



I'm not robot



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frenums



gay-teedo

This is the most random thing I've ever seen and it conveys an indescribable emotion

spaceghostfoucaultbirdtarot2020

It conveys what it means to be alive

Sartre begins his 1957 *Existentialism and Human Emotions* with a 43-page defense and exposition of existentialism. He commences with a series of criticisms that have been leveled against the philosophy—charges that he believes betray erroneous interpretations or understandings of existentialism. The charges he enumerates are the following:

- Existentialism is a philosophy of “desperate quietism” because action is impossible owing to the lack of any solutions to be arrived at in the world—solutions to ethical, political, social, personal quandaries. Thus, then, renders existentialism a philosophy of mere speculation, and, hence, a bourgeois philosophy.
- The predilection for dwelling on human degradation, suffering, and evil—the grotesque—comes at the expense of noticing or appreciating the beautiful, gracious or sublime. The smile of a child—as Sartre says existentialism has been accused of forgetting—is lost on the existential engagement with the night side of human experience.
- Because existentialism takes “pure subjectivity” or “the Cartesian *I think*” as its point of departure, it has been impugned for its pretermission of human solidarity, and for conceiving of mankind in isolated, atomistic terms.
- Finally, since atheistic existentialism denies God—this, a criticism from Christians—caprice and sheer desire rule, and, in a sense, all is possible or permissible since God does not exist.

These charges, argues Sartre, fail to meet existentialism on its own terms. Beginning with these criticisms, he will move to defend the philosophy by explicating its central tenets. This exegetical essay will follow Sartre’s disquisition on existentialism and include critical questions, in the margin, to be explored in further discussion, reading and writing.

To begin then

There are, writes Sartre, two strands of existentialism: theistic and atheistic. In the theistic camp, Sartre includes thinkers such as Gabriel Marcel and Karl Jaspers. In the atheistic party, Sartre places Heidegger, himself (Sartre, that is) and the French existentialists. While, at bottom, these two threads, theist and atheist, differ on the God question, they both hold in common the foremost principle of existentialism: “that existence precedes essence”, or “that subjectivity must be the starting point” (13).

Historically, in theology and philosophy, essence was taken to precede existence. Like an object produced by an artisan, God—in theocentric accounts—was taken to be a designer or creator who fashioned humans, as an artisan designed and produced, for instance, a table. The artisan and God both employed some ‘universal essence’ or ‘ideal concept’ (a cognitive blueprint, perhaps) to direct their creation. The table has an essence as a result of its production and in its use or final cause, just as the human being with its “human nature” as prescribed by God. This issued in, as Sartre says, “a [subsequent] universality... [in which] the wild-man, the natural man, as well as the bourgeois, are circumscribed by the same definition and have the same basic qualities” (some essential nature) (14-15).

Sartre notes a more coherent break from the *essence precedes existence* claim in atheistic existentialism, which he represents. Atheistic existentialism contends that if God does not exist, there is still a being in which essence does not precede existence—man,



