

Chapter 1 : Major Criticisms Of Existentialism â€” J.W. Carey

Marxism Versus Existentialism Existentialism and Marxism are the most widely discussed and widely held philosophies of our time. The first is dominant in Western Europe and gaining increasing popularity in the United States.

Existence precedes essence Sartre claimed that a central proposition of Existentialism is that existence precedes essence , which means that the most important consideration for individuals is that they are individualsâ€”independently acting and responsible, conscious beings "existence" â€”rather than what labels, roles, stereotypes, definitions, or other preconceived categories the individuals fit "essence". The actual life of the individuals is what constitutes what could be called their "true essence" instead of there being an arbitrarily attributed essence others use to define them. Thus, human beings, through their own consciousness , create their own values and determine a meaning to their life. His form must be just as manifold as are the opposites that he holds together. The systematic eins, zwei, drei is an abstract form that also must inevitably run into trouble whenever it is to be applied to the concrete. To the same degree as the subjective thinker is concrete, to the same degree his form must also be concretely dialectical. But just as he himself is not a poet, not an ethicist, not a dialectician, so also his form is none of these directly. His form must first and last be related to existence, and in this regard he must have at his disposal the poetic, the ethical, the dialectical, the religious. Subordinate character, setting, etc. The setting is not the fairyland of the imagination, where poetry produces consummation, nor is the setting laid in England, and historical accuracy is not a concern. The setting is inwardness in existing as a human being; the concretion is the relation of the existence-categories to one another. Historical accuracy and historical actuality are breadth. Instead, the phrase should be taken to say that people are 1 defined only insofar as they act and 2 that they are responsible for their actions. For example, someone who acts cruelly towards other people is, by that act, defined as a cruel person. Furthermore, by this action of cruelty, such persons are themselves responsible for their new identity cruel persons. This is as opposed to their genes, or human nature, bearing the blame. As Sartre says in his lecture Existentialism is a Humanism: The more positive, therapeutic aspect of this is also implied: A person can choose to act in a different way, and to be a good person instead of a cruel person. In a set of letters, Heidegger implies that Sartre misunderstood him for his own purposes of subjectivism, and that he did not mean that actions take precedence over being so long as those actions were not reflected upon. This way of living, Heidegger called "average everydayness". Absurdism The notion of the Absurd contains the idea that there is no meaning in the world beyond what meaning we give it. This meaninglessness also encompasses the amorality or "unfairness" of the world. According to Albert Camus, the world or the human being is not in itself absurd. The concept only emerges through the juxtaposition of the two, where life becomes absurd due to the incompatibility between human beings and the world they inhabit. These are considered absurd since they issue from human freedom, undermining their foundation outside of themselves. The notion of the Absurd has been prominent in literature throughout history. It is in relation to the concept of the devastating awareness of meaninglessness that Albert Camus claimed that "there is only one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide" in his *The Myth of Sisyphus*. The possibility of having everything meaningful break down poses a threat of quietism , which is inherently against the existentialist philosophy. The ultimate hero of absurdism lives without meaning and faces suicide without succumbing to it. Facticity Facticity is a concept defined by Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* as the in-itself , which delineates for humans the modalities of being and not being. This can be more easily understood when considering facticity in relation to the temporal dimension of our past: As an example, consider two men, one of whom has no memory of his past and the other who remembers everything. They both have committed many crimes, but the first man, knowing nothing about this, leads a rather normal life while the second man, feeling trapped by his own past, continues a life of crime, blaming his own past for "trapping" him in this life. There is nothing essential about his committing crimes, but he ascribes this meaning to his past. Another aspect of facticity is that it entails angst , both in the sense that freedom "produces" angst when limited by facticity, and in the sense that the lack of the possibility of having facticity to "step in" for one to take responsibility for something one has done, also produces angst. Authenticity Many

noted existentialist writers consider the theme of authentic existence important. Authentic existence involves the idea that one has to "create oneself" and then live in accordance with this self. This can take many forms, from pretending choices are meaningless or random, through convincing oneself that some form of determinism is true, to a sort of "mimicry" where one acts as "one should". How "one should" act is often determined by an image one has, of how one such as oneself say, a bank manager, lion tamer, prostitute, etc. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre relates an example of a "waiter" in bad faith: *The Other and the Look*[edit] Main article: *Other philosophy* The Other when written with a capital "O" is a concept more properly belonging to phenomenology and its account of intersubjectivity. However, the concept has seen widespread use in existentialist writings, and the conclusions drawn from it differ slightly from the phenomenological accounts. The experience of the Other is the experience of another free subject who inhabits the same world as a person does. In its most basic form, it is this experience of the Other that constitutes intersubjectivity and objectivity. To clarify, when one experiences someone else, and this Other person experiences the world the same world that a person experiences – only from "over there" – the world itself is constituted as objective in that it is something that is "there" as identical for both of the subjects; a person experiences the other person as experiencing the same things. This is because the Look tends to objectify what it sees. Suddenly, he hears a creaking floorboard behind him, and he becomes aware of himself as seen by the Other. He is thus filled with shame for he perceives himself as he would perceive someone else doing what he was doing, as a Peeping Tom. Another characteristic feature of the Look is that no Other really needs to have been there: *Angst and dread*[edit] See also: *Living educational theory* "Existential angst", sometimes called existential dread, anxiety, or anguish, is a term that is common to many existentialist thinkers. It is generally held to be a negative feeling arising from the experience of human freedom and responsibility. The archetypical example is the experience one has when standing on a cliff where one not only fears falling off it, but also dreads the possibility of throwing oneself off. Angst, according to the modern existentialist, Adam Fong, is the sudden realization of a lack of meaning, often while one completes a task that initially seems to have intrinsic meaning. While in the case of fear, one can take definitive measures to remove the object of fear, in the case of angst, no such "constructive" measures are possible. There is nothing in people genetically, for instance that acts in their stead – that they can blame if something goes wrong. Therefore, not every choice is perceived as having dreadful possible consequences and, it can be claimed, human lives would be unbearable if every choice facilitated dread.

Chapter 2 : Sartre's Political Philosophy | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Existentialism Versus Marxism has 13 ratings and 1 review. Ethan said: This book is an enjoyable performance of mutually assured destruction of two philo.

