

Aspects of Western Philosophy
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Module - 36
Lecture - 36
Existentialism
Main features
Existence Precedes Essence
Freedom and Responsibility
Finiteness and Situatedness of Human Existence

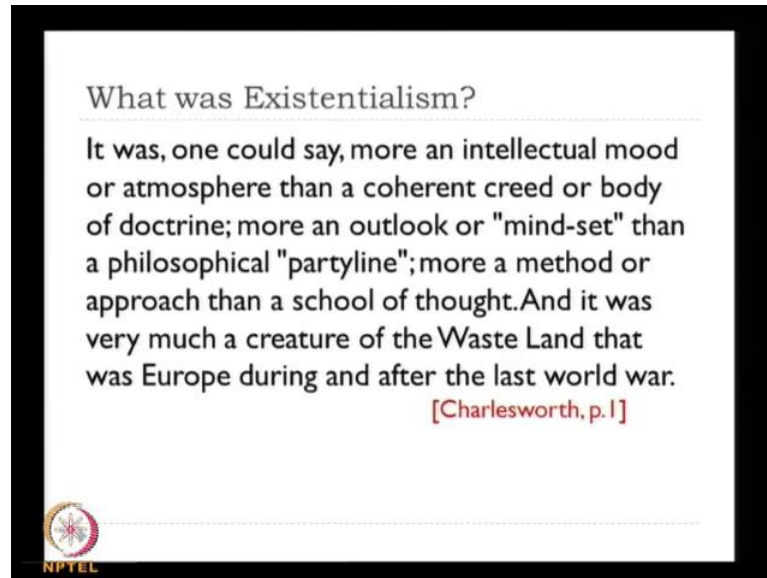
Welcome to this lecture series on Aspects of Western Philosophy, module 36 and lecture number 36. So, this lecture is going to introduce existentialism, focusing on its main features and some of the important concerns of existentialism as I do not want to call it a philosophical movement, because there was not such a movement as such. In that sense existentialism is a very unique and a very different approach to philosophy or has a place in the history of philosophy, there is pictures you can see the you if you can identify them, the first 1 is Nietzsche, we have already examine some of his views, this is Heidegger and third 1 is this is Sartre, Jean Paul Sartre, and here comes, this is Soren Kierkegaard.

They are all different types of philosophers for instance Kierkegaard is Sartre would call him his theistic existentialist, and Sartre would define himself for understands himself as an atheistic existentialist, and Heidegger is one percent who would not probably like to associate himself with existentialism, he rather hated that label of existentialism, and Nietzsche is a one person who was active in philosophy when the movement called existentialism was not, was yet to come up.

In that sense you know you can see all these diversity in existentialism and probably one philosopher who claimed himself as an existentialist in this picture is Sartre, who actually claim that he is an existentialist and he is also a written in book existentialism and humanism, which is a defense of existentialism. A defense in the sense you know a it is an answer to various critics from various directions from the communist, from the Christians, from various other directions. So, in this lecture we will see some of the important features and try to situate in the context of a historical development both in philosophy as well as in western history.

Is very difficult to say that existentialism is a result of the works done by a group of philosophers, who agreed upon certain common notions and all that very difficult to identify such common themes.

