

# Existentialism



Summer Carmack

# Existentialism

Existentialism is a term philosophers use to emphasize freedom and choice.

Humans use these view to define the meaning of their lives.

Existentialism is a term commonly used to focus on the question of human existence.

# Existentialists

Soren Kierkegaard Kierkegaard was a Danish philosopher who is regarded as the “Father of Existentialism”. He often criticized aspects of the philosophical systems brought on by those before him. He also had a recurring theme in that the “truth was subjective”, which is how one relates himself to the supposed truth Friedrich Nietzsche Nietzsche was a German philosopher, cultural critic, poet, and Latin and Greek scholar whose work has exerted a profound influence on Western philosophy and modern intellectual history. His body of writing spanned philosophical polemics, poetry, cultural criticism, aphorism, and fiction while displaying a fondness for metaphor and irony and drawing variously on philosophy, art, history, religion, and science. Albert Camus Camus was a French philosopher, author, and journalist. The views he had contributed to the rise of a philosophy known as absurdism. He published *The Rebel*, which analyzed rebellion and revolution, and showed his rejection of communism. He is often called an existentialist, even when he was living, though he did not believe himself to be one. JeanPaul Sartre Sartre was a French philosopher, playwright, novelist, political activist, biographer, and literary critic. He was one of the key figures in the philosophy of existentialism and phenomenology, and one of the leading figures in 20thcentury French philosophy and Marxism. His work has also influenced sociology, critical theory, postcolonial theory, and literary studies, and continues to influence these disciplines.

# Background

Born July 3, 1883

He was born into a middle class German-speaking Jewish family from Prague, Bohemia

First studied chemistry at the Charles-Ferdinand University of Prague, but switched after two weeks to law, because he wanted to please his father.

Due to the extended amount of schooling needed for a law degree he had opportunities classes such as German studies and art history.

He wrote *The Metamorphosis* (1912) and *In the Penal Colony* (1914), while his novels are *The Trial* (1925), *The Castle* (1926) and *Amerika* (1927).

His works explore alienation, existential anxiety, guilt, and absurdity.



# Absurdism

## 1. What is absurdism?

-a philosophy based on the belief that the universe is irrational and meaningless and that the search for order brings the individual into conflict with the universe

## 2. Related to Franz Kafka?

-Kafka's world is essentially chaotic, and this is why it is impossible to derive a specific philosophical or religious code from it — even one acknowledging chaos and paradox as does much existential thought. Only the events themselves can reveal the basic absurdity of things. To reduce Kafka's symbols to their "real" meanings and to pigeonhole his world-view as some "ism" or other is to obscure his writing with just the kind of meaningless experience from which he liberated himself through his art.

# The Metamorphosis

There are many different interpretations of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. The novella is ultimately a kafkaesque experience. Kafkaesque was a word named after Kafka himself reminiscent of the nightmarish qualities in Kafka's fictional world. *The Metamorphosis* shows that how Kafka views existentialism is people have an individual side, and a side committed to society. In order for life to stay balanced, you have to balance the two sides. In *The Metamorphosis*, Gregor didn't know how to keep both work and leisure balanced, and in effect defeated the purpose of his new form. Kafka's view of existentialism is to maintain a balance between work and leisure, because if they devote their life to work, they are no more than a droning insect, but if they devote their lives to leisure they are no better off.

# Existentialists

Soren Kierkegaard Kierkegaard was a Danish philosopher who is regarded as the “Father of Existentialism”. He often criticized aspects of the philosophical systems brought on by those before him. He also had a recurring theme in that the “truth was subjective”, which is how one relates himself to the supposed truth Friedrich Nietzsche Nietzsche was a German philosopher, cultural critic, poet, and Latin and Greek scholar whose work has exerted a profound influence on Western philosophy and modern intellectual history. His body of writing spanned philosophical polemics, poetry, cultural criticism, aphorism, and fiction while displaying a fondness for metaphor and irony and drawing variously on philosophy, art, history, religion, and science. Albert Camus Camus was a French philosopher, author, and journalist. The views he had contributed to the rise of a philosophy known as absurdism. He published *The Rebel*, which analyzed rebellion and revolution, and showed his rejection of communism. He is often called an existentialist, even when he was living, though he did not believe himself to be one. JeanPaul Sartre Sartre was a French philosopher, playwright, novelist, political activist, biographer, and literary critic. He was one of the key figures in the philosophy of existentialism and phenomenology, and one of the leading figures in 20thcentury French philosophy and Marxism. His work has also influenced sociology, critical theory, postcolonial theory, and literary studies, and continues to influence these disciplines.

# Background

Born July 3, 1883

He was born into a middle class German-speaking Jewish family from Prague, Bohemia

First studied chemistry at the Charles-Ferdinand University of Prague, but switched after two weeks to law, because he wanted to please his father.

Due to the extended amount of schooling needed for a law degree he had opportunities to take other classes such as German studies and art history.

He wrote *The Metamorphosis* (1912) and *In the Penal Colony* (1914), while his novels are *The Trial* (1925), *The Castle* (1926) and *Amerika* (1927).

His works explore alienation, existential anxiety, guilt, and absurdity.



# Absurdism

## 1. What is absurdism?

-a philosophy based on the belief that the universe is irrational and meaningless and that the search for order brings the individual into conflict with the universe

## 2. Related to Franz Kafka?

-Kafka's world is essentially chaotic, and this is why it is impossible to derive a specific philosophical or religious code from it — even one acknowledging chaos and paradox as does much existential thought. Only the events themselves can reveal the basic absurdity of things. To reduce Kafka's symbols to their "real" meanings and to pigeonhole his world-view as some "ism" or other is to obscure his writing with just the kind of meaningless experience from which he liberated himself through his art.

# The Metamorphosis

There are many different interpretations of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. The novella is ultimately a kafkaesque experience. Kafkaesque was a word named after Kafka himself reminiscent of the nightmarish qualities in Kafka's fictional world. *The Metamorphosis* shows that how Kafka views existentialism is people have an individual side, and a side committed to society. In order for life to stay balanced, you have to balance the two sides. In *The Metamorphosis*, Gregor didn't know how to keep both work and leisure balanced, and in effect defeated the purpose of his new form. Kafka's view of existentialism is to maintain a balance between work and leisure, because if they devote their life to work, they are no more than a droning insect, but if they devote their lives to leisure they are no better off.