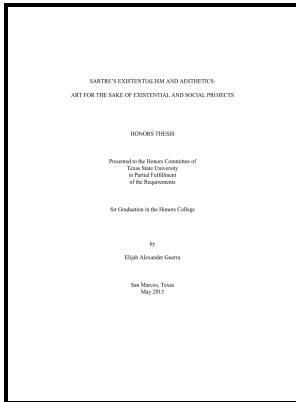


Principles and persons - an ethical interpretation of existentialism

Johns Hopkins Press - Is an Existentialist Ethics Possible?



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Principles And Persons An Ethical Interpretation Of Existentialism by Frederick Olafson

One must not renege on one's responsibility as does Electra in The Flies , nor must one place the responsibility for one's actions onto the shoulders of someone else. Neither plants nor animals make deliberate choices or carry through with responsibility. In order to explore the above objections to an existentialist ethics further, it is useful to examine how Sartre approaches these issues.

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Sartre seems to assume there is moral value in behaving consistently with human reality, without offering any justification for this view.

Sartrean Existentialism: Specific Principles

In the eighteenth century, with the atheism of the philosophers, the notion of God was done away with, but not so with the idea that essence precedes existence. As with a man shooting a gun in the air or directly at a target, it's better to have a target, a message. What does this mean, that existence precedes essence? As each option held a different type of moral attraction for him, he asked Sartre for advice as to how he should resolve this practical dilemma.

Sartrean Existentialism: Specific Principles

He demonstrates that a broad parallelism exists between developments in ethical theory among Continental philosophers of the phenomenological persuasion and the more analytically inclined philosophers of the English-speaking world. In other words, it is impossible to regard freedom as a purely subjective value. The dust jacket for hard covers may not be included.

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Articles Is an Existentialist Ethics Possible? Sartre concludes that if any of the above four conditions prevail s , one finds oneself in circumstances that are hell.

Sartrean Existentialism: Specific Principles

He has a responsibility before other citizens for his actions. Man does not always understand the motives behind his actions; therefore, he needs others to help in this process. He demonstrates that a broad parallelism exists between developments in ethical theory among Continental philosophers of the phenomenological persuasion and the more analytically inclined philosophers of the English-speaking world.

Is an Existentialist Ethics Possible?

In this way, existentialism is often portrayed as promoting a view of morality where anything goes. An individual is responsible for making himself into an essence, of lifting himself beyond the level of mere existence. It is impossible to engage in genuine ethical reflection without recognising the central position of choice in moral experience.

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