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Article

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HUMAN PERSON AND THE MORALITY OF SUICIDE IN MODERN SOCIETY

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Abstract

This essay evaluated Kant's notion of irrationality of suicide in reference to the values of human person as a subject of lived-experiences. The study examined and gives a clearer definition of the human person within the resolve to suicide as a means of overcoming human pains, sufferings, dissatisfactions and limitations through the understanding of Kant's categorical imperatives, freedom and the autonomy of will in the expression of human actions and choices. Through the examinations of Kant's irrationality of suicide, the study aimed at the values of human life in faces of the effects of existential absurdities and wills enable the human person through one's actions and choices for the respect, protection and promotion of human rights and dignity. Adopting the expository and speculative methods of analysis, the study concluded by appraising Kant's thoughts on the morality of suicide by ethically identifying it as an irrational means of escaping from problems. It recommended the individual faced with weight of existential problem should look the effects of the problem by embracing the values of life through meaningful and right actions and choices.

Keywords: Human Person, Morality, Modern Society, Suicide, Self-Love.

Introduction

The conception of the morality of suicide in any given society is dependent on the values of life and the self-worth the individual as a victim places on his or herself as an existential reality and the ability of the individual in overcoming societal challenges or absurdities. Considering the circumstances that propel the adoption of the act, the morality of suicide is dependent on whether such act is acceptable or not, whether it is rational or

irrational. The morality of suicide indicates of the memories and values of the dead remain in the hearts of the living. It takes the living to the values of life, not in death.¹ With such motives of human actions and choices, every society has its own faults of values in evaluating the effects of suicide as a means of escaping societal and personal fears, worries and limitations as existential absurdities.² Modern civilization of values is not an exception to the effects of relevance of human life hinged the exercise of one's freedom and the autonomy of will through the expression of one's actions and choices. In analyzing the sociological responses to the morality of suicide, Jude Ibeh observed that:

As it is, opinions are divided on the unjustifiable alibis behind this very strange human existential problem. It has been sampled that many opt for, attempt and commit suicide because they erroneously see it as a lesser evil and speedy escape route out of miseries and 'unbearably' harsh realities of life. Besides, sorrowful death notes left behind by some suicides reveal that many of them felt suicidal actions are in fact, the fastest and effective opium and prophylaxis to humanly estimated and termed meaningless, purposeless and regrets-filled lives. Also, one-third of the people who kill themselves have been found to have been suffering from mental ailments and disorders, depressive illnesses such as a feeling of worthlessness and despair. It is equally mentioned that suicide is fuelled by psychological disruptions in social relations such as aggressive responses to frustration generated by the flow of economic forces, and hopelessness. For some, terminal illnesses, shameful events, and major life failures and losses, anxieties, depression, life and career crises, and overwhelming family difficulties, et cetera, are all causative factors of suicide.³

Hence, this paper relevantly seeks to expose the understanding Kant's irrationality of suicide in reference of the ontological values of the human person as a subject of lived-experience and as an existential agent of development. This is to understand Kant's intentions on the value of life that is independent of morality of suicide. It indicates that it is very imperative to create a commonplace to substitute "capacity for choice" for the dignity of the human person.⁴ This makes the injunction to "respect the dignity of people" very close to the injunction to "respect the choices of people/"⁵ With this concern, the thesis seeks to locate the foundation of human life and dignity and to know the very consequences that follow from it, that is, by knowing the very nature of the life of the human person and what are demanded of him or her in overcoming the situations that may compare him or her to resolving to committing suicide.⁶ The study interrogates the view of Kant's notion of the

¹Omoregbe, J. O., *The human predicament: has human life on earth any ultimate purpose. Any ultimate meaning?- An existential inquiry*. Inaugural Lecture Series, UNILAD, Akoka, 2001, p.4.

²Cholbi, M., Kant on euthanasia and the duty to die: Clearing the air. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, Vol. 41, No. 8, 2015, pp. 607–610.

³Ibeb, J. U., Looking at Suicide through the lens of African value for life: An effective prophylaxis for the world. *The Agora Magazine*, Vol. 3, 2021, pp. 7-9, see, p. 7.

⁴Cholbi, *Ibid*.