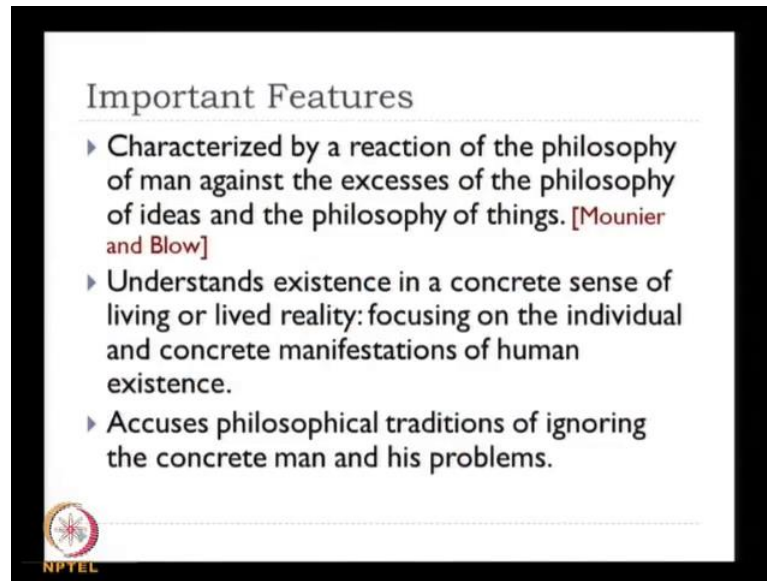
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Yet there were attempts even including Sartre try to sort of identify something which can be understood as the most important feature of existentialism, which is according to Sartre the dictum existence proceeds as in we will discuss that later. So, here there is some sort of a definition or some sort of a description of existentialism, which is given by Charlesworth, he says I quote it was one could say more or intellectual mood or atmosphere than a coherent creed or body of doctrine. More an outlook or mind set than a philosophical party line, more a method or approach than a school of thought and it was very much a creature of the waste land that was Europe during and after the last 2 war last world war.


This is if this keeping this is mind, this particular description of existentialism in mind. Let us move on to identify some of the important features thought as I mentioned earlier, this is not an attempt to identifies some of the common features which are set to be a essential for all philosophers whom would identified themselves as existentialist, but just to see some of the features.

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Important Features

- ▶ Characterized by a reaction of the philosophy of man against the excesses of the philosophy of ideas and the philosophy of things. [Mounier and Blow]
- ▶ Understands existence in a concrete sense of living or lived reality: focusing on the individual and concrete manifestations of human existence.
- ▶ Accuses philosophical traditions of ignoring the concrete man and his problems.

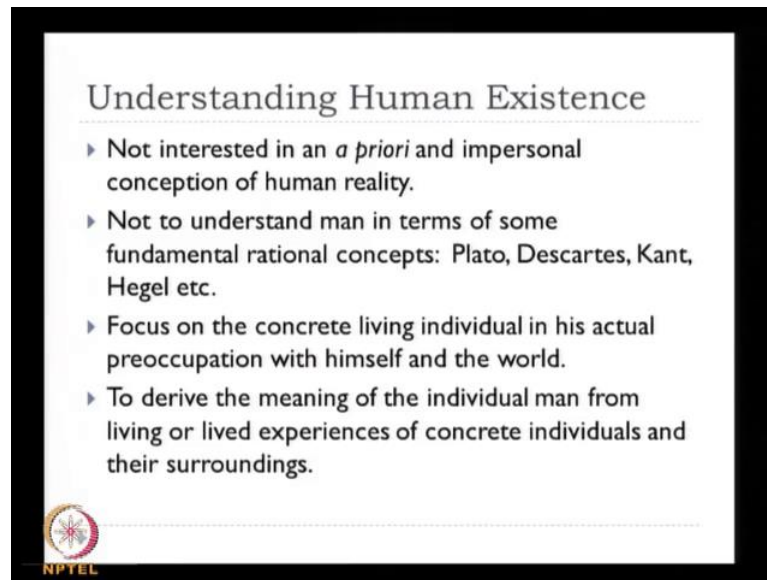
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First one is characterized by a reaction of the philosophy of man against the excess of the philosophy of ideas and the philosophy of things. So, in one sense this statement implies that traditionally in western philosophy has been mostly a philosophy of ideas and philosophy of things, where in that process man gets neglected.

Existentialism can be seen as a kind of a response or a reaction to this feature. It understands existence in a concrete sense of living or lived reality. So, there are certain terms like lived experiences or living reality. These are some of the terms which you will find repeatedly figuring in when you read existential literature, because the focus is on the individual and the concrete manifestations of human existence. What I mean by concrete manifestations are like you know the kind of experiences human beings have, rather than problems of humanity or universal humanity. There are problems, which each individual faces in his or her life day to day, problems and relationships and various other issues. Traditionally philosophers have never dealt with such issues. Traditional philosophy has always been a philosophy of ideas or philosophy of things, but here these 20th century philosophers sort of try to argue that what is more important is man himself or herself, accuses philosophical traditions of ignoring the concrete man and his problems.

