggle between self-preservation and her professional and moral pledge to heal the sick. Salama's oscillations between her responsibilities to her brother and the hospital are vividly expressed by the metaphor in S/FT/43, "the ropes that bind me on each side," which illustrates how her facticity limits her while she is still in a condition of undetermined transcendence. When taken as a whole, these chapters show Salama's continuous battle to rise beyond the factual limitations placed on her by duty, devotion, and broken vows, despite the fact that she is greatly overburdened by them.

Kenan's experience with facticity versus transcendence also demonstrates a poignant existential struggle. His claim that he loved Syria so much "that the consequences didn't matter" in (K/FT/95) illustrates how emotional connection, which acts as a self-imposed restriction on his

freedom, rationalizes and obscures facticity of the deadly risk of staying. This perspective is further supported by evidence from (K/FT/104): due to a love that "overwhelms" and eventually "drowns" him, Kenan decides not to act on his knowledge of the dire destiny that awaits him if he does not leave. This illustrates his inability to get beyond his situation and his inevitable fall into bad faith. To put it briefly, the quotes from both characters demonstrate the existential conflict between transcendence and facticity that Kenan and Salama are experiencing. They struggle to fully use their independence despite being conscious of its constraints, which include obligations, love, danger threats, and promises. This exemplifies Sartre's notion that although people possess radical freedom, they may act in Mauvaise Foi (bad faith) when they refuse to accept the responsibility for making real decisions due to the weight of facticity.

The Manifestation of Radical Freedom in Salama and Kenan

In Sartre's philosophy, Radical Freedom is the core of human existence. Humans, he argues, do not have a defining essence at birth; rather, humans become who they are through the choices they make. As he states in *Existentialism is a Humanism*, "*Man is nothing other than his own project,*" and that man "*becomes who he is by what he does.*" *Freedom, therefore, is not an accessory to human existence it is the substance of human existence itself.* Sartre defines anguish as "*the consciousness of this freedom, the recognition that my future is my possibility, that it depends on me to bring it into existence and sustain it, that the only thing that separates me from it is my freedom*" (Peng, 2021). This anguish reveals how awareness of freedom can be both a burden and an opportunity, as individuals realise the weight of responsibility that comes with their choices. Salama demonstrates her radical freedom through a slow but transformative process that begins with her tendency to avoid major decisions, especially those concerning her and Layla's future. But over time, Salama begins to realise that not making a choice is also a choice, and she is responsible for the consequences that come along. When we take a look at (S/RF/93-94), Salama shows that she has accepted full responsibility for their life. This is in line with Sartre's statement: "*The indispensable and fundamental condition of all action is the freedom of the acting being*" (Sartre, 1943). She no longer hides behind trauma or the expectations of others, but chooses based on her awareness, even though it is difficult.

Next, in the quote (S/RF/94), Salama undergoes a difficult but vital moment of enlightenment, where she understands that all this time she has denied the reality of choice. The sentence "How did I not see it?" becomes a symbol of her reflection on the freedom that has been ignored. Sartre calls this a form of "bad faith" that can finally be overcome through full awareness of freedom and responsibility. In the quote (S/RF/112), Salama expresses her decision to Layla by stating, "I've decided we're going to leave." Although this decision is heavy and filled with fear, she does it consciously and actively, as a form of radical freedom to go beyond the past and the trauma that shaped her. Here, it is seen that free action is not an impulsive act, but the result of deep reflection and awareness of reality. Furthermore, when Salama says, on the (S/RF/113), it shows an acceptance of her freedom and a release from the guilt that has limited her actions. This is in line with Sartre's idea that humans are "*condemned to be free,*" meaning they cannot escape

freedom, and are therefore responsible for every decision they undertake. The climax is seen in her vision of the future (S/RF/115-116), where Salama not only survives but actively creates new meaning from her life. This is a form of transcendence, namely the ability of humans to go beyond facticity and create a new future through freedom.

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre states: "*Freedom makes itself an act.*" Mackenzie (1994) also emphasizes that for Sartre, violence and terror are not merely oppressive forces, but are essential for the emergence of human freedom. In a social constellation, individuals can even use terror as a mechanism that solidifies social ties and secures their freedom. This concept speaks to Salama's experience of gaining freedom via her decisions within the context of conflict and devastation, particularly when those decisions support a battle and survival that is not solely hers. Kenan's journey in realizing his freedom is more implicit, but still significant. Initially, Kenan seems burdened by his promise to his father and his responsibility to his country. However, in the scene where we take a look at (K/RF/229), he begins to realise that there are two equally valid choices, which require him to determine his viewpoint. The statement on (K/RF/230) shows that the decision to leave Syria was not forced, but rather the result of awareness and acceptance of personal responsibility, which, according to Sartre, is the main characteristic of radical freedom. Quote (K/RF/91) shows that before Kenan reached this decision, he was experiencing tremendous emotional stress, as seen from his physical description: "Kenan's jaw is tight, his shoulders shaking silently." This is a symbol of existential anxiety that marks the transition from bad faith to awareness of his freedom.