Novack, in his exploration, comes to the conclusion that the two philosophies can never be mixed. Of course, it would be shortsighted to claim that embracing rebellion is not political due to its individualistic orientation. So even the success of a rebellion individual or political that allows for greater radical freedom for the individual will still need to contend with absurdity as a brute psychological force. On a more practical level, rebellion against oppression is in and of itself a choice to subjugate oneself to, something external to their individual identity. Choosing to take up a political cause in the hopes that it may deliver you the freedom you desire requires you to give up your freedom to pursue your radical freedom now "to subsume your identity into something outside of yourself. People react consciously and vigorously to their environment and take initiatives to alter certain aspects of it. The measure of control exercised by the objective and subjective components of the causal process changes and develops in the course of time according to the growth of our mastery over nature and society. Absurdity is what it is simply because of our current lack of mastery " or lack thereof " over nature science and society. With enough time and exploration even absurdity can be brought into the fold of understanding. Second, that it is absurd that a person can pursue their radical freedom outside their material conditions extrinsic determination. It is the material world interacting with my self-determination. The over reliance on the advance of science seems almost to suggest that human consciousness will one day be unraveled " a plausible outcome. This would make Marxists natural supporters of Neuropsychology. Biology and medicine will ease the processes of birth and postpone the incidence of death. The coming biological-social type of human will manifest a new psychology in which, among other things, people will no longer have reason to dread death. The Marxist aversion to the abstract individual as posited by Existentialists also leads to the collapse of Dialectic Materialism leaving us simply with Materialism. Marxists, then, put the same expiry date on their philosophy as they do on Existentialism and they do so with a sense of unfounded nihilistic optimism " almost as an instrument of faith. The radicalizing nature of Existentialism In all of this, it is impossible to ignore the radicalizing nature of existentialism itself. Sure, this being uncovered does not necessitate a move towards Marxism " an understanding that life has no intrinsic meaning may just as well make someone double down on the current state of affairs. After all, under Existentialism, any system of organization is equally as absurd as the current one. But a move towards Marxism " not just Communism as an economic doctrine " necessitates a level of Existentialism. This is where the self-determination part of the Dialectic Materialism comes from. Existentialism also contains, in its philosophy, a refusal of social and moral tradition. In this way it is more radical than Marxism which, although acknowledges a near amoral future, still contends that we need to get there through societal transformation. Existentialism is also greater radicalizing force than Marxism because it does not deal with the material conditions of the individual. This is convenient for those who may find ideas of communal ownership anxiety inducing for fear of, what they perceive, they may lose. Sartre, an Existentialist philosopher and a Marxist, argued that, since Existentialism represents only part of the equation that Marxists propose then it must be subordinate to it. It is self-determination that determines what is done with self-determination. Yes, material conditions play a role in the formulation of our self-determination, but Existentialists are right to place priority on our own perception of the world around us in their analysis as opposed to material conditions. Put simply, we cannot bring to life what we cannot first conceive " irrespective of why we were drawn to conceive it. Yet, to suggest that there is no relationship between the two is simply callous. Marxism embodies the same quest for individual freedom that Existentialism does and both require each other " in method and thought " to reach their objectives. Marxism requires the Existential call for revolt against order, and Existentialism requires Marxism to empower and proliferate that revolt so it may be possible in spite of our material conditions.

Chapter 3 : nietzsche - Existentialism and the absence of free will - Philosophy Stack Exchange

*Existentialism Versus Marxism [George Novack] on racedaydvl.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. There is an increasing division between Existentialism and Marxism, despite Jean-Paul Sartre's attempts to bridge these two influential philosophies of the twentieth century.*

This is a place for learning, not for debating. Give well-informed Marxist answers. There are separate subreddits for liberalism, anarchism, and other idealist philosophies. Posts should include specific questions on a single topic. This is a serious educational subreddit. Come here with an open and inquisitive mind, and exercise humility. Standards of answer accuracy and quality are enforced. A term describing a stateless, classless, moneyless society with common ownership of the means of production. An umbrella term used to describe social ownership of the means of production. Social ownership can include common ownership, state ownership or collective ownership. An all-embracing term that describes every non-human material factor involved in the process of socially useful production. The capitalist class; the ruling class in capitalist society. The social class which owns the means of production and exploits hired labor. The buyers of labor power. This class is made up of a very small minority of the population. The working class; the class of people in capitalist society who, deprived of any ownership of the means of production, must sell their labor power to the capitalists in order to survive. The exploited class; the producers of surplus value. Marxists specifically use the term to refer to the expropriation theft of the labor of a worker via the extraction of surplus value by the owners of the means of production. Capitalists make their profit from exploitation. Dictatorship of the Proletariat: A state of proletarian rule where the working class organizes to democratically control the means of production, defend against bourgeois reaction, and create the material basis for a gradual transition to communism. This term is the antithesis of the "Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie" that exists under capitalism where the minority class rules society. The state, in Marxist terminology, is a mechanism for class rule. It is the primary instrument of political power in class society, consisting of organs of administration, and of force. A state of one kind or another will exist as long as social classes exist. Thank you for visiting!

Chapter 4 : Existentialism Versus Marxism by George Novack

In , Jean-Paul Sartre, the leading advocate of Existential thought, published 'Critique of Dialectical Reason', in which he reversed his antagonistic position toward Marxism and instead pushed forward the idea that Existentialism would 'rescue and renew the original ideas of Marx'.