This is what I mention the concrete man and his problems are ignored completely by these traditional thinkers. Now let see what is meant by understanding human existence, an existentialist say that, what is important his existence of man?

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The slide is titled "Understanding Human Existence" and contains four bullet points. At the bottom left, there is a circular logo with a star and the text "NPTEL" below it.

- ▶ Not interested in an *a priori* and impersonal conception of human reality.
- ▶ Not to understand man in terms of some fundamental rational concepts: Plato, Descartes, Kant, Hegel etc.
- ▶ Focus on the concrete living individual in his actual preoccupation with himself and the world.
- ▶ To derive the meaning of the individual man from living or lived experiences of concrete individuals and their surroundings.

They are not interested in an a priori an impersonal conception of human reality this is again a very important aspect of existentialism, there is a kind of turn towards concrete human existence, the man who exist, the man who lives, his lived experiences his anxiety his threats, his worries and problems. So, these are the concerns of existential thinkers not an a priori and impersonal conception of human reality they are concern with. Where again it is not to understand man in terms of some fundamental rational concepts like what was advocated by philosophers like Plato, Descartes and Kant Hegel etc for example, in the case of Plato you have this notion of essence.

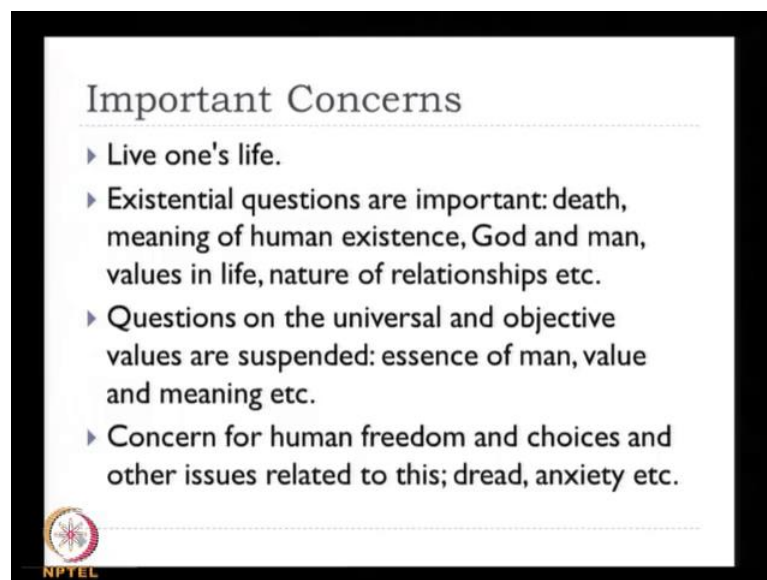
Plato has a philosopher conceived, what is philosophically relevant? What is philosophically significant is the idea the essence of man is important not concrete human beings; concrete human beings he conceived are in perfect copies of that idea of man. So, all substantial philosophical problems are deal with these abstract universal ideas for Plato, where does the concrete human being figure in such a situation again descarte, where it begins with the thinking the cogito the thinking eye which is again not a very concrete a individual, who lives in a world, but it is the very abstract entity Kant and Hegel, all of them you know there is a emphasis on structures of universal rationality

in Kant the structures of mind the twelve categories, and Hegel talks about an absolute in which everything is consumed under, everything is got under that absolute for Hegel, where there is no scope for anything which is concrete and particular.

This over those of universalism and absolutism and abstract theorization would eventually neglect, the human Situatedness the human worries the concrete human being, what Heidegger would term has the being in the world, the world where the merits of you know things and objects and other human beings with a lot of problems and worries focus on the concrete living individual in his actual preoccupation with himself and the world. So, this is what I said other the actual relationship between the world of objects in the other people and again you know how I pre occupy myself, I mean when I leave in this world myself conceptions, what I do the kind of worries I have, I mean the kind of being I create out of this world in which I leave.