⁵Anifowose, A. O., Exploring the nexus between human dignity and justice. *Enwisdomization Journal*, 5(1), 2019, p. 22.

⁶Krapiec, M., On the sources of natural law. *Dialectics and Humanism: The Polish Philosophical Quarterly*, XVII(2), 1990, pp. 237-243, see, p. 240.

irrationality of suicide in order to have a more critical and good understanding of the contents of human action and choices in overcoming human absurdities. For no morality of reasoning being expressed is outside the exercise of human physical and mental abilities in terms of his or her acting. With the possible conviction, we believe that the human person is with his or her dignity but how this dignity was given to the human person is where the question arises and what differentiates the human person from every other animal being that we have, as on his or her ability to overcoming the situations that may make him or her to resorting to committing suicide as a means of escape.

Conceptual Clarification

Human Person: The word 'human' was first recorded in the mid-13th century and owes its existence to the middle French, "*human* which means, "of belonging to the individual". That word, in turn, comes from the Latin '*humans*'.⁷ The root words for humans are 'hum' and 'human' which literarily in Latin comes from *humus*, meaning earth and ground. Bringing these words together to be human, is thought to be a hybrid relative of homo, meaning man, and humus meaning earth.⁸ Hence, human person has to do with someone or somebody, characteristic of, or having the nature of people, meaning that human is consisting of people. When we say "people", we mean the social aspect of people,⁹ living on earth. Contemporary disputation exists that human can live on the moon/ or other planets. Flowing from the above etymology, we define a human to be any living or extinct member of the family *Hominidae* characterized by superior intelligence, articulate speech, and an erect carriage. Hence the word 'person' is a derivative of the Greek *prospon*, and some existentialist scholars trace its root meaning to the Latin *persona* which is its equivalent. Existentially, *Persona* means, "mask, especially as worn by an actor or social role in plays or drama", while *prospon* refers to as "mask", or more precisely "face". With the "face" construct of analysis, the humankind as a person is a being with many definition and characters based on his ability to make choices and decisions, and therein, acts upon them. Later, sociologically, this conception of the nature of humankind took a technical character to describe a unique being especially by the Romans to depict who bears legal rights as different from slaves who had no rights.¹⁰

The individual as a person exacts the totality of his or her own personhood, especially in relation to his own ontology. He or she synthesises the sense data for the development of experiential knowledge, imagines and remembers and performs instinctive actions and choices. He or she strives for sensuous good, and avoids sensuous evil and experiences emotions. He or she forms ideas, judgment, and with his or her rationality develops ability of intelligibility, freewill and spirituality. In all, he or she is a being that is conceived, lives along the values of existence, and dies when life fades.¹¹ The Anthropologists generally conclude that the human person deals is a being so fabulously rich and complex, and he or she is a being is practically indefinable. The human person is a complex and multidimensional

⁷Edema, P. A. & Isanbor, P. O., "Philosophical conception of man: its contemporary African analysis." In: M. A. Izibili, P. O. Isanbor & S. U. Attah (eds). *Studies in philosophy and society*, Vol. I. (pp. 38-65). Kagoma: Albertine Institute, 2018.

⁸Onah, G. I., *To restore the dignity of man: why and how?* The Fifty-Seventh Founders' Day Lecture, UNN, 5th Oct., 2017.

⁹Dictionary. com/browse/human. Accessed November 20, 2021.

¹⁰Onah, *Ibid*.

¹¹Anifowose, 20.

reality.¹² Therefore, the elements that are essential for the achievement of one's personhood or fullness are also complex. They cannot be summarized and comprehended in a single claim or right. The various rights recognized or are emerging in the contemporary debate on human rights do not singly help to attain the fullness of personhood.¹³ The understanding of the nature of the human person has increasingly played a foundational role in the history of philosophy and modern sciences.