The first is dominant in Western Europe and gaining increasing popularity in the United States. The second is not only the official doctrine of all communist countries but, in one form or another, is accepted as a guide by many movements and parties throughout the world. Over the past 20 years the proponents of these two schools of thought have engaged in continual debate with one another. The centre of this controversy has been France. There existentialism has found its most talented spokesmen in Nobel Prize winner Jean-Paul Sartre and his associates, who have developed their positions in direct contact and contest with Marxism. They live on a continent where, unlike the United States, socialism has influenced public life for almost a century, and in a country where the Communist Party gets a quarter of the vote, is followed by most of the working class, and exerts heavy pressure upon radical intellectuals. These circumstances have compelled the so-called mandarins of the left to make clear their attitude toward Marxism at every stage in the evolution of their views. The development of Sartre has been especially paradoxical. He worked out his original existentialist ideas under the sway of nonmaterialist thinkers such as Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger as a deliberate challenge to Marxism. In *Being and Nothingness* and *Materialism and Revolution* Sartre presented his philosophy as an alternative to dialectical materialism. Then in the late s he made a turnabout and embraced Marxism, at least in wordsâ€”which for him, as he explains in the first volume of his recent autobiography, have had a reality greater than the objective world. In his latest philosophical treatise, *The Critique of Dialectical Reason*, the first section of which has been published in English as *Search for a Method*, he declares that existentialism has become a subordinate branch of Marxism which aspires to renew and enrich it. Thus the phenomenologist of existence who condemned dialectical materialism as false and a foe to human freedom in the s now proposes to marry Marxism and existentialism. To what extent, if any, can these philosophies be conjoined? Can a synthesis of the two be viable? Actually, the one nullifies or extinguishes the other when they come into contact. It is the same with Marxism and existentialism. Their fundamental positions over a broad spectrum of problems extending from philosophy and sociology to morality and politics are so divergent that they cannot really be reconciled. This piece can do no more than indicate the main lines of their disagreement on the most important issues. Let us first consider their opposing conceptions on the nature of reality and then on science, which is the highest expression of our endeavours to investigate and know the world. The propositions of existentialist metaphysics are set in a context of cataclysmic personal experience. They all flow from the agonising discovery that the world into which we are thrown has no sufficient or necessary reason for existence, no rational order. It is simply there and must be taken as we find it. Being is utterly contingent, totally without meaning, and superfluous. Human existence as such is equally meaningless. We do not know where we came from, why we are here, what we must do; or where we are going. If the world is devoid of meaning and impervious to rational inquiry, a philosophy of existence would seem a contradiction in terms. In contrast to religious mysticism, philosophy aims to illuminate reality by means of concepts, the tools of reasoning. How is it possible to explain an unconditionally absurd universe or even find a foothold for theory in it? Soren Kierkegaard did contend that it was neither possible nor desirable to think systematically about the reality of life, which eluded the grasp of the abstracting intellect. Albert Camus rejected existentialist theorising on similar grounds. It is hopeless, he asserted, to try to give rational form to the irrational. The absurdity of existence must be lived through, suffered, defied; it cannot be satisfactorily explained. However, the professional thinkers of this school do not choose to commit philosophical suicide. There is logic to their illogicality. If everything is hopelessly contradictory, why should the enterprise of philosophy be an exception? The human mission, they say, is to find out the meaning of meaninglessnessâ€”or at least give some meaning through our words and deeds to an otherwise inscrutable universe. For dialectical materialism, reality has developed in a lawful manner and is rationally explicable. The rationality of nature and human

history is bound up with matter in motion. The concatenation of cosmic events gives rise to cause-and-effect relations that determine the qualities and evolution of things. The physical preceded and produced the biological, the biological the social, and the social the psychological in a historical series of mutually conditioned stages. The aim of science is to disclose their essential linkages and formulate these into laws that can help pilot human activity. The rationality, determinism, and causality of the universal process of material development do not exclude but embrace the objective existence and significance of absurdity, indeterminism, and accident. However, these random features of reality are no more fundamental than regularity. They are not immutable and irremovable aspects of nature and history but relative phenomena which in the course of development can change to the extent of becoming their own opposites. Chance, for example, is the antithesis of necessity. Yet chance has its own laws, which are lodged in the occurrence of statistical regularities. Quantum mechanics and the life insurance business exemplify how individual accidents are convertible into aggregate necessities. Exceptions are nothing but the least frequent alternatives, and when enough exceptions pile up they give rise to a new rule of operation which supersedes the formerly dominant one. The interplay of chance and necessity through the conversion of the exception into the rule can be seen in the economic development of society. Under tribal life, production for immediate personal consumption is the norm whereas production for exchange is a rare and casual event. What was categorically necessary in the first economic system is fortuitous in the second. Moreover, in the transition from one economy to the other the bearers of chance and necessity have changed places, have become transformed into each other. Social structures that are rational and necessary under certain historical circumstances become absurd and untenable at a further stage of economic development and are scrapped. Thus feudal relations, which corresponded to a given level of the powers of social production, became as anachronistic as Don Quixote and had to give way before the more dynamic forces and more rational forms of bourgeois society. The existentialists go wrong, say the Marxists, in making an eternal absolute out of the occurrence of chance events and unruly phenomena. These are not unconditioned and unchangeable but relative and variable aspects of being. As a result, of their conflicting conceptions of reality, the two philosophies have entirely different attitudes toward science. If the universe is irrational through and through, then science, which is the most sustained and comprehensive effort to render the relations and operations of reality intelligible and manageable, must be nonsensical and futile. The existentialists mistrust and downgrade the activities and results of science. Marxism, which holds fast to the rationality of the real, esteems scientific knowledge and inquiry as the fullest and finest expression of the exercise of reason. It believes that the discovery of physical and social laws can serve to explain both the regularities and irregularities of development, so that even the most extreme anomalies of nature, society, and the individual can be understood.

The Predominance Of Ambiguity In the eyes of the existentialists, ambiguity presides over existence. It is easy to see why. Ambiguity is a state between chaos and order, darkness and light, ignorance and knowledge. If the universe is ruled by chance, everything is inevitably and ineradicably indeterminate. The absence of cause-and-effect relations endows reality with a duplicity and disorder which renders it hopelessly obscure. This uncertainty is exceedingly acute in the individual. We are torn by warring elements within ourselves. This predicament is all the more difficult because we are trapped in a maze of conflicting possibilities. We must act in a fog where indistinct shapes move in no definite direction and toward no ascertainable destination. Since the given situation has no intrinsic structure, trends, or signs which make one alternative superior to another, the existentialist is entitled to pick whatever solution seems most appealing. What comes out is then a matter of chance or caprice. She has attempted to found an ethics on the tragic ambivalence of the human being, who is tossed like a shuttlecock between pure externality and pure consciousness without ever being able to bring them into accord. Maurice Merleau-Ponty likewise made ambiguity the leading principle of his social and political outlook. Human beings, he maintained, are thrust willy-nilly into situations where many conflicting forces are at work. These do not have any central line of development or indicate any particular outcome. We must arbitrarily select one of the multifarious possibilities and act upon it amidst uncertainty and confusion. Our option makes and throws light on our character but cannot remove either the inherent ambiguity of the situation or the risk of the undertaking. Everything in life is a gamble. Merleau-Ponty objected to historical materialism because it did not give