Thorough my lived experiences I can put it in that way. So, these things are the focal concern and to derive the meaning of the individual man from living or lived experiences of concrete individuals and their surroundings.

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Important Concerns

- ▶ Live one's life.
- ▶ Existential questions are important: death, meaning of human existence, God and man, values in life, nature of relationships etc.
- ▶ Questions on the universal and objective values are suspended: essence of man, value and meaning etc.
- ▶ Concern for human freedom and choices and other issues related to this; dread, anxiety etc.

NPTEL

Now, let us come to some important concerns again not to identify common concerns, but some important concern which appear here and there in the work in the writings of these thinkers live once life, this is very important because the moment you emphasis on

concrete existence of man and you know what you mean by each individual's concrete existence is unique.

This is what Heidegger means by authenticity when you say that, when you distinguish authentic human existence from inauthentic ways of existing, which is again recapitulated by Sartre through his concept of bad faith which is where you inauthentically exist.

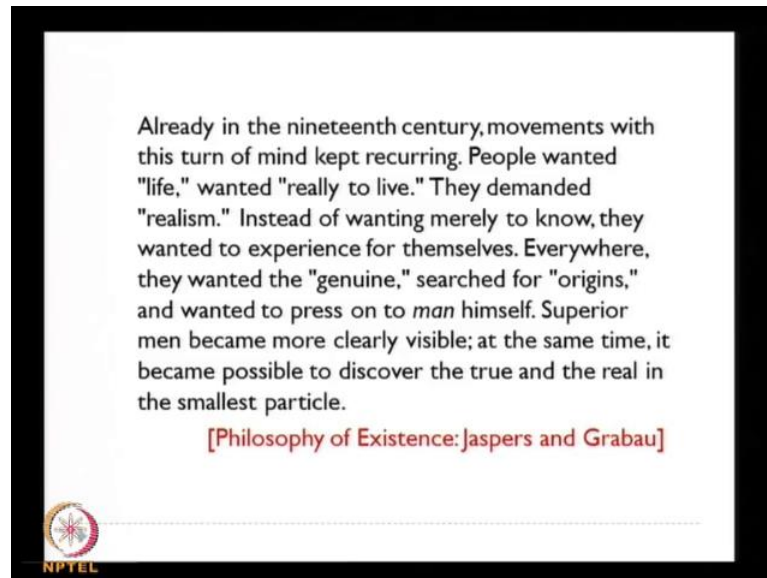
Where he emphasizes that you should live your own life do not try to imitate others you live in a concrete situation you have to take decisions you cannot blame others for your life what is happening to your life take responsibility, these are some of the important concerns associated with this then again existential questions are important death meaning of human existence god and man, values in life, nature of relationships, etcetera.

These are considered as existential problems rather than universal problems concerning human essence or universal human nature or anything, anything of abstract nature these problems are very concrete you know, when I say I am concerned about death it is about death which affects me, my death or death of those people whom I know. So, it is a concrete reality for me, it is not an abstract philosophical concept again meaning of human existence, what is that meaning when I raise this question, I would eventually have to find an answer to this question from the conditions, which I live in this world. So, what things happen to me though all those things that happen to me my historicity is very important in finding answers to these questions, like values in life for instance my relationship with other people, my relationship with god, all these are problematized and in all such problems you can see the concrete human being comes to the foreground rather than an abstract universal humanity.

Questions on the universal and objective values are suspended like essence of man value and meaning of life etcetera, and concern for human freedom and choices and other issues related to this like dread anxiety etcetera, concern for human freedom and choices like what you mean by freedom, freedom is essentially understood by existential thinkers as something which is the ability and the freedom to make choices in your life. So, when you make a choice, naturally you know; you know that you are making the choice and you are anxious about what is going to happen. So, there is anxiety there is dread there is

a lot of anxiety about what would be the impact or the result of the choice which you are going to make.