Suicide: It is difficult to have a general acceptable definition of the act, 'suicide', but it is generally considered or described as an act of self-killing. There have always been philosophical difficulties at defining and characterizing suicide precisely.¹⁴ This is possibly because such attempts are tied with intricate issues about how to describe and explain human actions in exact terms, simply because of its non-acceptance by many human societies. This makes it herculean and challenging to identify a set of conditions for suicide that fit well with the conventional usage of the term, considering its delimitation of the values of human person that must define it as a concept or as a reality.¹⁵ In many societies, suicide is considered as a strong negative emotional and/or moral condition connotations. It is seen as a taboo in some cultural and traditional societies, and while in some others, it is an act of bravery and honour for one to take his or her life. Here, it is easier for people to categorize self-killings intended to avoid unfavourable conditions as suicides than self-killings intended to benefit others.¹⁶ For a worthwhile definition and characterization, scholars opine that 'suicide' should not be equated with wrongful self-killing in the way that 'murder' is equated with wrongful killing of another, lest we render ourselves unable to refer even to the possibility of a morally justified self-killing.¹⁷ Conceptually put, suicide is "the act of intentionally causing one's own death"¹⁸ Suicide, the decision to end one's own life, usually stems from despair and an inability to cope with life. This has to be differentiated from attempted suicide or non-fatal suicidal behaviour which is self-injury with the desire to end one's life that does not result in death; and from assisted suicide which is when one individual helps another bring about their own death indirectly via providing either advice or the means to the end.¹⁹

Kant and the Irrationality of Suicide: The Imports of 'Self-Love' in Freedom

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was notable for his contributions in modern philosophy, and he was greatly associated with the synthesis of rationalism and empiricism for the development of the basis of human knowledge. This concern of knowledge development influenced other areas of philosophy: metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, axiology, law, politics and logics, and as the issues of knowledge are centred on the level of human reasoning in assessing the meaning and nature of perceptible realities around the individual as a subject of

¹²Aghaosa, I. P. & Isanbor, P. O., Human person and the metaphysics of education. *Euromentor: Journal Studies About Education*, XII(4), 2021, pp. 49-60.

¹³Kusumalayam, J., *Human rights*. Mumbai: St Paul Press, 2008, p. 314.

¹⁴Crosby, A.E. & Sacks, J.J., "Exposure to suicide: Incidence and association with suicidal ideation and behaviour. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behaviour* 32, 1994: pp. 321–328.

¹⁵Ogabo, G. A. & Adidi, D. T., A Reassessment of the rising tide of suicide in contemporary Nigerian society: A Kantian Interrogative. *Asian Journal of Social Science and Management Technology*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2020, pp. 102-109, see, 102.

¹⁶Garrison, E. P, *Attitudes towards suicide in ancient Greece*. USA: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

¹⁷Ogabo & Adidi, *Ibid*.

¹⁸Crosby & Sacks, 321

¹⁹Ogabo & Adidi, *Ibid*.

perception.²⁰ In addition to his groundbreaking work, in philosophy, he also made significant contributions in some of the sciences, despite the fact that Kant was very rigid and strict in his personal lifestyle, his contemporaries describe his lectures as humorous, entertaining, and even playful.²¹ Amongst his books, Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* helps to define the human person as a moral agent, and this understanding is mainly situated on Kantian conception of the knowledge. The human person is a product of his or her consciousness. The awareness of the self and the other selves within the opportune possibilities of knowledge and knowledge claim. For Kant, the level of consciousness determines the valuation of the human person in reference to the life he or she possesses. The life is only possibly defined due to the consciousness exhibits by the individual.²² Kant believed on the operation of one's self-consciousness for the development of the self and for the sustainability of the knowledge of the self and that of the other selves. The self-consciousness arises from the some particular contents or avenues of values and existence that are being present in each of one's representation of idea as the self.²³

Evaluating the philosophical contents of the morality of suicide, based on the interests of the human personhood, the following thoughts became the guiding theories: Act Utilitarianism, Rule Utilitarianism, Moral Nihilism, Kantian Deontology and Libertarianism. There are two major camps (the Pro-Suicide and Anti-Suicide) on the morality of personal's choice and duty.²⁴ These camps are based on the values of human actions and choices in relation to the respect, promotion and protection of human personhood.²⁵ The Pro-Suicide have reasons to embrace what the individual's choices dependent on, by the utility values of life and on the contents of one's pleasure. This is based on the situations that demand such action or choice to be made, in order to end life's misery or limitation.²⁶ On the other hand, the proponents of Anti-Suicide stance mainly used the deontological values of human personhood inherent in Kantian's categorical imperative to sustain their philosophical thought on the promotion of life irrespective of the situations that may demand otherwise.²⁷ Along the same line of argument Kant declared:

He who contemplates suicide should ask himself whether his action can be consistent with the idea of humanity as an end in itself. If he destroys himself in order to escape from painful circumstances, he uses a person merely as a means to maintain a tolerable condition up to the end of life. But a man is not a thing, that is to say, something which can be used merely as means, but must in all his actions be always

²⁰Kuehn, M., *Kant: A biography*, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

²¹Rohlf, M., "Immanuel Kant." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. First Published on May 20, 2010, Substantive Revision on the July 31, 2024.