accident primacy over necessity in history. He applied his sweeping indeterminism to the outcome of the struggle for socialism: The personages in the works of existentialist writers exemplify the enigmatic duplicity of the human being. They do not have stable characters or predictable courses of conduct. They plunge into unexpected and uncalled-for actions which contravene their previous commitments. Their lives and motives are susceptible to multiple meanings and inconclusive interpretations which the authors are not concerned to clarify, since misunderstanding must accompany the ambiguity of existence. The problem of ambiguity is very real; it arises from the contradictory content of things. While the universe has a determinate structure and a discernible order of evolution, its elements are so complex and changing that the forms of their development can assume highly equivocal and puzzling appearances. The question is whether these paradoxical manifestations must remain forever indecipherable and unsettled or whether the diverse and misleading forms can be correlated by scientific means into some lawful pattern which gets at the essence of things. The existentialists refuse to concede that the outcome of a situation depends upon the relative weight of all the factors at work within it; they want to make the settlement depend entirely upon the will of the individual. This runs into conflict with their observation that the results of our activities are often at odds with our intentions, desires, and expectations. If this is so, what other underlying forces determine the outcome? The existentialists have no answer but accident. For them, arbitrariness remains the arbiter of all events. The materialist dialectician takes up where the baffled existentialist leaves off, proceeding from the premise that what can become definite in reality can find clear-cut formulation in thought. No matter how hidden, complicated, and devious the contradictions encountered in reality may be, they can with time and effort be unravelled. The dialectical essence of all processes consists precisely in the unfolding of their internal oppositions, the gradual exposure and greater determination of their polar aspects, until they arrive at their breaking point and ultimate resolution. As the contending forces and tendencies within things are pushed to the extreme, they become more and more sharply outlined and less and less ambiguous. The struggle of opposites is brought to a conclusion and maximum clarification through the victory of one irreconcilable alternative over the other.

I argue that existentialism is the individual aspect of marxism, the individual realisation of existence's nature, rather than a separate societal ideology. These opposing conceptions of the object-subject relationship are reflected in the conflict between the two philosophies on the nature of the individual and the individual's connections.

Though Heidegger would repudiate the retrospective labelling of his earlier work as existentialism, it is in that work that the relevant concept of existence finds its first systematic philosophical formulation. And while not all existential philosophers were influenced by phenomenology for instance Jaspers and Marcel, the philosophical legacy of existentialism is largely tied to the form it took as an existential version of phenomenology. According to Husserl, consciousness is our direct openness to the world, one that is governed categorially normatively rather than causally; that is, intentionality is not a property of the individual mind but the categorial framework in which mind and world become intelligible. In turning phenomenology toward the question of what it means to be, Heidegger insists that the question be raised concretely: According to Heidegger, the categories bequeathed by the philosophical tradition for understanding a being who can question his or her being are insufficient: One can find anticipations of existential thought in many places for instance, in Socratic irony, Augustine, Pascal, or the late Schelling, but the roots of the problem of existence in its contemporary significance lie in the work of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Subsequent existential thought reflects this difference: A focus on existence thus led, in both, to unique textual strategies quite alien to the philosophy of their time. In Kierkegaard, the singularity of existence comes to light at the moment of conflict between ethics and religious faith. How does philosophy conceive this meaning? In doing so I lose my individuality since the law holds for all but my actions become meaningful in the sense of understandable, governed by a norm. Abraham has no objective reason to think that the command he hears comes from God; indeed, based on the content of the command he has every reason, as Kant pointed out in *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, to think that it cannot come from God. His sole justification is what Kierkegaard calls the passion of faith. Since it is a measure not of knowing but of being, one can see how Kierkegaard answers those who object that his concept of subjectivity as truth is based on an equivocation: Responding in part to the cultural situation in nineteenth-century Europe—historical scholarship continuing to erode fundamentalist readings of the Bible, the growing cultural capital of the natural sciences, and Darwinism in particular—and in part driven by his own investigations into the psychology and history of moral concepts, Nietzsche sought to draw the consequences of the death of God, the collapse of any theistic support for morality. Unlike Dostoevsky, however, Nietzsche sees a complicity between morality and the Christian God that perpetuates a life-denying, and so ultimately nihilistic, stance. Nietzsche was not the first to de-couple morality from its divine sanction; psychological theories of the moral sentiments, developed since the eighteenth century, provided a purely human account of moral normativity. On the account given in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, the Judeo-Christian moral order arose as an expression of the resentment of the weak against the power exercised over them by the strong. The normative is nothing but the normal. Yet this is not the end of the story for Nietzsche, any more than it was for Kierkegaard. In such a situation the individual is forced back upon himself. On the one hand, if he is weakly constituted he may fall victim to despair in the face of nihilism, the recognition that life has no intrinsic meaning. He has understood that nihilism is the ultimate meaning of the moral point of view, its life-denying essence, and he reconfigures the moral idea of autonomy so as to release the life-affirming potential within it. If such existence is to be thinkable there must be a standard by which success or failure can be measured. To say that a work of art has style is to invoke a standard for judging it, but one that cannot be specified in the form of a general law of which the work would be a mere instance. Rather, in a curious way, the norm is internal to the work. For Nietzsche, existence falls under such an imperative of style: As did Kierkegaard, then, Nietzsche uncovers an aspect of my being that can be understood neither in terms of immediate drives and inclinations nor in terms of a universal law of behavior, an aspect that is measured not in terms of an objective inventory of what I am but in terms of my way of being it. Neither Kierkegaard nor Nietzsche, however, developed this insight in a fully systematic way. That would