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This a quote from a jaspers book to himself is a very important prominent member of this existential movement, the book's title is philosophy of existence I quote already in the 19th century, movements with this turn of mind kept recurring people wanted life wanted really to live, they demanded realism instead of wanting merely to know they wanted to experience for themselves, everywhere they wanted to genuine wanted the genuine searched for origins and wanted to press on to man himself, superior men became more clearly visible at the same time it became possible to discover the true and the real in the smallest particle and quote.

The catchword is instead of wanting merely to know they wanted to experience for themselves, I would rather identify this as a most important statement in this paragraph which I read out. So, here existentialism as been divided into 2 classes, 2 types of existentialism mostly done by Sartre it is theistic and atheistic.

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Existentialism: Atheistic & Theistic	
Theistic	Atheistic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Buber, Paul Tillich, Gabriel Marcel, Karl Jaspers.▶ God exists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Jean Paul Sartre, Simon de Beauvoir, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger▶ God does not exist or not problematized▶ Hence no values and meaning▶ Absurdity

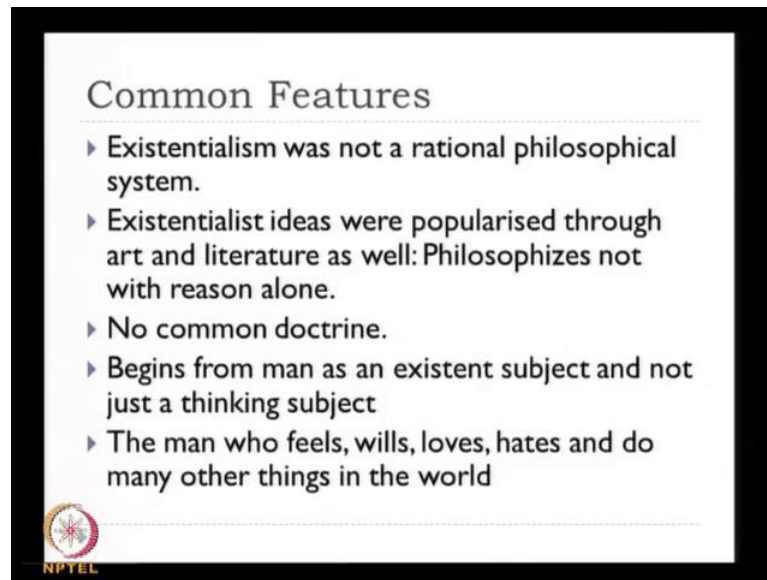
 MOSTLY A DISTINCTION MADE BY SARTRE

The theistic existentialist are people like Soren Kierkegaard, who is also being understood as the founder of which is not a real at expression the most important thinker in the existential movement, in that sense Kierkegaard is being regarded by many as the founder of existentialism a Martin Buber, Paul Tillich, Gabriel Marcel and Karl Jaspers. These are some of them they for them god exists, and the atheist people prominently are Jean Paul Sartre then Simon De Beauvoir, Friedrich Nietzsche, Nietzsche is again as I mentioned you know it is very difficult to classify Nietzsche as an existentialist, but still Martin Heidegger this is also in other very content issue, because whether Heidegger can be treated as an existentialist he himself which it does not want to be categorized as an existentialist.

Then there are others like Albert Camu, who are absurdist and also shared a lot of other a concerns with the existentialist prefer to distance themselves from the existential movement, and for them god does not exist or is not problematized for Heidegger for instance, it is not problematized at all, hence no values and meaning since people like Nietzsche And Sartre since, they are visibly atheistic they would deny the conception of values which are transcendental or metaphysical there is no such transcendental an metaphysical values or meaning for human life which is fixed a priori. So, they would emphasis or rather, Sartre would do it more explicitly emphasizing on you know creating one zone essences through existence, the way on the exits them choices one makes in once life and essentially you know one exist by making choices.

By making such choices one exists and through which one makes oneself. So, that is a process which these people would prominently identify as part of their existentialism and absurdity is another concept which I have already mentioned people like Albert Camu and many others.

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Again let us come back to common features once again, existentialism was not a rational philosophical system like rationalism or empiricism, I have already mentioned this it was existentialist ideas were popularized through art and literature as well philosophers, philosophizes not with reason alone.

