

EXISTENTIALISM IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF ANITA DESAI AND ANITA NAIR

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ABSTRACT

Anita Desai and Anita Nair as the novelists, strongly leans towards the existentialist understanding of the human condition. In particular, Anita Desai gives voice to "themute miseries and helplessness of married women tormented by existentialist problems and predicaments". Both, as female novelists, have carved out a unique space for herself by writing about women's emotions and revealing the underlying mechanisms at play in feminine sensibility and psychology. This bias compels her to investigate how her female protagonists process the absurdity of their situations. This makes them think about the more sinister aspects of life. By putting their female heroines in dangerous situations, they convey a melancholy perspective in their stories. They also analyse her female heroes as unique people who must persevere despite living in hostile environments. Existential anxiety is a symptom of this terrible conflict between the individual and their adverse surroundings.

Keywords: Existentialism; Anita Desai; Anita Nair; Female importance; Society

INTRODUCTION

Existentialism, originally intended to refer to the Danish theologian Sren Kierkegaard and the handful of early 20th-century German thinkers who took inspiration from him, is the English translation of the German phrase "philosophy of existence." The term's initial meaning was lost as it became associated with a wide variety of cultural phenomena. Many existentialists who came after Camus lamented this fact and, for a while, refused to use the term because of it. There is a huge chasm between Christians and existentialists, which demonstrates that the term encompasses many different schools of thought that aren't always agreeable with one another. Therefore, it may be easier to identify the important figures in the philosophical and literary movement known as "existentialism" than to define a single principle on which its adherents could all agree. In philosophical contexts, the term "existentialism" usually refers to a school of thought within Europe's post-Hegelian philosophical tradition. Through his use of the terms "existence," "the existential," and their derivatives, Kierkegaard is often regarded as the originator of the word "existentialism," which he used to contrast the theoretical and the abstract with the real world. Existentialism has been traced back too many thinkers of the nineteenth century, including Fyodor Dostoevsky (a Russian author) and Friedrich Nietzsche (a German philosopher). The German school of phenomenology established by Edmund Husserl and developed by Martin Heidegger was known as "existentialism" in English during the twentieth century. Religious existentialism in the twentieth century was dominated by Karl Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, who might be viewed

as continuing in the lineage of Kierkegaard, unlike the phenomenological movement. Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Simone de Beauvoir presided over the height of existentialism in France.

Many philosophers see the idea of an existentialist ethic as a contradiction in terms because of how difficult it is to settle ethical questions under existentialism. As a philosophical position, existentialism is opposed to both prevailing moral norms and theoretical frameworks. All existentialist philosophers, including themselves, deny the viability of providing adequate explanations for human action in terms of logical principles or discursive argumentation. This is why, despite their prolific output and wide range of interests, well-known existentialist philosophers like Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty never developed an ethics. The major existentialists' pessimism makes it difficult to explain or reconstruct an ethical framework grounded in existentialism. Existentialists, who view structured moralities and organised religions as the most noxious impediments to the actual accomplishment of human freedom, reject any attempt to build yet another conventional moral framework. As a result, existentialists tend to paint their views with a negative or repressive tone. Existentialism is characterised by a rejection of the significance of objective and pre-existing structures that would give meaning to human experience. Human experience is worthless in and of itself; it is only via our subjective acts that we can give it any value at all. First impressions suggest there is scant basis for a robust ethical framework.

Since existentialists reject traditional ethical theory, their views on ethics are more akin to cultural criticism or philosophical psychology, such as in the writings of Kierkegaard or Nietzsche. As opposed to defending a particular ethical theory, existentialists' meta-ethical arguments of ethics may be distinguished by their emphasis on the essence of ethics and the individual's moral situation. When it comes to ethical philosophy, existentialists rejected both its substance and its discursive form. Thus, the existentialists' ethical ideas are not to be found in scholastic works like philosophical treatises but rather in works of fiction. Other authors find inspiration in Dostoevsky, Camus, and Sartre because of the ethically ambiguous situations and characters they present in their works. Since the ethical theories of Aristotle, Kant, and Spinoza are more discursive and propositional in nature, existentialism requires a slightly different approach to the problem of ethics.

