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Existentialism

Definition

- A philosophical outlook that stresses the importance of free will, freedom of choice, and personal responsibility
- This perspective emphasizes the unique experiences of each individual and the responsibility of each person for their choices and what they make of themselves



Introduction



- A term applied to the work of certain late 19th- and 20th-century philosophers
- Who, despite profound doctrinal differences, shared the belief that philosophical thinking begins with the human subject
- Which contains not merely the thinking subject, but the acting, feeling, living human individual.
- Term is often seen as a historical convenience as it was first applied to many philosophers in hindsight, long after they had died
- Existentialist has certainly had great influence outside philosophy, for example on psychological theory and on the arts

Concepts

- The key concept of existentialism is mankind
- All that matters to the mankind is in the foundation of existentialism
- Some people's overview of existentialist is that basically nothing matters
- Became popular in the years following World War II
- Strongly influenced many disciplines besides philosophy, including theology, drama, art, literature, and psychology

Jean-Paul Sartre



- French philosopher, playwright, novelist, screenwriter, political activist, biographer, and literary critic
- He was one of the most famous philosophers
- His work influenced sociology, critical theory, post-colonial theory, and literary studies, and continues to influence these disciplines
- One of his plays was called “No Exist”
- Referring to “When we make something we do so for a purpose”
- The purpose (or essence) of a thing comes before existence
- “We are not made for any purpose so our existence precedes essence.”
- “There is no god, we are not made by god, we are not made for any purpose, and we have to create our purpose for ourselves.”
- He was awarded the 1964 Nobel Prize in Literature but refused it, saying that he always declined official honors and that "a writer should not allow himself to be turned into an institution"

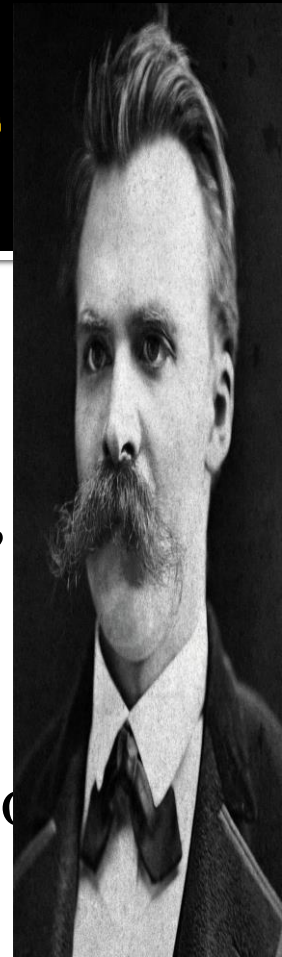
Soren Kierkegaard



- Was a Danish philosopher, theologian, poet, social critic, and religious author who is widely considered to be the first existentialist philosopher
- Though he did not use the term existentialism, he proposed that each individual not society or religion is solely responsible for giving meaning to life and living it passionately and sincerely
- He wrote critical texts on organized religion, Christendom, morality, ethics, psychology and philosophy of religion, displaying a fondness for metaphor, irony and parables.
- Most of his philosophical work deals with the issues of how one lives as a "single individual", giving priority to concrete human reality over abstract thinking, and highlighting the importance of personal choice and commitment

German Friedrich Nietzsche

- Was a German philologist, philosopher, cultural critic, poet and composer
- Wrote several critical texts on religion, morality, contemporary culture, philosophy and science, displaying a fondness for metaphor irony and aphorism
- His key ideas include perspectives, the Will to Power, the "death of God", the *Übermensch* and eternal recurrence
- Attitude towards religion and morality was marked with atheism, psychologism and historicism
- He considered them to be human creations loaded with the error of confusing cause and effect



List of more Philosophers who Agreed to the Term

- Czech Franz Kafka (1883–1924) a short story writer and factory manager and Russian
- Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881) a novelist.
- Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) as an Existentialist Philosopher
- Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) as an Existentialist Philosopher
- Albert Camus (1913-1960) as an Existentialist Philosopher

Works cited:

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- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%B8ren_Kierkegaard
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche