

Whichever of the two kinds we examine, there appears to be in both the idea that existence (primarily human existence) is prior to all forms, essences, or natures; or, to put it in Kierkegaardian terms, becoming is prior to being.

(2) Human existence must be understood subjectively. Objective knowledge does not tell us anything about the realm of human existence. What is needed is passionate involvement and reflection upon one's inner life.

(3) Man is free to decide his own existence. This tenet is a rejection of all determinism, and an affirmation of man as autonomous and completely self-determining. Of course, this "dread freedom" brings upon man a great anxiety.

(4) Whenever the decision not to decide predominates a man's life, then existence is determined for him by hereditary and especially by environmental forces. This abandonment of his individuality and merging of himself into the crowd is unauthentic existence. Whenever the decision to assert or actualize his freedom predominates a man's life, then he enters authentic existence. He acknowledges his responsibility for what he is and becomes, throws off the influences of all determinative factors, and decides what he shall be.

(5) The awareness of the "death of God" places upon man a sense of absolute aloneness and of the absence of any given structure of meaning whatsoever. Since God, the objective source of meaning, is dead, the only possible source of meaning is the self. Men create, they cannot discover, the principles by which they live. For man without God, the good is man's arbitrary fiat.

(6) Existentialist freedom is thus the inescapable necessity of choosing an end without reason or encompassing purpose, simply as an act of freedom!

(7) For the existentialist the achievement of authentic life is no guarantee of happiness. On the contrary, it is the acceptance, without illusion, of anguish and loneliness. Virtue and happiness are alike false goals. Only dread freedom remains!

(8) The fear of death is the finally decisive limitation to man's freedom. To be fully free, man must be willing to accept death, at any time and in any form. As long as he is unwilling to accept death, society and circumstances can place several limits upon his choice of mode of existence. He can choose only among those ways of being which are tolerated by society.

(Of course, for the religious existentialists motifs #5, #6, and #7 must be modified insofar as they speak of or are based on the "death of God". The religious existentialists would follow Kierkegaard's "Absolute Paradox" instead of Nietzsche's "death of God".)

### Recent Trends in Existentialist Philosophy

Over the past forty years some dramatic changes have taken place in Existentialism.