A meaningful discussion of existential ethics would necessitate two interrelated phases: the negative and the positive. They act as if challenging religious dogmas, objective truths, and divinely ordered hierarchies is a good thing to do. Because of their antinomian iconoclasm, which allowed them to expose and deconstruct the saving fictions that most humans work under, authors like Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard have remained popular. For existentialists, the act of making a choice has moral value since it shows that one has achieved authenticity, the existentialists' version of a moral ideal. It's not so much the options one has as they are taken that count. Those who are unable or unwilling to determine their own destinies are bound to a life of inauthenticity non which they believe that they are stuck with the same essential qualities they were born with. Inauthenticity is a way of life for the great majority of folks. Only the existential

hero, that quasi-mythical creature who embraces the meaninglessness of human existence and revels in the freedom given by the 'death of God' or the collapse of all stable foundations or points of reference, can truly live an honest life.

In addition to these purely philosophical causes, there are additional historical factors that have contributed to the development of the ethical concerns that existentialists strive to address. The existentialist movement is best understood in the context of the general mood of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Existentialist reflections on the transience of human existence are frequently linked with feelings of anxiety, death, isolation, and pain. It's simple to put off dealing with these problems while things are going swimmingly. The violent upheavals of our own time, in contrast to the great advances in human life during the eighteenth century, have made it much more urgent to return to these subjects.

One of the most remarkable changes over the past two centuries is the Church's and organised religion's rapid slide from their formerly central place in everyday life. There was a tremendous growth in the natural sciences during this period of secularisation. As a direct result of the rapid and apparently miraculous developments in science and technology, many people believe that **science can be depended upon to provide answers to our most basic problems.**

REVIEW LITERATURE

Chalise, S. (2016) Everyone in a society shares a common awareness, or "social consciousness." To be aware of the norms and values of one's community provides a sense of security and fairness by ensuring that one's own interests are protected. It's also about how people and communities depend on one another. Everyone has been shaped in some way by the dominant worldview, values, and social mores. The extent to which an individual is impacted by their surroundings and their level of exposure, however, varies greatly. Anita Nair is one of the most committed contemporary Indian writers, and like all artists, she has a keen perception of the world and uses her philosophical and perceptual acumen to try to increase people's awareness of important social issues. She valiantly exposes her views about women's suffering in contemporary Indian society. This paper is a representation of Nair's efforts to raise social awareness through her novel Ladies Coupe.

Shubha, P. (2015) Although women have been portrayed in literature in a variety of ways since the dawn of the written word, the arrival of women writers has set a new standard for the female literary protagonist. These authors have reinterpreted the importance of women asserting their individuality and taking a stand against patriarchal values. The women of India who write in English have created their own kind of feminism while championing women's rights. To be sure, there isn't a single Indian female author's view on how to portray Womanhood in their works. Each author has built a following for her unique brand that reflects her personal values and outlook on life. This study examines the female protagonists' efforts to find their own voices in a male-dominated society and culture in order to form an opinion on the merits of the works of Kamala Das, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, and Arundhati Roy from a feminist standpoint. These writers

have often raised their voice against societal and cultural practises that hindered their freedom. Since the authors are often in the same position as the readers, both as sufferers and as agents of social upheaval, their writings often take on a confessional and personal tone.

Batts, A. N. (2011) Scholarly critique of Anita Desai's canon is as eclectic as the author's subject matter and viewpoints, proving that her work defies easy categorization. Scholars generally agree that Desai employs the banal and every day, as well as the apparently ordinary domain, to portray something greater and universal in an existentialist sense, though they disagree on what that something greater is. *Indian Women Novelists (1991)* is a five-volume anthology edited by R. K. Dhawan that includes critical analysis of topics like "the alienated self," "childhood," "marital disharmony," "forgotten men," "views of nature," "views of cities and gardens," "imagery as a mode of apprehension," "comparisons to Virginia Woolf," "rhythm," "the individual's search for identity," "the feminine psyche," " Desai's body of work as a whole has been the subject of a wide range of critical responses, and this single piece serves as an example of the breadth and depth of those responses. This suggests that, despite disagreements among reviewers, her works are stimulating inquiry and investigation across a number of theoretical frameworks.

Tripathi, P., & Komalesha, H. S. (2011) This paper starts by looking at how often Indian women writers have been left out while writing a history of the birth and development of Indian Short Fiction in English. It then tries to show how important Indian women writers have been in shaping the short story form as it exists today in India. Almost all Indian women writers who have put out collections of short stories in English are included in it. This essay is mostly about the annotated chronological list of Indian Women's Short Fiction in English because there isn't a lot of information out there and it needs to be put together.