In contrast, in quote (K/RF/229), Kenan starts to openly admit his moral dilemma. He understands that he must give his decision some sort of significance and no longer believes that one option is better than another. This demonstrates that freedom in the Sartrean meaning is not freedom without purpose, but rather freedom that is coated with accountability for one's own principles. As in *Being and Nothingness*: "*That man... is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being.*" Kenan ultimately chose not because of external pressure, but because of his awareness of the personal meaning of "Syria" namely, his family, his memories, and the people he loves. In this case, Kenan becomes a real representation of Sartre's statement that in choosing oneself, humans also choose values and meaning for the world, as stated in *Existentialism is Humanism* "*In choosing myself, I choose man*". The power to choose meaning and direction in spite of limitations is ultimately how Radical Freedom functions, as demonstrated by both Salama and Kenan. In the middle of trauma, fear, and devastation, both continue to demonstrate that human freedom is about how people react to their experiences, not what happens to them, and that is where their true humanity lies.

The Interrelation between Mauvaise Foi and Radical Freedom

Mauvaise Foi and Radical Freedom are closely related ideas in Sartre's existentialism, rather than being two inflexibly distinct ideas. Sartre (1943) described bad faith as "a lie to oneself." This indicates that the source of this untruth is not outside forces but rather a self-deceptive consciousness. The relationship between these two ideas is demonstrated in the novel *As Long as*

the Lemon Trees Grow through the internal conflict between the characters of Kenan and Salama, who are continuously torn between the need to deny their freedom of choice out of comfort or a sense of obligation to society. The conflict between radical freedom and Mauvaise Foi is portrayed in Salama's character when she denies her radical freedom in the quote (S/DF/4), implying that her current life is the product of an unintentional event rather than a deliberate choice. Salama does, however, also demonstrate the actual form of freedom at the same moment. As stated in the quote (S/SR/29), she deliberately decides to remain in the hospital and act as a medical worker. Here, Salama continues to transcend facticity when she makes the conscious decision to become a new version of herself, despite her initial denial of her ability. This illustrates that Mauvaise Foi can be a shortcut to avoid the responsibility of freedom, but at the same time, it does not eliminate freedom itself.

Sartre said that “*the one who practices bad faith is hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth*”, and this is also reflected in Kenan's actions. Kenan often shows his certainty and conviction in his decision to stay in Syria, such as his statement “in the quote (K/DF/91). However, his facial expression, full of fear and emotional conflict, narrated through Salama's dialogue as in the quote K/FT/104, shows that he is lying to himself. He chooses to reject the fact that he wants to leave, and this shows bad faith as a form of escape from freedom of choice. Ultimately, the interrelationship between Mauvaise Foi and Radical Freedom is a tug-of-war between fact and choice. Sartre wrote that “*bad faith does not come from outside to human reality [...], but consciousness affects itself with bad faith*”, and neither Salama nor Kenan is forced by the outside world to act as they do; rather, they consciously choose to believe that they have no choice. This is a form of lie that they create to avoid the anxiety of freedom of choice.

Moreover, throughout the story, both Salama and Kenan show moments of awareness of their freedom. Salama ultimately chooses to escape the war zone and frees herself from the role that she previously considered to be her destiny. Kenan, in the same way, although initially rejecting the possibility of leaving, eventually changes his mind and chooses to leave for the safety of his family. This shows that the awareness of freedom cannot be completely silenced. Even in bad faith, there is still room for radical freedom to bridle. Thus, Mauvaise Foi and Radical Freedom in this novel do not stand as absolute opposition, but as two sides of human consciousness that constantly struggle between the fear of freedom and the demand to live that freedom itself. As Sartre (1943) said, *We can see the use which bad faith can make of these judgments which all aim at establishing that I am not what I am* in other words, it is a subtle way to pretend to have no choice when in reality humans always have an attachment to the freedom to choose.

CONCLUSION

Through the lens of Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy of existentialism, this research analyzes how the concepts of Mauvaise Foi and Radical Freedom are manifested through the characters of Salama and Kenan. The results show that both characters are facing deep existential dilemmas in living a life filled with limitations and responsibilities. But in the end, they are able to embrace the freedom themselves. Salama, initially shackled by social expectations and guilt, chooses to leave Syria which is a decision that reflects an acceptance of responsibility and the ability to transform

suffering into a new path. Kenan also experiences a shift from passivity to active choice-making, integrating his role as a child and citizen into an existential consciousness. By using Sartre's perspective, this research shows that war and displacement are not only external violence that marginalises humans, but also become internal conflicts that must be faced consciously. In the context of literature and existentialism, this study builds a bridge between trauma and freedom in contemporary narratives, that humans are not only victims of circumstances, but also creators of meaning. This study affirms that even in chaos and suffering, humans remain fundamentally free, and it is in the recognition of freedom that true human existence can be found.

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