be left to their twentieth-century heirs. In contrast to other entities, whose essential properties are fixed by the kind of entities they are, what is essential to a human being—what makes her who she is—is not fixed by her type but by what she makes of herself, who she becomes. It is in light of this idea that key existential notions such as facticity, transcendence project, alienation, and authenticity must be understood. At first, it seems hard to understand how one can say much about existence as such. Traditionally, philosophers have connected the concept of existence with that of essence in such a way that the former signifies merely the instantiation of the latter. Having an essence meant that human beings could be placed within a larger whole, a kosmos, that provided the standard for human flourishing. Entities of the first sort, exemplified by tools as they present themselves in use, are defined by the social practices in which they are employed, and their properties are established in relation to the norms of those practices. A saw is sharp, for instance, in relation to what counts as successful cutting. Entities of the second sort, exemplified by objects of perceptual contemplation or scientific investigation, are defined by the norms governing perceptual givenness or scientific theory-construction. An available or occurrent entity instantiates some property if that property is truly predicated of it. Human beings can be considered in this way as well. However, in contrast to the previous cases, the fact that natural and social properties can truly be predicated of human beings is not sufficient to determine what it is for me to be a human being. This, the existentialists argue, is because such properties are never merely brute determinations of who I am but are always in question. It is what it is not and is not what it is Sartre Human existence, then, cannot be thought through categories appropriate to things: In this sense human beings make themselves in situation: If such a view is not to collapse into contradiction the notions of facticity and transcendence must be elucidated. Risking some oversimplification, they can be approached as the correlates of the two attitudes I can take toward myself: Facticity includes all those properties that third-person investigation can establish about me: From an existential point of view, however, this would be an error—not because these aspects of my being are not real or factual, but because the kind of being that I am cannot be defined in factual, or third-person, terms. Though third-person observation can identify skin color, class, or ethnicity, the minute it seeks to identify them as mine it must contend with the distinctive character of the existence I possess. There is no sense in which facticity is both mine and merely a matter of fact, since my existence—the kind of being I am—is also defined by the stance I take toward my facticity. An agent is oriented by the task at hand as something to be brought about through its own will or agency. Such orientation does not take itself as a theme but loses itself in what is to be done. Thereby, things present themselves not as indifferent givens, facts, but as meaningful: It may be—the argument runs—that I can be said to choose a course of action at the conclusion of a process of deliberation, but there seems to be no choice involved when, in the heat of the moment, I toss the useless pen aside in frustration. But the point in using such language is simply to insist that in the first-person perspective of agency I cannot conceive myself as determined by anything that is available to me only in third-person terms. Because my projects are who I am in the mode of engaged agency and not like plans that I merely represent to myself in reflective deliberation, the world in a certain sense reveals to me who I am. For reasons to be explored in the next section, the meaning of my choice is not always transparent to me. Existential psychoanalysis represents a kind of compromise between the first- and third-person perspectives: In the first place, though it is through my projects that world takes on meaning, the world itself is not brought into being through my projects; it retains its otherness and thus can come forth as utterly alien, as unheimlich. This experience, basic to existential thought, contrasts most sharply with the ancient notion of a kosmos in which human beings have a well-ordered place, and it connects existential thought tightly to the modern experience of a meaningless universe. In the second place, the world includes other people, and as a consequence I am not merely the revealer of the world but something revealed in the projects of those others. I am not merely looking through a keyhole; I am a voyeur. I cannot originally experience myself as something—a voyeur, for instance. It is because there are others in the world that I can take a third-person perspective on myself; but this reveals the extent to which I am alienated from a dimension of my being: This has implications for existential social theory see the section on Sartre: Existentialism and Marxism below. Finally, the self-understanding, or project, thanks to which the world is there for me in a meaningful way, already belongs to that world, derives from it,

from the tradition or society in which I find myself. This theme is brought out most clearly by Heidegger: The idea is something like this: Practices can allow things to show up as meaningful—“as hammers, dollar bills, or artworks—“because practices involve aims that carry with them norms, satisfaction conditions, for what shows up in them. But norms and rules, as Wittgenstein has shown, are essentially public, and that means that when I engage in practices I must be essentially interchangeable with anyone else who does: I eat as one eats; I drive as one drives; I even protest as one protests. To the extent that my activity is to be an instance of such a practice, I must do it in the normal way. If such standards traditionally derive from the essence that a particular thing instantiates—“this hammer is a good one if it instantiates what a hammer is supposed to be—“and if there is nothing that a human being is, by its essence, supposed to be, can the meaning of existence at all be thought? Existentialism arises with the collapse of the idea that philosophy can provide substantive norms for existing, ones that specify particular ways of life. Authenticity—“in German, *Eigentlichkeit*—“names that attitude in which I engage in my projects as my own *eigen*. What this means can perhaps be brought out by considering moral evaluations. In keeping my promise I act in accord with duty; and if I keep it because it is my duty, I also act morally according to Kant because I am acting for the sake of duty. But existentially there is still a further evaluation to be made. But I can do the same thing authentically if, in keeping my promise for the sake of duty, acting this way is something I choose as my own, something to which, apart from its social sanction, I commit myself. Similarly, doing the right thing from a fixed and stable character—“which virtue ethics considers a condition of the good—“is not beyond the reach of existential evaluation: But such character might also be a reflection of my choice of myself, a commitment I make to be a person of this sort. In both cases I have succeeded in being good; only in the latter case, however, have I succeeded in being myself. Some writers have taken this notion a step further, arguing that the measure of an authentic life lies in the integrity of a narrative, that to be a self is to constitute a story in which a kind of wholeness prevails, to be the author of oneself as a unique individual. *Nehamas ; Ricoeur* In contrast, the inauthentic life would be one without such integrity, one in which I allow my life-story to be dictated by the world. Even interpreted narratively, then, the norm of authenticity remains a formal one. Thus to be authentic can also be thought as a way of being autonomous. Being a father authentically does not necessarily make me a better father, but what it means to be a father has become explicitly my concern. It is here that existentialism locates the singularity of existence and identifies what is irreducible in the first-person stance. At the same time, authenticity does not hold out some specific way of life as a norm; that is, it does not distinguish between the projects that I might choose. The possibility of authenticity is a mark of my freedom, and it is through freedom that existentialism approaches questions of value, leading to many of its most recognizable doctrines. Freedom and Value Existentialism did not develop much in the way of a normative ethics; however, a certain approach to the theory of value and to moral psychology, deriving from the idea of existence as self-making in situation, are distinctive marks of the existentialist tradition. Existential moral psychology emphasizes human freedom and focuses on the sources of mendacity, self-deception, and hypocrisy in moral consciousness. The familiar existential themes of anxiety, nothingness, and the absurd must be understood in this context. Rather, it is located in the breakdown of direct practical activity. Both Heidegger and Sartre believe that phenomenological analysis of the kind of intentionality that belongs to moods does not merely register a passing modification of the psyche but reveals fundamental aspects of the self. Fear, for instance, reveals some region of the world as threatening, some element in it as a threat, and myself as vulnerable. In anxiety, as in fear, I grasp myself as threatened or as vulnerable; but unlike fear, anxiety has no direct object, there is nothing in the world that is threatening.