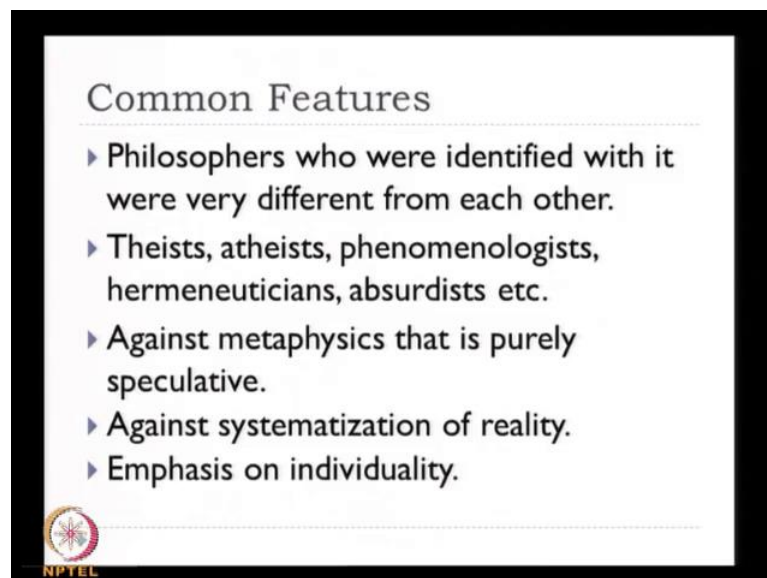
See for instance Sartre was a novelist and some of his very important philosophical ideas were articulated through novel century stories. For instance is famous novel nausea which is his probably is first philosophical novel is nausea and there are prominent stories, like the world and all where he expresses the ideas of existentialism through these media and Albert Camu is another prominent (Refer Time: 16:50) who is a novel narrate for literature, he is novels and short stories are taken contain a lot of existential elements and another very important aspect, as I mentioned you know existentialism is not something which originated with one thinker in the classical sense of the term, it is always been there and you know these philosophers particularly Sartre and Camu and many others.

They were all inspired by not only by philosophers, but also by other times of intellectuals like poets and artist and novelist and others, for instance Shakespeare was a major inspiration Dostoevsky, is a very prominent inspiration for existentialist Kafka, Franz Kafka his short stories particularly his very famous story metamorphosis, these are all very important literature for the existential movement and in that sense it is a very different form of philosophy, a there is no common doctrine which all the existentialist would be arguably advocating begins from man as an existent subject and not just a thinking subject.

This is this is very a important concept you know it begins with man; man is a not just a thinking substance like Descartes conceived to be that a kind of existent subject not a substance subject which means you know, your living in this world.


That is why you know this emphasize on lived experiences and lived reality they call it the man who feels wills loves hates and do many other things in this world. So, it is a being in the world where I exists as a concrete human being by relating myself with others and other objects and the world the world of objects, where I hate them, love them, and do many other things.

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Common Features

- ▶ Philosophers who were identified with it were very different from each other.
- ▶ Theists, atheists, phenomenologists, hermeneuticians, absurdists etc.
- ▶ Against metaphysics that is purely speculative.
- ▶ Against systematization of reality.
- ▶ Emphasis on individuality.