ORIGIN OF EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism has spawned offshoots such as "genuine existence" and "authentic life." Existentialism came into being as a reaction to naturalism and idealism, both of which place an emphasis on determinism and reason. In the name of this uprising against reason and tradition, institutions and ideals are being destroyed. This poem focuses a heavy emphasis on the individual's personal uniqueness as well as their freedom of choice. In order to explain this philosophical perspective, the phrase "Existence comes before Essence" is frequently used. This amazing concept was first conceived of by those working in the domain of existentialism much before Jean Paul Sartre. As a direct consequence of this, the claim to existence that an existentialist makes is, in and of itself, a claim. It goes without saying that it is not possible to provide a precise definition. Existentialism is a contemporary philosophical paradigm that examines the human condition through the prism of human life. In the latter half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, a group of early philosophers led a revolt against rationalism, positivism, and the conventional portrayals of man. This resulted in the emergence of existential philosophy. Marjorie Greene believes that when the popularity of a philosophy grows, the definition of that philosophy becomes increasingly unclear. Existentialists assert that, in spite of widespread criticism and a general lack of comprehension, every book that forecasts the end of the world, every novel with mad or evil

characters, and every theatrical production with content that is dismal but not uplifting are all existential. As a direct result of this, the term "existentialism" is now used to refer to something shocking, filthy, or vulgar, rather than the naturalism of Zola or Ibsen.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERM EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism in 19th Century

The motivation motivating today's youth is individualism. Self-improvement books and seminars have become extremely popular in recent years. At the core of any self-improvement movement is living an authentic life. This tradition's writers have tackled authenticity in a variety of ways. In self-help and inspirational literature, the term "spirituality" is frequently used to suggest that these concepts have a religious foundation. We are taught, in a way that many of us are unaware of, that life is a journey of self-discovery a few decades after the term "spirituality" was coined. It is evident that spirituality and self-help gurus are unrelated. Put differently, the crux of the matter lies in determining whether the fundamental principles and modes of reasoning that were logical inside a religious framework remain relevant in the current secularised world. When God becomes an afterthought or "God's being me," the framework of ideas that once made inward-turning and expressing one's genuine self-make sense may seem strange. Still, this significantly modifies the conceptual framework.

Many of us no longer believe that there is a reliable source of information and guidance that we can use to get ideas for our everyday tasks. It is difficult to see how a mentor who is just another human being can or ought to have any kind of impact. The idea of an essentially decent, meaningful self-inside is getting difficult, even in today's reality. Self-discovery and being genuine to oneself have become meaningless due to uncertainty, critical thinking, and the caustic outcomes of research. Stated differently, our current understanding of the world is composed of fragments of earlier ideas.

Getting a handle on one's own genuineness may appear today as the obvious final goal of life. However, this goes against the grain of what most people think about the meaning of life. In the 1960s and 1970s, a common theme in self-help literature was the idea of improving oneself by becoming more idealised. Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* is a classic example. In an effort to help others succeed and gain popularity, many people offered advice on how they should act in common social situations.

Earlier In The 20th Century

Existentialism was a popular philosophical and literary movement in the early 20th century. The Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo wrote about the "flesh and bone" existence vs the "abstract rationality" life in his book *The Tragic Sense of existence in Men and Nations*, published in 1913. Unamuno rejected systematised philosophy and instead encouraged the individual pursuit of religious conviction. The main character of *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote, served as a continual reminder of the absurdity and tragedy of the quest.

Unamuno taught philosophy at the University of Salamanca in addition to being a writer, poet, and playwright. Saint Manuel the Good, Martyr, his short story about a priest having a crisis of faith, has been published in various anthologies of existentialist fiction.

Despite the fact that the majority of Martin Buber's philosophical works were published in German, he is not generally considered to be a part of that tradition. He was born in Vienna in 1878 into a Jewish family and was interested in Zionism and Hasidism throughout his life. In 1938, he settled down in Jerusalem for good. His most famous philosophical work, the short book *I and Thou*, was published in 1922. While scientific rationality and abstract philosophical thinking are important, "man with man" is the essential truth of human life, according to Buber.