Chapter 6 : Existentialism Versus Marxism: George Novack: racedaydvl.com: Books

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In addition to these theoretical tomes both over 1, pages , Sartre wrote a large number of political essays, most of which were first published in *Modern Times Les Temps modernes* , the journal founded by Sartre and others in . The significant essays have been collected in a ten volume set by Gallimard entitled *Situations*. Of the four novels and nine major plays Sartre published, many have political content. While writing frequently and passionately about politics and ethics, Sartre never published a systematic philosophical treatise outlining his political or ethical views. His political philosophy emerges from his situational pieces, which were reactions to contemporary political issues, such as the Algerian and Vietnam Wars, French Anti-Semitism and Soviet communism. The main themes of *Critique* include the nature of social groups, history, and dialectical reason. *Critique* only briefly addresses the canonical themes of political philosophy, such as the theory of the state, political obligation, citizenship, justice and rights. His political views were influenced heavily by Hegel. In *Being and Nothingness* he shows some familiarity with the work of Hegel, but this knowledge was indirect and piecemeal. Sartre did not begin a serious study of Hegel until the late s. Between and he composed a series of notebooks outlining his plans for a major work in ethical theory. The surviving notebooks, published posthumously as *Notebooks for an Ethics Cahiers pour une morale* , reveal that he developed his own political views through a dialogue with Hegel and Marx. In *Being and Nothingness* he agreed with Hegel that humans struggle against one another to win recognition, but rejected the possibility of transcending struggle through relations of reciprocal, mutual recognition. First, he accepted the possibility that struggle could be transcended through mutual, reciprocal recognition. His best example was the collaboration between artists and their audience. Second, he located the struggle for recognition in society and history, not in ontology. Finally, he came to agree that social solidarity was not, as claimed in *Being and Nothingness*, a mere psychological projection, but an ontological reality, based on ties of recognition. However, the majority of his works speak critically of Kant. The influence of Hegel vastly outweighs that of Kant. While he identified with the French Left prior to the war, experiences during the war politicized him and motivated the turn to Marxism. Overwhelmingly devoted to ontological and phenomenological explanations, he would powerfully describe social reality using Marxist structural analysis. The result was a highly original political theory that, while recognizably Marxist, did not resemble the work of structuralist contemporaries such as Louis Althusser. Sartre described himself as rescuing Marxism from lazy dogmatism *Search for a Method*, pp. Like his contemporaries in Germany at the Frankfurt School for Social Research, he sought to develop a general critical theory of society. While accepting the reality of economic class, he strongly criticized those who reduced all social conflicts and all personal motivations to class. In his political period, Sartre deepened his psychological explanations of human behavior by contextualizing individual action within wide social structures class, family, nation, and so on. He held that economic class was only one of many important structural factors that explained human action. Vehemently criticizing all forms of social scientific reductionism, he claimed that the human situation includes birth, death, family, nationality, gender, race and body, to name only the most relevant *Anti-Semite and Jew*, pp. Class analysis must be combined with personal history. He showed that functionalist explanations of social phenomena could be grounded in the intentional states of individual agents. The two major components of the method are a regressive analysis of static social structures such as class, family and era, and a second progressive analysis where complex permutations of structures are explained from the lived perspective of individuals and groups. In his existential biographies, such as those on G. His view should not be confused with deterministic Marxism, which holds that individuals are mere pawns in a historical game that would be the same with or without them. Individuals have the power to change history, especially through group struggle. In addition to its methodological contributions, *Critique* offers a broad account of history, social groups and mass phenomenon. Pace Hegel, Sartre rejects group

minds, arguing that there is a basic ontological distinction between the action of persons individual praxis and the action of groups group praxis Critique, pp. While groups exhibit collective intentionality, no group is a literal organism. Individuals are ontologically prior to the groups they create. In Critique, social groups are divided into four main types: His analysis of the Bastille is a case in point. Rioting citizens were transformed from a disorganized collective into a group by internalizing the perspective of government officials who thought the rioters were a coherent movement with a single aim Critique, pp. Throughout Critique Sartre develops his foundational claim that social groups are unified when they internalize threatening features of their environment. The social theory of Critique is a far cry from Being and Nothingness, which had asserted that social groups were mere psychological projections Being and Nothingness, p. Mediating third parties are members of groups who temporarily act as external threats for example, when giving orders but who subsequently re-enter the group Critique, p. The concept of the mediating third party allows Sartre to extend his theory of interpersonal recognition beyond the fictionalized, abstract encounter between self and other, and better explain the fundamentals of group solidarity. One popular, plausible interpretation holds that spontaneous groups for example, fusing and pledge groups promote human freedom, while bureaucratic groups such as organizations and institutions engender alienation. Characteristically, Sartre uses moral terminology to describe groups, but subsequently distances himself from moral conclusions. Nonetheless, any politics consistent with Critique would have to favor spontaneous, decentralized social groups. Unlike Being and Nothingness, where alienation is depicted as an unavoidable ontological condition, in the later political works alienation is rooted in material scarcity. For most of his life, Sartre remained at a distance from party politics and articulated his political principles without reference to any existing parties. From to Sartre supported but did not join the French Communist Party. Later he became disillusioned by the soviet invasion of Hungary and distanced his vision of socialism from Soviet-style communism. He forcefully argued against deterministic, structuralist versions of Marxism, inserting human subjectivity back into the equation. With a keen eye towards interpersonal relations, he showed that social struggle, whether among classes, races or interest groups, must be understood simultaneously at the psychological and the systemic level. Sartre, more than any Marxist of his generation, exposed the limits of classical Marxism and paved the way for a general critical theory of society. There is a strong consensus, though, that after World War II Sartre shifted to a material view of freedom, in contrast to the ontological view of his early period. According to the arguments of Being and Nothingness human freedom consists in the ability of consciousness to transcend its material situation p. Later, especially in Critique of Dialectical Reason, Sartre shifts to the view that humans are only free if their basic needs as practical organisms are met p. Let us look at these two different notions of freedom in more depth. Early Sartre views freedom as synonymous with human consciousness. In simple terms, consciousness escapes itself both because it is intentional consciousness always targets an object other than itself and temporal consciousness is necessarily future oriented Being and Nothingness, pp. The notion of ontological freedom is controversial and has often been rejected because it implies that humans are free in all situations. In his early work Sartre embraced this implication unflinchingly. Famously, Sartre claimed the French public was as free as ever during the Nazi occupation. In Being and Nothingness, he passionately argued that even prisoners are free because they have the power of consciousness p. A prisoner, though coerced, can choose how to react to his imprisonment. The prisoner is free because he controls his reaction to imprisonment: Since there are no objective barriers to the will, the prison bars restrain me only if I form the will to escape. In a similar example, Sartre notes that a mountain is only a barrier if the individual wants to get on the other side but cannot Being and Nothingness, p. It is an open question whether and how to reconcile the early, ontological conception of freedom with the late, material conception of freedom. However, it is undeniable that in his political phase Sartre adopted a new, material view of freedom. Several points stand out in particular. In later works he never again used the notion of consciousness to characterize human existence, preferring instead the Marxist notion of praxis. He did not explicitly discuss such alterations, though clearly abandoning the view that humans are free in all situations. Since humans can never lose their ontological freedom, the loss of freedom in question must be of a different sort: Take the case of the prisoner. The prisoner is ontologically free because she controls whether to attempt escape. On this view, freedom is