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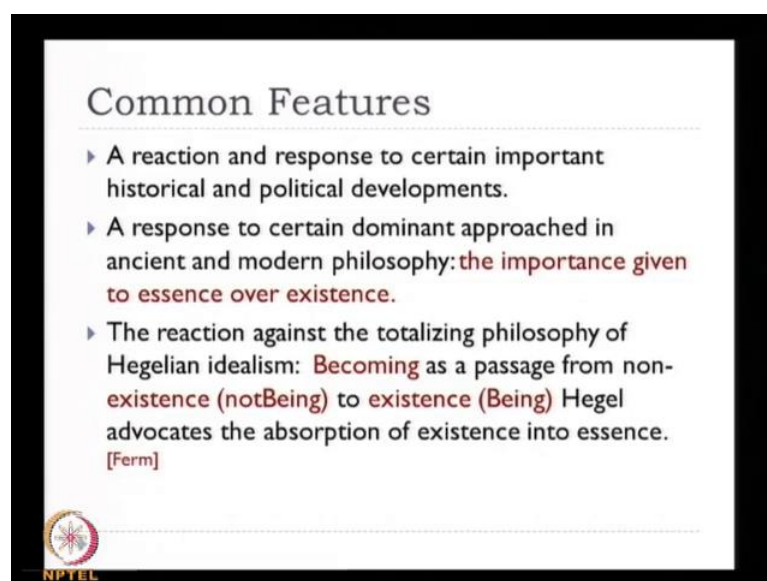
Again philosophers who were identified with it were very different from each other as I have already mention you know Kierkegaard was the theist for his philosophy was

predominately a system where his one of the major concerned Kierkegaard was to relationship between man and god, and for Sartre for that matter there is no god.

You have totally different contradictory kind of views and perspectives, but still they there are certain very important features which put them all and the umbrella of existentialism, theist atheist phenomenologist's, hermeneuticians, absurdist's, etcetera. All these are philosophers who I mean different kinds of people, who participated in the movement there are atheist and phenomenologists, Heidegger of phenomenologists for that matter and hermeneuticians Heidegger again is hermeneuticians, absurdist's like people like Albert Camu (Refer Time: 19:53) Samuel Beckett all these people where not academic philosophers Beckett and (Refer Time: 20:00) for that matter they where they where artist, but they where and there will be lot of painters and other people.


Against metaphysics that is purely speculative, see this is one common feature we can say that you know the over those of metaphysics which you would find in the philosophical systems of all almost all traditional thinkers you want find in the these philosophies, against systematization of reality because the major aspect of reality which these people are concerned with is the human reality which is the lived human reality which is a concrete human being, and it is very difficult to systematize concrete human being because each human being is different and unique.

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Common Features

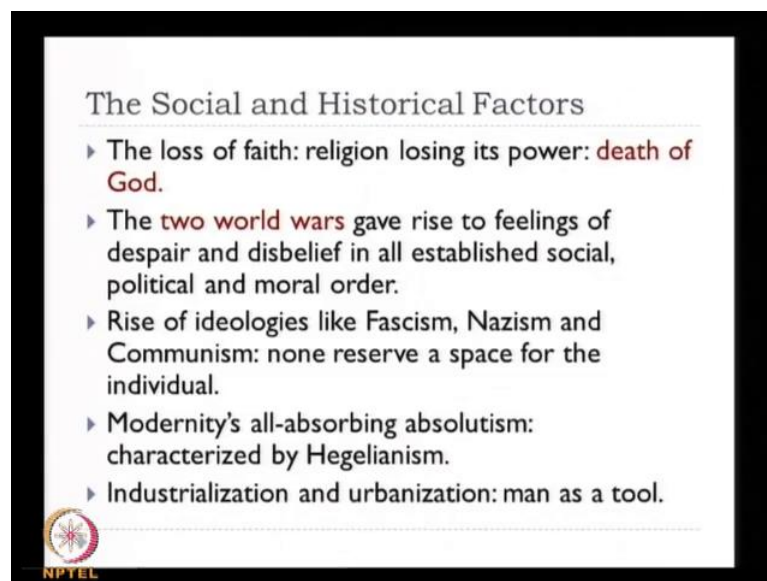
- ▶ A reaction and response to certain important historical and political developments.
- ▶ A response to certain dominant approaches in ancient and modern philosophy: **the importance given to essence over existence.**
- ▶ The reaction against the totalizing philosophy of Hegelian idealism: **Becoming** as a passage from non-existence (**notBeing**) to existence (**Being**) Hegel advocates the absorption of existence into essence.
[Ferm]

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Emphasis on individuality, again it is a reaction and response to certain important historical and political development like any of the philosophy there is a kind of very creative negotiation that happens, between what is happening in the historical political and cultural domain and in the domain of ideas and thinking.