²²Kant, *Groundwork for the metaphysics of morals*, p; 47.

²³Oyebola, E. O., "African anthropology: Toward returning to the respect human dignity and Communism in African Tradition" *The Agora Magazine*, 3, 2021, pp. 1-2.

²⁴Brassington, I., Killing people: What Kant could have said about Suicide and Euthanasia but did not. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, Vol. 32, No. 10, 2006, pp. 571–574.

²⁵Nashnoush, M. & Sheikh, M., The Morality of Suicide, *Health Population Journal*, 1(1), 2021, pp. 55-60, see, 57

²⁶Feldman, D. B., Can suicide be ethical? A utilitarian perspective on the appropriateness of choosing to die. *Death Studies*, 30(6), 2021, pp. 529–538.

²⁷Alvaro, C., God and Kant's suicide maxim. *Cultural: International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2021, pp. 27-53.

considered as an end in himself. I cannot therefore, dispose in any way the man in my own person so as to mutilate him, to damage or kill him.²⁸

This is the promotion of “self-love” and the needs to universalize the suffering and pains without adverse results that over-weigh or outweigh the individual’s capacity to overcome fears and the desires to live.²⁹ To Kant, it is difficult to convince one who is readily frustrated with life’s contents and based on the same of self-love, one may to be attempted to values death over life, with the view that he or she has overcoming his or her absurdities.³⁰ To be sure, suicide becomes a complex issue to condemn or to appraise, as people commit suicide for a number of reasons. It is on this dilemma that we consider the foundations of conviction on which some people as victims or perpetrators give reasons for suicide as Kant describes as being motivated by self-love. With such their self-conviction Kant presents the maxim of the person contemplating suicide as follows, “from self-love I make it my principle to shorten my life when its longer duration threatens more troubles than it promises agreeableness.”³¹

Hence, the question is whether, as rational beings, we have any duty to ourselves to preserve our own lives and never commit suicide. Is it conceivable or desirable that the suicide maxim becomes a universal law?³² Going by Kant’s summation on the evaluation of the human life in relations to the values of human relations in the society, where he categorizes the human dignity based on two classes or qualities of human actions and choices: on the operation of freedom and the autonomy of will, hence, the notion of the irrationality of suicide becomes very tenable and indispensable.³³ This is giving that human dignity deals with the individual uniqueness yet equality in value and the human person bear highest values of existence and meaning than other created beings on earth, and such the individual does not right to take his or her life at any given evaluation of his or her will.³⁴ It is on this conception of human life that Kant opines that human dignity is an existential value, and he sets his aim on explicating the superiority of the human person as higher compared with other beings.³⁵ Meaning that all persons are equal but other beings are not equal to that of the human species or human person and thus these two propositions make up the concept of human dignity. With this consciousness for the values of human personhood, we can recall that there are three basic tenets, based on which Kant’s notion of irrationality of suicide depends:

A maxim that cannot be made a universal law, either on the account of contradiction of itself or for the reason that it is in discordance with natural order should not be applied, man has a duty of preservation of the person in himself and that of the person in others and the proposition that the rational will as the very source of universally binding normative principles could not authorize its own destruction.

²⁸ Kant, *Groundwork for the metaphysics of morals*, p. 57

²⁹Ibeb, J. U., Looking at suicide through the lens of African value for life: An effective prophylaxis for the world. *The Agora Magazine*, Vol. 3, 2021, pp. 7-9, see, p. 7.

³⁰Kant, *Metaphysics of morals*, 214.

³¹ Kant, *Metaphysics of morals*, 214.

³²Alvaro, 2.

