

Existentialism

1. Introduction.

Existentialism is a major philosophical thought which says that humans are born without any pre established essence. They are free; so, instead of relying on others they should live authentic life by fully exercising their freedom.

2. Major Philosophers of existentialist thought.

3. Understanding existentialism in context of ^{of} essentialism

4. Key concepts linked with existentialism.

a. Meaninglessness of life

b. Bad faith according to J.P. Sartre.

c. Importance of living an authentic life.

5. How Existentialism is important and relevant today

a. Resolution of political issues

b. Entrepreneurship and existentialism

c. How existentialism is humanism

d. Changing of personal life by adopting existentialist philosophy.

e. Philosophy behind Ubermensch is existentialism

6. Criticism on existentialism

a. Subjective philosophy

b. Denial of communal and historical progress

c. Existentialism leading to nihilism

7. Conclusion

For thousands of years, philosophers disagreed on whether matter or idea is real and central, and to which more importance should be given, but then came the philosophical thought known as 'Existentialism'. It puts the human at centre and give more importance to it as compared to any other thing. It propogates that humans are free. This freedom comes with responsibility. So, instead of blaming others humans should take responsibility and should strive for change. Overall, It is complex, but has remained influential throughout the recent history. Being popular, it has often faced criticism from various sections. In a nutshell, it says that humans donot have any

innate essence. They are free, and essence depends upon them.

Existentialism has its roots in 19th and 20th century. Initial Philosophers in this regard were Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche. Although they proved to be influential but the guy who popularized it throughout the Europe and rest of the world was Jean Paul Sartre. Simone de Beauvoir often played crucial role in popularizing it among females in 20th century. It was effort of these Philosophers that existentialism succeeded in becoming a major philosophical thought.

This influential thought essentially appeared in response to another philosophical concept

known as essentialism. Essentialism says that just like every other thing humans are born with particular innate essence. Existentialism contradicts it by its core statement "Existence precedes essence" which means that existence is first thing and then these existing beings give meaning and essence by themselves. This simple looking concept has deep connection with human life and society.

This deep connection comes with telling humans that they are free; They have no innate essence; their lives have no pre determined meaning and purpose; It's upon them to choose purpose and give meaning to life. They can make it heaven

or hell; It is totally upto them
 So according to existentialists,
 man is product of his choices;
 Believing in pre determined meaning,
 essence or destiny is nothing but
 bad faith.

The concept of bad faith
 was given by Jean Paul Sartre.
 It is a tool to deny responsibility;
 It is all about blaming
 others. According to Sartre,
 humans donot want to exercise
 their freedom and take responsibility
 So, in order to escape this
 burden they look towards
 others like religion, society or
 state for dictation. Majority of
 people use this method, but
 It is a hurdle in the way
 of authentic life.

According to existenti-
 alists, authentic life can only

be lived by taking responsibility
 It is all about exercising
 the power of freedom. By
 using this freedom, ~~they~~^{humans} can
 take action and can change
 their lives. Although responsibility
 comes with this freedom and
 its exercise, but it is all
 about difference of humans from
 other species and products.

It shows that
 existentialism is a call to
 action. It is the reason that
 it demands responsibility. These are
 two things that are divided by
 most of human beings. Today most
~~of~~ people do not take slight action
 in changing their actions and habits.
 Same is the case of political
 situation of Pakistan. According to
 a report of Gallup Survey, Majority
 of Pakistanis complain about politics.

But the action to change politics can be seen nowhere. As Uzair Younis reports that more than 80% of Pakistani politicians come from traditional political background. How can such people allow change. Hence, for resolution of political issues, and to replace bad politics with good politics authenticity in the form of action is required.

Just like politics, in the case of business and entrepreneurship action has primary importance. In this era of innovation, entrepreneurship has become backbone of any successful economy. Entrepreneurs are simply existentialists. They take action, work hard and claim responsibility of results. It is the reason that modern era values such people quite more than job seekers. They are considered kings because of their

fight. Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, Ashneer Grover and thousands of others have come up quite influential in recent years. This is all because of authentic life they live.

The discipline, action and exercise of freedom that made these entrepreneurs highly successful, can also change the lives of other people. The path of this success can be achieved by taking existentialist approach which is linked with shunning of bad faith and adoption of authentic life.

The daily routine and action of these entrepreneurs manifests a challenging life; But it is only way to become Übermensch (superman).

Existentialism contributes to philosophy by giving many key ideas. These ideas have helped humanity but these ideas have

not been exempted from criticism
 Existentialism is widely criticized
 because of its subjective nature. Instead
 of collective action and combined
 efforts it demands a separate path
 from everyone. If everyone will take
 a separate path and will give meaning
 to life on his own it will make world
 a place of colliding ideas and of
 chaos.

Existentialism asks people
 to shun the old ideas and values,
 and to create new ideology that
 suits them. It makes man measure of
 everything. As Plato argued that
 if man would be measure of everything
 then there would be no way to
 differentiate moral thing from immoral
 one. One action may appears justified
 to one person would be disastrous
 for other one. The relationship between
 Adolf Hitler and Existentialism is

after widely discussed in academic circle because of his attempt to become superman.

As when old and objective ideas are rejected. It leads to vacuum which is called nihilism. It leaves people in purposeless life. The religion and morality which has provided the service of Psychological security to humans for thousands of years; when its basis are shattered; it leaves humanity in despair and anxiety ~~anxious~~. The two great works in history have often been observed in this era of nihilism. It clearly depicts the importance of religion in human life irrespective of it being true or false.

To sum up, Existentialism focuses on the efforts. It believes in hardwork and action to determine destiny; It completely denies the

Idea of any innate essence and pre determined destiny. It says that meaning of life is in the hands of humans. So everyone is responsible for his actions and ^{their} consequences. This freedom, and responsibility that comes along ^{with} it leads to anxiety, but it often provides an opportunity to grow and prosper. Existentialist philosophical thought is ~~+~~ on the other hand - criticized for its individualistic, nihilistic and subjective nature. However by adopting the positive aspects of this philosophy meaningful prosperity can be observed.