

General / Opening - Comments on Existentialism / Nihilism

Post by “Hiram” of January 2, 2020 at 10:48 AM

Sartre in particular elaborated some of the complicated issues raised by the Epicurean view on freedom, and the creativity and responsibility that comes from those views which are terrifying for some people (which is why they invent mythical narratives to excuse themselves from owning these powers).

Sartre said: "you are what you make of what life gives you"--which is basically a summary of Epicurus' sermon "On Moral Development". And like Epicurus in that sermon, Sartre and De Beauvoir worried about evaluating the extent to which we are free, and the extent to which we are bound by societal and natural conditions (freedom versus facticity / gravity).

Epicurus evaluated freedom in On Moral Development in terms of our anticipation of agency and responsibility. But Sartre evaluated freedom in terms of POWER over others, and its inevitability in social relations. He evaluated our freedom in terms of how we objectify others, and the difficulties of having true inter-subjectivity. He explained this by saying that as soon as we LOOK at someone, that person becomes an object, and he argued that this is almost always uncomfortable for the person being objectified.

And, obviously, his philosophical discussions and relationship with De Beauvoir and his other associates in Parisian cafés are examples of friendships based on philosophical interests, which is an important part of Epicurean practice also.