³³Kant, *Metaphysics of morals*, 213.

³⁴Cholbi, *Ibid*

³⁵Budić, M., Suicide, euthanasia and the duty to die. *Filozofija i društvo*, 29(1), 2018, pp. 88-114.

Hence, following the camps of interest on the morality of suicide, it is adjudged that camps (the Pro-Suicide and Anti-Suicide) admit that suicide is permissible. But, the Anti-Suicide only admits that suicide can only be permissible under the very extenuating circumstance that does not have existential solution or solutions to the situation (as problematic phenomena).³⁶ The evaluation of one's action and choices in relation to the values of human personhood is based on Kantian deontology. With such theory, Kant regards suicide as acceptable last resort when the individual as the subject of lived-experience loses the foundational or fundamental virtues that grant and sustain life's values, grating the human life beyond the interests of the individual.³⁷ This understanding tends to arouse some questions in the minds of the critical thinkers, such questions as: What dignifies humans above every other being? What gives us the sure evidence that the human beings are greater than every other created being? And if humanity comes into existence, what makes him dignified? Is there any higher Being that makes the human person higher than others? It is on this note of questioning that we set out to appraise Kant's notion of the irrationality of suicide as an action or choice in expressing of one's dissatisfactions for one's existential limitations and disappointments, in relation to the contemporary demands of human freedom and autonomy of will.

Human Person and the Suicidal Morality in Modern Nigeria

The Nigerian society has being a difficult one for a large number of Nigerians. The situations accessioned by the principalities and personalities of political corruptions and mismanagement of public funds are enlivening pains and sufferings, and making some genuine efforts of some Nigerians to be seemed as nothing, as they cannot really take care of their needs. These are leading Nigerians to deep aggression of choices, alienations of values and depressions of emotions, as many of them considering suicide as gateway to their freedom. It is on this conviction for the indispensability of human actions and choices in the development and formations of histories and civilizations along the values of human interests and needs for its definition, rationality and reasonability.³⁸

For instance, in Nigeria, the preponderance of suicidal cases greatly indicates the nature of the contents of human values in the faces of social, emotional, political, medical and economic circumstances. Traditionally, it is regarded as a taboo (an abominable act) for one to take his or her life just because of some existential absurdities which he or she felt that he or she cannot overcome while still alive.³⁹ Such individual probably sees suicide as a way of escaping from the existential absurdities or challenges of life and living. However, irrespective of the various reasons associated with suicidal behaviours ranging from economic hardship to mental illnesses, the common question on the lips of all facets of human civilization, we will be attempted to question what has gone wrong with the traditional and ontological values of the human person placed by the society.⁴⁰ Taking the report of a man who committed suicide within the University of Benin Staff Quarters during the eight months of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike at the years of 2022, leaves one to question the rationale behind the values of life and the reasonability for the such decision to be taken as an action against life. The report indicated that the man

³⁶Budić, *Ibid*.

³⁷Nashnoush & Sheikh, 57

³⁸Omoregbe, 4.

³⁹Ogabo & Adidi, 102.

⁴⁰Asadu, G. C. & Agbo, B. I., Immanuel Kant's notion of suicide: Implications for Nigerian society, *Philosophy and Praxis*, 11(1), 2021, pp. 17-31

committed the act based on his inability to meet up with his financial commitments and responsibilities as a husband and as a father, especially the payment of his children's school fees and for family up-keeping. The situated was propelled by the conditional result of the unpaid salaries of the striking workers by the Federal Government of Nigeria that insisted on "No Work, No Pay Policy", as championed or politically implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Productivity. The condition of economy crunch was also occasioned and sustained by the COVID-19 pandemic, that businesses into a deep down-turning and recession, and resulted to many businessmen and women to be mentally depressed and of which many of them contemplated, attempted and committed.

There was another report of a man who committed suicide also due to his inability to meet up with his financial commitments and responsibilities, especially the payment of the children's school fees. After his suicidal death, it was reported as duly investigated that the wife has initially paid for the children's school fees, but she instructed the school management to constantly inform the husband that the children's school fees have not being paid. This is in view for her to have a refund when the husband will eventually pay. So; the man felt disappointed on himself due to the pressure mounted on him by the school management for the payment of the fees, and then, considered it unbearable for him, and he resolved to committing suicide in order to escape from the shames associated with such social and economic limitations. These two reports are occasioned by our immediate economic and social conditions of values. With them as a case study or as references, it can be agreed on that every society has its own peculiarity of values and limitations associated with the dignity of the human person that may and will occasion the act of suicide.⁴¹ In Nigeria, as in most African territories, it is almost superfluous to state that the value of human life is now being judged through the lens of religious, tribal, ethnic and political sentiments that placed some heavy burdens on the individual in expressing his or her essence in the faces of limiting and limited opportunities. It becomes readily difficult for the individual to meet up with his or her responsibilities, even when such responsibilities are minimal to accomplish on the ground of engagement of one's will, power and intelligence.

These sentiments above have now been assumed on the bases of the most important positions in our value system, influenced by the social, political, medical and economic conditions of our existential conditionings. We cannot feign ignorance of these things as existential realities that sometimes opposed to one's autonomy of will and freedom.⁴² But if we pretend to be; the unheeded pleas for life by aborted babies, the scourging accounts of kidnapped victims with very unreasonable and unbearable amounts of money as ransoms, the cadaver of missionaries martyred and person been killed, especially in the Northern parts, the litanies of our mothers at delivery in quack hospitals and even the fathers incapable of footing the bills dues to economic hardships, the arrays of unpaid salaries to many workers, the stories of slaughtered farmers, and swollen bellies of children dying of hunger and malnutrition, the painful recounts of youths deceived and trafficked with no hope of returning; and the list is inexhaustible⁴³ Hence, the scenarios above, as philosophically and sociologically represented, strongly demanded the existential evaluation of societal contents and relevance on the value of life of any individual as a subject of lived-experiences. It is demanded that such consciousness for the evaluation of human actions

⁴¹Ogabo & Adidi, 102.

⁴²Ezetoya, S., Man in himself: A philosophical look at the value of human Life in modern Nigeria. *The Agora Magazine*, Vol. 3, 2021, pp. 1-2, see, 1.

⁴³Szasz, T., *Fatal freedom: The ethics and politics of suicide*. Syracuse University Press, 2002.

and choices should be in reference to the human dignity, especially as an ontological and cosmological agent of development. This is a highly debatable conceptualization of the human person in relation to the operational exercises of his or her freedom and autonomy of will. Hence, it remains a debatable and difficult operational concept to define and understand because it is a reality of definition of all other existential realities. With such difficulties, many different meanings have been proposed through ethical, cultural, social and political debates, but a consensus has not been reached on its general conceptualization or meaning in references to the effects of societal absurdities. The lack of a clear definition of the human person in reference to his or her actions and choices has given rise to many societal controversies and philosophical alterations on the values and operations of human freedom and autonomy of will.⁴⁴

It is on the conviction of the operation of human freedom and the autonomy of will in exercising one's actions and choices, irrespective of the nature of their resultant consequences and implication on the values of life, that some authors defined the human person hinged on their consideration of his or her ontological nature; some others consider the cosmological nature, as whereas many others reject both natures of the former definitions, but only on his or her pragmatic utilization and meaningfulness.⁴⁵ Existentially, the human person and the valuation of his or her life and dignity remains a prominent concept in every society, Human dignity has been seen to be very much pragmatic and that is why the human being sees his or herself to be endowed with that special quality or power and uniqueness in his or her specie as a subject of lived-experience and as reasonable agent of development.⁴⁶ This is due to his or her worth respect in the world due to some social and theological beliefs of the human person been created in such a way by a greater Being which some called God.⁴⁷ This is by considering the phenomenology of human neighbourliness and the transcendent values of creation in reference of contents of human actions and choices. Owing to the moral structure or rationality of human existence: on one's rational values with God, and with the neighbours, this concern here is poised to evaluate the motives of human actions and choices in reference to Kant's notion of the irrationality of suicide. As contemporarily observed, the news reports of many suicidal cases and scenarios had and have been indicating the increasing rate for the de-value of human existence simply due to societal forces against the fulfillment of human wills, especially in their pursuits for happiness and peace. The human person is strongly losing his or her essence against the values of his or her existence freely given to him or her by God.⁴⁸