Two Russian philosophers, Lev Shestov and Nikolai Berdyaev, were recognised as existentialists after being deported to Paris during the Russian Revolution. As early as 1905, in his book of aphorisms titled *All Things Are Possible*, Shestov was criticising the philosophical trends of rationalism and systematisation. Berdyaev created a clear distinction between the spiritual and physical worlds. Human freedom, in Berdyaev's view, has its roots in the spiritual realm, which is distinct from scientific notions of causality. True spiritual independence is impossible to attain for someone who is still bound to the material world. The term "man" should not be used in a naturalistic sense, but rather as a metaphor for a being fashioned in the image of God, capable of free, creative action. In 1931, he published a seminal work on these issues titled *The Destiny of Man*.

MEANING OF EXISTENTIALISM WITH SPECIAL DEFINITIONS

The term "existentialism," like the terms "rationalism" and "empiricism," is one that is properly placed in the annals of intellectual history. Therefore, the definition of the phrase is contingent upon its time period. Many major existentialists, like Karl Jaspers, Albert Camus, and Martin Heidegger, later rejected the label. Its philosophical predecessors were the nineteenth-century philosophers Sren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche. The existentialists were a literary movement as well as a philosophical one.

This has led others to claim that the term "existentialism" should be used only to refer to Sartre's philosophy and not as a philosophical stance in its own right. Two new books have taken these stances, continuing decades-long efforts to engage existentialism in constructive dialogue within current philosophical debates. A concept first articulated by Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre, "existentialism" is the "ethical view that we need to respect the freedom at the centre of human life as fundamentally important and the basis of all other values," as explained by Jonathan Webber. By sticking to this definition, we may better grasp how existentialism can "base sophisticated contributions to social psychology, philosophy of mind, moral philosophy, cultural theory, and psychotherapy" while also detecting the flaws within what is commonly recognised as "existentialism" in the broad sense. However, as noted by Noreen Khawaja, the "movement" of existentialism has a reoccurring problem with identifying its membership, as those recruited are often unfamiliar with the term and others are outright hostile to it. However, she sees a problem with this if existentialism is indeed a philosophical movement. To put it another way,

existentialism "is a tradition, not a movement," with "a pattern of intergenerational impact, in which later personalities studied and appropriated the work of earlier characters" evident throughout its recorded history. Even if you identify as a "atheist," you may find yourself feeling religious when reading the works of existentialists like Kierkegaard, Sartre, and Heidegger. Both Khawaja and Webber agree that authenticity is fundamental to existential philosophy; however, Webber argues that the existentialism of Sartre, Beauvoir, and Franz Fanon begins with "eudaemonist arguments for the value of authenticity" and concludes with "a categorical moral imperative of authenticity."

The philosophical theory known as "existentialism" thus asserts that understanding human existence necessitates the creation of a new set of categories that are determined by the authenticity criteria. It could appear that this kind of classification hides the "heart" of existentialism, which is often understood to be its opposition to academic philosophy, its anti-systemic sensibility, and its escape from the "iron prison" or reason. While the main tenet of existential philosophy is that philosophy cannot be practised objectively, the major existential philosophers wrote with an intensity rarely seen in modern times, and all the themes commonly associated with existential philosophy—dread, boredom, alienation, the absurd, freedom and commitment, nothingness, etc.—find their philosophical significance in existential philosophy.

IDENTITY CRISIS OR EXISTENTIAL THEMES IN DESAI AND NAIR'S NOVELS

It is important to comprehend what "autonomy" means in this context. The definition of "imitation" in this context is obviously an unconscious submission to the social and cultural norms that have been formed by the male-chauvinistic society. 'Autonomy' has many different meanings for women, so it needs to be explained. The concepts of self-governance can go by many other names, such as self-rule and self-determination. The Greek words "auto" (self) and "nomos" (rule) are used to refer to the idea of autonomy (law). To be happy both personally and as a member of society, autonomy is an attribute that must be appreciated. To be autonomous, one must be able to think critically about and control one's own behaviour, as well as be able to do so in social contexts that support it. Individual autonomy is the ability to live one's life in accordance with one's own set of beliefs and ideas, as opposed to those that are imposed upon us by others. In terms of being an autonomous person, one's own beliefs and feelings are more significant than those of others. Autonomy is the ability and the right to conduct one's own affairs. "Autonomy," or the freedom to make decisions without interference from others, is a recurring theme in women's viewpoints regarding the idea of "individual self-determination."

Modernism and Existentialism

A novelist from India who writes in English has made an effort to explore the ideas of individualism, self-reflection and identity exploration, and the resistance to following moral and religious principles. An individual must be willing to follow their own inclinations, regardless of how irrational or ridiculous they may appear to others, according to a core tenet of existentialism.

The novel's definition of "modernity" includes investigating hitherto unexplored topics, examining human behaviour objectively, purposefully disproving oppressive morality, sympathetically depicting the inner motivations behind human behaviour, and refusing to adhere to traditional notions of heroism and respectability. Modern art, on the other hand, dares to portray reality as it actually is. Current works that portray life as a humorous puzzle seem to lack depth and purpose. You don't have to go far to find out why this is the case. These days, the rationalistic perspective of the modern era on religion forces people to renounce their implicit faith in religious institutions.

Existential Issues in the City's Voices

The Peacock portrays Maya in Cry, a woman whose obsession with death drives her to murder. Anita Desai's second book, Voices in the City, tells the story of a lady who feels alone and has the will to rebel but is unable to do so. The author uses dramatic form to show the antagonistic relationship that exists between the voices of the city and the city itself. According to Meena Belliappa's book Anita Desai: A Study of Her Fiction, "In Voices in the City, an attempt is made, maybe for the first time in Indian literature, to relate the subjective world of the individual to the spirit of a location." page 26. According to Anita Desai, the human condition is the most important aspect of life. Anita Desai goes into great depth about "the agony of battling single-handed, the terrible assaults of existence," as she put it in an interview with Yashodhara Dalmia. The representation of the city's instability in the book Voices in the City uses adjectives and adverbs to convey dread and disgust. Given that the city is characterised as acting "recklessly," "maniacally," and "murderously," it is obvious that the person is in danger. The author uses Nirode's desire for Arun, the sibling she wants, to contrast the city as a prison with the boundless countryside as a metaphor of escape. Nirode believes that the anonymity forces him to lead an artificial life in the city. He believes that routine controls his existence.

Anita Desai's Narrative of Women's Suffering: A Critical Analysis

Anita Desai has spent her entire life looking at the intricate web of human civilization from the perspective of "individual and individualism". "Introspection into the infinite depths of the mind, with the main thrust meditated on the inner life of the individual, the myriads and passing fancies and fleeting thoughts, together with her razor-like sharp awareness of the futility of existence", as perceived magnificently in the exotic shades of her narrative profundity. "My writing is an attempt to identify and describe things' worth," the author, Anand Bhandari, once said in a great quotation. In order to find explanations for the seemingly random events occurring around me, I have to delve under the surface and illuminate the depths until they mirror the surface world in a way that is more brilliant, dazzling, and understandable.

Existence Precedes Essence

Since there is no God or a priori world of principles to direct man, existentialists believe that man must take responsibility for his own acts. Heidegger and Sartre, on the one hand, are existentialists, while theistic philosophers like Kant and Aristotle are agnostics. Since they place existence before essence, they conclude that this means there is no such thing as a universal human nature. He is

the only one who can make laws. Having no one else to draw on, he must rely on his own judgement.

He doesn't simply make a decision for himself, but for all of humanity, since he thinks everyone should do what he does. What one individual does has consequences for how all of humanity works. When a guy has to decide between two bad options, he feels pain. In such a predicament, the creative process can be relied upon to provide a solution. Being the last to comply puts a damper on one's ability to think beyond the box. Keeping one's word is the single most important factor in strengthening the emotional bond between one's internal commitment and its goal. The existence of God, according to Marcel and other existentialists, is essential for human fulfilment.

The Theme of Anguish

Bharathi Mukherjee's novels show women's mental and bodily anguish in equal measure. They broke both theoretical and societal taboos. They analysed themselves thoroughly in order to foretell the public's perception of women and their social status. This has led to a fresh approach to the topic of women in their discussions. The outlook on life held by one character is dismissive and invalidating, whereas that of another is aggressive and acknowledging. The reader will experience profound satisfaction as a result of this exchange of temperaments. Postmodern Indian women researchers are an inspiration for new studies since they challenge the idea of a patriarchal social order. Thanks to their work, the study of women in Indian literature written in English now has a firm footing. The women depicted in Mukherjee's writing are complex and multifaceted. The feminism presents in Indian literature written in English is essential for a comprehensive understanding of these depictions. Bharati Mukherjee was born on July 27, 1940, in Calcutta, India, to a Hindu Brahmin family of some affluent social rank. Approximately forty to fifty relatives took care of Sudhir Lal and Bina Mukherjee's second daughter till she was eight years old. Bharati Mukherjee and her sisters have plenty of opportunities to pursue academic pursuits. All of them have chosen to make learning their life's work and have had access to excellent education. A job in England was granted to her father's family in 1947, and they went there for the remainder of the year, allowing Mukherjee the opportunity to develop and improve her English accent abilities. She received her Bachelor of Arts in 1959 with high honours from the University of Calcutta.