synonymous with choice. But there is no qualitative distinction between types of choices. If freedom is the existence of choice, then even a bad choice is freedom promoting. The early view is subject to the charge that if there are no qualitative distinctions between types of choices, then the phenomena of oppression and coercion cannot be recognized. In *Anti-Semite and Jew* and *Notebooks* Sartre implicitly addresses the above criticism, arguing that oppression consists not in the absence of choice, but in being forced to choose between bad, inhumane options *Notebooks*, pp. Jews in anti-Semitic societies, for example, are forced to choose between self-effacement or caricatured self-identities *Anti-Semite and Jew*, pp. In *Critique* Sartre uses the example of a labor contract to illustrate the claim that choice is not synonymous with freedom *Critique*, pp. An impoverished person who accepts a degrading, low wage job for the sake of meeting her basic needs has a choice—she may starve or accept a degrading job—but her choice is inhumane. In the political period as a whole Sartre developed his material view of freedom by contrasting the free person with the slave. Though his notion of slavery is derived from Hegel, Sartre, unlike Hegel, diagnosed literal cases like American chattel slavery. A slave, he argues, is un-free because he is dominated by a master *Notebooks* pp. Material freedom requires, therefore, non-domination, or freedom from coercion. Though both perpetrator and victim are in bad faith, only the slave is coerced physically *Notebooks*, p. The material view of freedom assumes a thin set of universal human goods, including positive human goods food, water, shelter and education and negative goods freedom from all of the following: While *Critique* elaborates an economic understanding of human goods the essential needs are those of the physical organism, elsewhere Sartre defends a wider spectrum of human needs including cultural goods and access to shared values *Notebooks* pp. The foregoing definition casts Sartre as an ally of political liberalism, and suggests that material freedom is a version of liberal autonomy. Liberals who defend the primacy of autonomy typically claim that positive notions of freedom assume substantive, controversial conceptions of the good life. However, Sartre criticizes classical liberalism, especially in *Critique*, arguing against asocial, atomistic notions of selfhood p. Further, like civic republican philosophers such as Aristotle and Rousseau, Sartre contends that controlling the social forces to which one is subject is a valuable type of human freedom. However, his preference for mass movements and bottom-up social organization suggest that he would favor radical participatory democracy. After the student revolts of May Sartre told an interviewer: Consistent with his general methodology, Sartre denied that oppression reduces to either individual attitudes or impersonal social structures.

Chapter 7 : How does communism interpret existentialism? : communism

Existentialism vs. Naturalism in Native Son Words May 26th, 7 Pages When I was recently suffering from the dreaded sweet tooth syndrome, I hadn't the slightest clue that the result would lead to a personal and universal philosophical debate worthy of comparison to Richard Wright's Native Son.

Max Stirner[edit] Anarchism had a proto- existentialist view mainly in the writings of German individualist anarchist Max Stirner. In his book *The Ego and Its Own* , Stirner advocates concrete individual existence, or egoism , against most commonly accepted social institutionsâ€”including the state , property as a right, natural rights in general, and the very notion of societyâ€”which he considers mere spooks or essences in the mind. Existentialism, according to Herbert Read , "is eliminating all systems of idealism, all theories of life or being that subordinate man to an idea, to an abstraction of some sort. It is also eliminating all systems of materialism that subordinate man to the operation of physical and economic laws. It is saying that man is the realityâ€”not even man in the abstract, but the human person, you and I; and that everything elseâ€”freedom, love, reason, Godâ€”is a contingency depending on the will of the individual. While he was alive, however, Nietzsche was frequently associated with anarchist movements and proved influential for many anarchist thinkers, in spite of the fact that, in his writings, he seems to hold a negative view of anarchists. Relationship between Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Stirner. It was these things that drew Nietzsche to anarchists and existentialists alike, showing the clear commonality between both. Existence precedes essence Some point to Mikhail Bakunin as possibly following a "philosophy of existence" against "the philosophy of essence" as advocated by Hegel , [5] a figure whom many anarchists, in contrast to Marxists , have found authoritarian [6] [7] or even totalitarian. While influenced by Hegel early in his life, Bakunin later was stridently opposed to Hegel around the time he became an anarchist, and would refuse to say he was ever influenced by him. Before the Second World War , when existentialism was not yet in name, Franz Kafka and Martin Buber were among these thinkers who were also anarchists. Both are today sometimes seen as Jewish existentialists as well as Jewish anarchists. He spoke, for instance, of family life as a battleground: Otto Gross himself blended Nietzsche and Stirner with Sigmund Freud in developing his own libertarian form of psychology, feeling that they revealed the human potential frustrated by the authoritarian family: Martin Buber is best known for his philosophy of dialogue , a form of religious existentialism centered on the distinction between the I-Thou relationship and the I-It relationship. In his essay *Ich und Du* published in , he writes how we cannot relate to other people through the "I" towards an "It", towards an object that is separate in itself. Instead, he believes human beings should find meaningfulness in human relationships, through "I" towards "Thou", towards people as ends-in-themselves which brings us ultimately towards God. This perspective could be seen as anarchist in that it implicitly critiques notions of "progress" fundamental to authoritarian ideologies which abstract from the personal here-and-now meeting of human beings. Later Martin Buber published a work, *Paths in Utopia* , in which he explicitly detailed his anarchist views with his theory of the "dialogical community" founded upon interpersonal "dialogical relationships". Post-war period[edit] Following the Second World War , existentialism became a well-known and significant philosophical and cultural movement, and at this time undoubtedly influenced many anarchists. An influential exponent of atheist existentialism , Sartre throughout his works stressed the expansion of individual freedom in a world without God or a fixed human nature. Just as anarchists have always stressed that deterministic blue-prints for ourselves or the future will never lead to freedom, Sartre believed human beings could choose for themselves their own freedom, a "being-for-itself" that is not enchained by the social, political, and economic roles imposed on them. This freedom may not always be completely joyous, as "man is condemned to be free" for Sartre. Anarchists argue likewise that an anarchist society would be desirable, but never inevitable and given to us, and thus we are left with what is the harder demand and responsibility for ourselves alone to create such a society. It was for a brief period between and that Sartre was an anarcho-pacifist. As another exponent of atheist existentialism, he concerned his works with facing what he called the absurd , and how we should act to rebel against absurdity by living, by opening up the road to freedom without a transcendent reality. Camus would also be associated with the French