Surprisingly, in recent times, numbering among the plethora of core and steady-multiplying conundrums bedeviling humanity is suicide. It is surprising because it is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine an individual conceive of voluntarily and intentionally taking his or her very own life.⁴⁹ The increasing rate of suicide is worrisome, enigmatic, unimaginable and unthinkable, as many victims are conceived to be resigning to fate, and the death is the cheapest option to overcoming their pains and suffering, they see suicide is the last and

⁴⁴Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 213

⁴⁵Ede, S-W., Thomistic Animus, Cartesian cogito, and neuroscience: Triplets of an authentic Human Identity. *West African Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 8, 2005, pp. 15-32, cf, 30.

⁴⁶Edema, P & Abam, M., Kant's duty ethics and the problem of governance in Africa. *Enwisdomization Journal*, 4(1&2), 2009, pp. 14-20.

⁴⁷Ibeh, 7.

⁴⁸Oyetola, 1,

⁴⁹Ogabo & Adidi, 104.

comfort action or choice to be made.⁵⁰ This is due of the imbalanced motivating consciousnesses that are hinged on the wrong contents of truths inherent in the expression of one's actions and choices. As it is greatly observed, the opinions on the morality of suicide are divided on the unjustifiable consents behind the interpretations and evaluations of the nature or contents of human actions and choices, which may be in reference to human existential problems. It is been sampled that many opt for, attempt and commit suicide because they erroneously see suicide as a lesser evil and speedy escape route out of miseries and unbearably harsh realities of life. Besides, sorrowful death notes left behind by some suicides reveal that many of them fleet to suicidal actions are in fact, the fastest and effective opium and prophylaxis to humanly estimated and termed meaningless, purposeless and regrets-filled lives. However, this work is to philosophically expose, as a means of strengthening the argument on the values of values of life, the thought of Kant's irrationality of suicide. Kant supports the notions of others on the idea of human dignity but he goes about it in a theoretical and philosophical way by leaving out their dogmatic beliefs on the dignity of the human person. Kant talks about the values of the human life in the terms of the applications of the practice of categorical imperatives of morals in evaluating human actions and choices, where the human person should be taken as an end in itself, not as a means to an end. With this consciousness, the essay is directed to support his notion of the irrationality of suicide by the employment of African notion on the values of the human person in the faces of the existential absurdities that clouding the rationality of the individual. This is understanding of Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* on the fact that human person is an existential value that is very much beyond personal's evaluation of one's worth and independent from the contents of morality.

Conclusion

The concern here aligned with the conviction that suicide is the result of the action of an individual but nonetheless it has profound effects upon the immediate societies or families of the subject and indeed, upon the wider society in which the subject lived. With life; morality, norms and law are reinforcing each other in the management of human freedom in reference to the values of human dignity. This is on the ethical principles that specify that life is of values, and the individual is just possessor of such life, and he or she does not the right to take such life away from him/herself, even the his or her power to express his or her autonomy of will and the principle of self-governance. In modern society, the case is being made, by some thinkers such as Jan Narveson, Micheal Choibi, Muhammed Nashnoush, Munessza Sheikh and Sanja Ivic, for the legal, social, ethical, economic and cultural right to have the desire or conviction to assist someone subscribing to suicide as an option. This is when, at the same time, others are demanding that the individual should prevent someone else from subscribing to committing suicide as an option. The one position emphasises autonomy and the rights of the individual whereas the other takes a wider perspective of our responsibilities to others, deriving its moral force from the principle of beneficence. With Kant's notion of irrationality of suicide in the analysis of the morality of suicide: whether right or wrong, many thinkers considered that there is certainly a case for arguing that the use to which the principle of autonomy can be put to the consideration of existential absurdities may suppress the individual's will to live. They also that such individual cannot ignore the complex web of relationships, the duties and responsibilities we have for one another, such that the need to act as a community as a restraint to the consideration of

⁵⁰Ibeh, 7.

suicide as a means to an end. Therefore, these concerns for values of human life and dignity over the expression of self-love by one killing him/herself must remain space for heteronomy, the governance of our individual conduct by others, within the framework of modern ethics, as indicated in Kant's irrationality of suicide, especially by the fulfilment of the specified maxims for the permissiveness of suicide.

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