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF A SELECTION OF LIVING PHILOSOPHERS

Kierkegaard influenced thinkers like Heidegger and Sartre. It's important to remember that the foundation for Existentialism was laid by authors and thinkers from domains other than philosophy. We are perplexed and demand to know, "What is it?" Existentialism suggests we ask questions like "Why is it here?" and "What is its purpose here?" whenever we look at something. Another way of saying this is that the first contact is about establishing the reality of something, while the second contact is about learning more about it. There is something beyond existence that predates all of our mental creations, intellectual ideas, and spiritual beliefs. Rationalism's

popularisation by Hegel contributed to existentialism's ascent to prominence. The fallacious claims of knowing and reasoning are totally offensive to Existentialism.

Kierkegaard

Kierkegaard (1813–55) is widely regarded as the most significant figure in the first generation of this movement. His name lives on in the Existentialism philosophy. Being alive has importance for people, and they honour that purpose. Passion, determination, and sense of duty all play a role in shaping an individual's way of life. These are the features of "real life," as Kierkegaard calls it, that existentialists later praised. According to this principle, what matters most is how one lives one's decisions and dedications. Authentic life is even more crucial when major decisions are made without sufficient evidence.

Albert Camus

Camus's writings are rife with absurdity. According to Albert Camus, a meaningful existence may be found in the battle to be honest and in working together to achieve peace and prosperity as a community of people. There is no way to avoid the pain of realising your time on Earth is limited and that death is inevitable. Franz Kafka and Fyodor Dostoevsky had a significant impact on the development of existentialist ideas. The negative connotations often attached to existentialist thought are undeserved. On the other hand, Existentialism does not promote a pessimistic view of humankind or the world.

J.P. Sartre

Karl Jaspers, who later called existentialism a "phantom" created by the public, said that in Germany, where he was born and raised, his philosophy—which was heavily influenced by Nietzsche and Kierkegaard—was known as Existenzphilosophie. As Jaspers says, "Existenzphilosophy is the manner of thinking by which man aspires to become himself...This mode of thinking does not cognize things, but elucidates and makes real the being of the thinker." Originally a self-description, the term "existentialism" came to be associated with the literary and philosophical work of Jean-Paul Sartre and his contemporaries, such as Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Albert Camus, in the postwar years of Europe.

Gabriel Marcel

Primary reflection was equivalent to what he called "abstract, scientific-technical thinking," whereas secondary reflection was the activity of the abstract Cartesian ego. According to Marcel, philosophising was an embodied, sensory, emotional, and environmental experience. Although Sartre coined the term "existentialism" in the 1940s, Marcel's worldview has been described as "nearly diametrically opposite" to Sartre's.

Predating the term "existentialism," Marcel's "Existence and Objectivity" (1925) and his *Metaphysical Journal* (1927) nonetheless present the core ideas of the movement to a French audience. The playwright and philosopher Marcel found philosophical inspiration in the existential

conundrum of trying to find lasting peace in a fleeting world. Marcel's outlook, which he called "dialogical" rather than "dialectic," was characterised by a sense of "wonder and surprise" because it was more interested in the "presence" of other people and God than in "knowledge" about them.

Martin Heidegger

Jaspers, a professor at Heidelberg University, knew Heidegger from when he taught there before he moved to Freiburg to fill Husserl's position there in 1928. After several philosophical discussions, they become estranged because of Heidegger's Nazism. Because of their shared admiration for Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Nietzsche engaged in lengthy conversations about each other during the 1930s. Heidegger's status as an existentialist is still up for debate. His focus on human existence (Dasein) as the source of philosophical explanations in *Being and Time* has led to him being considered as a key figure in the existentialist movement.

CONCLUSION

The rise of mass culture and the anonymity of modern society prompted Existentialism's return to an emphasis on the unique self. The modern trend away from communal living and towards mass consumption has pushed individuals to the periphery of society. Since everything else in the individual's experience challenges his right to autonomous self-determination, existentialism arises as an attempt to stand out for the individual and his cause. This is a high-level explanation of existentialism and the moral problems it addresses. At this time, we must concentrate on specific people and the place of existentialist thought within the history of ethics.

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