anarchist movement. One of the most substantial expressions of both his existentialist and anarchist positions appears in his work *The Rebel*. For Camus, as for Nietzsche, rebellion should not delve into nihilism, and as for Stirner, should be distinct from revolution. It is not a lonely act, and does not destroy human solidarity but affirms the common nature of human beings. In the experience of the absurd, suffering is individual, but when it moves to rebellion, it is aware of being collective. The first step of the alienated individual, Camus argues, is to recognize that he or she shares such alienation with all human beings. Rebellion therefore takes the individual out of isolation: At nineteen, he became the editor of "Storm", the youth paper, and at age twenty-two, he was appointed the cultural editor of *Arbetaren* "The Worker", then a daily newspaper of the syndicalist movement. He called "Arbetaren" his "spiritual birthplace". Influence of existentialism[edit] Italian anarchist Pietro Ferrua became an admirer of Sartre during this period and considered existentialism the logical philosophy for anarchists and "had written some papers on that topic". Read was one of the earliest writers outside of continental Europe to take notice of the movement, and was perhaps the closest England came to an existentialist theorist of the European tradition. Contemporary era[edit] Although throughout the s and s existentialism was the dominant European intellectual movement, in the s it was starting to lose its influence in the face of growing negative response. During the s, there would be little or no existentialist movement to speak of, and what popularity it had would become far more overshadowed by structuralism, post-structuralism, and postmodernism, intellectual approaches which are today still widely used in academia. However, existentialism, particularly existential phenomenology, would still remain a significant influence on post-structuralism and postmodernism; one commentator has argued that post-structuralists might just as accurately be called "post-phenomenologists". Since the s, therefore, a growing number of anarchist philosophies, represented by the term "post-anarchism", have used post-structuralist and postmodernist approaches. Saul Newman has utilized prominently Max Stirner and Friedrich Nietzsche along with such thinkers as Jacques Lacan in his post-anarchist works. Newman criticizes classical anarchists for assuming an objective "human nature" and a natural order, which existentialism also objects to. He argues that from this approach, humans progress and are well-off by nature, with only the Establishment as a limitation that forces behavior otherwise. Lewis Call and Michel Onfray have also attempted to develop post-anarchist theory through the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. However, it is of note that the anarcha-feminist L. Susan Brown has written a work, *The Politics of Individualism*, that explicitly argues for the continuing relevance of existentialism and its necessary compliment to anarchism. But she argues, like post-anarchists, that classical anarchist theory has asserted human beings as naturally cooperative, and that this fixed human nature presents many problems for anarchism as it contradicts its commitment to free will and the individual. For anarchism to be fundamentally individualist, she argues, it must look to existentialism for a more "fluid conceptualization of human nature". It is also notable that she argues anarchism does not generally take into account feminist ideas of child-raising. For instance, the idea of raising children existentially free from their parents and educated non-hierarchically by a community, is not often considered by anarchists, and yet radical thinkers from the highly Nietzsche-influenced Otto Gross to existentialist psychiatrists such as R. His book *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance* propounds a Levinasian conception of anarchism and an attempt to practice it. *The Philosophical Life of Albert Camus*

Chapter 8 : Existentialism: Reconciling Individualism with Dialectical Materialism - The Todd Blog

Existentialism, absurdism, and nihilism are widely blended together, since there are only narrow differences relating to the meaning of life. First of all, all three movements have roots in 19th century philosophy.

May 7, at 5: This, in turn, got me thinking about my role in the world, both as an individual and as an activist for social change. In essence, it is the self versus the society. Perhaps that is a bit too confrontational of a description, but I do indeed at times feel pulled between my individual desires, thoughts and manifestations and the desire to exacerbate critical thinking and pro-active social change. These two worlds are most certainly not mutually exclusive, but nonetheless, it is a common tendency of the Marxist left to distance dialectical materialism from individual notions of self, and of spiritualism and the role that plays in our schema of the social world around us. Of course it was Hegel who gave us modern dialectics evolved from the Socratic method, which would greatly influence Karl Marx to adopt dialectical materialism as the principle of thought and the philosophical foundation that communism would be based upon. A keen understanding of self within the world at large is a necessity if one is to realize their role in ameliorating the social world. Again, this is borrowed from A. Life in and of itself is somewhat absurd in the sense that we live life with no conception of a beginning before that life or an end afterwards. Of course, various religious theologies give explanations of this, but delving into those would be, not only time consuming, but antithetical to this discussion—though it does play an integral role in our universal schema. But absurdity of life may very well lead us to accept that our time on earth as we know it is brief, thus we must make the world around us a world that is free; that gives meaning—a world free of the suffocating constraints of capitalist exploitation. Next, we look at personal freedom as a theme of existentialism. This notion is one that everyone, regardless of ideology or philosophical understandings, embraces. The Marxist and the Existentialist might have differing ideas on what constitutes personal freedom. This freedom gives one the ability to make choices that affect not only self, but society as a whole. We would like to think of ourselves as having a unique place in the world. Marx dismissed individualism as a imperialist notion used to further class antagonisms. While this is indeed true, both historically and within a modern context, the idea that we are unique and different from everyone else, yet wholly similar, is the foundation of our collective understanding of freedom. Obviously, this understanding has been manipulated and propagated by the ruling class. Individualism has turned into a marketing ploy in contemporary capitalist society. Self-worth is not just relevant to imperialistic manipulation, but relevant ultimately to a society free of the restrictions of any system existing to exert power and control, in whatever the ideological guise may be. We now move on to authenticity, passion and acceptance of death as the final relevant existentialist ideals—relevant to this particular exploration anyway. Authenticity can loosely be explained as our notion of being true to ourselves and our calling, yet this is not easily accomplished. We can be consumed with what others think of us and how much easier it is to conform to prevailing ideas and trends. An authentic self is something we constantly strive for, yet rarely achieve completely. The existentialist lives a life a passion; going after what they want full steam ahead and enjoying every second of it. Again, something we all aspire to, yet largely unfulfilled with the responsibilities and demands placed on us by ourselves and by society. Again, I will not explore theological philosophies relating to death and what, if anything, exists beyond that. For what my conceptualization is worth, I believe existentialism is something we all try to live on a daily basis, regardless of our particular political, economic or philosophical leanings. Now that I have moved on from academia and associations with groups strictly adhering to particular philosophies, I can better understand that my need for individual autonomy is not due to imperialist indoctrination, but rather a legitimate understanding of my place in this world. I can be truly free as an individual while still using dialectical materialism as a means of explaining contemporary political economy and as a means of exacerbating positive social change. Self and society are not mutually exclusive, nor are the philosophical foundations of modern intellectual thought. We all can influence the world in our own unique way and we can also live a life of contentment that is true to our notion of self.

Chapter 9 : Sartre's Political Ideas

Existentialism vs. Phenomenology and the response to Hegelian Idealism Absolute idealism was a huge part of Western culture but through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the greatest political movement took place.

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