Here also we can see that it is a reaction and response to certain very important historical and political developments, a response to certain dominant approaches in ancient and modern dominant approaches, in ancient and modern philosophy the importance given to essence over existence, and it is a reaction against the totalizing philosophy of Hegelian idealism which we have already seen, Hegel consumes everything under the absolute, becoming as a passage from non existence to existence, Hegel advocates the absorption of existence into essence everything is absorbed under one entity which is the absolute for Hegel.

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The Social and Historical Factors

- ▶ The loss of faith: religion losing its power: **death of God.**
- ▶ The **two world wars** gave rise to feelings of despair and disbelief in all established social, political and moral order.
- ▶ Rise of ideologies like Fascism, Nazism and Communism: none reserve a space for the individual.
- ▶ Modernity's all-absorbing absolutism: characterized by Hegelianism.
- ▶ Industrialization and urbanization: man as a tool.

NPTEL

Now, with regard to the social and historical factors the loss of faith is a very important catalyst or rather not just a catalyst, very actively you know it contributed to the existential temperament emergence of this kind of a philosophy, religion losing its power which is being described beautifully by in each in his expression death of god, then again the 2 world wars gave rise to feelings of despair and disbelief in all established social political and moral order.

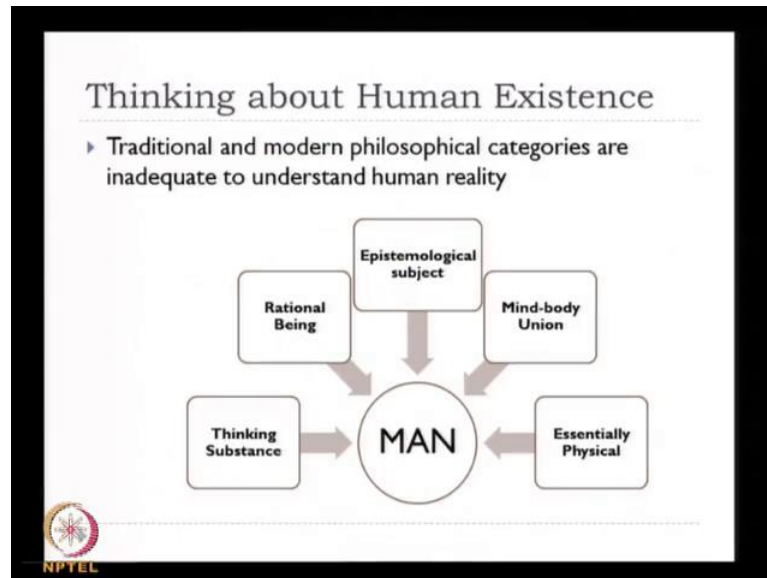
The 2 world war shattered European, what you called foundation list values system and this ultimately you know resulted actually in that sense which was predicting it the kind of faith in this death of god that what is eventually going to happen, and then again this is another important aspect the rise of ideologies, like Fascism, Nazism and communism, none of them reserve a space a respectable space for the individual in it.

They are all totalizing systems and you can see the way in which political power you. So, centralized in these systems in Fascism and Nazism, now the fascism which originated unitary my soliny, was the sole leader of fascism and in Hitler German Nazism, Hitler was the sole leader and communism again we had seen you know what is happen in Russia, like people like again detectors like Stalin have emerged they have crushed suppressed all free thinking and there is no respect, absolutely no respect for the individual freedom or concerns of the individual or any of those things.

And modernity's all absorbing absolutism characterize by Hegelianism, and industrialization and urbanization which eventually made man as a tools, see the one of the impacts of industrialization is it is separating man from nature, or the kind of relationship man had with nature has been substantially revised drastically redefined with industrialization and urbanization because, that kind of an intimate association with nature, complete dependency on nature, was revised to a kind of domination relationship where emphasis was more on controlling nature and changing it to once on requirements.

This is resulted in a kind of change of value system complete change of value system which ultimately resulted in this kind of you know social political and cultural you know events, which Europe has victors in 20th century.

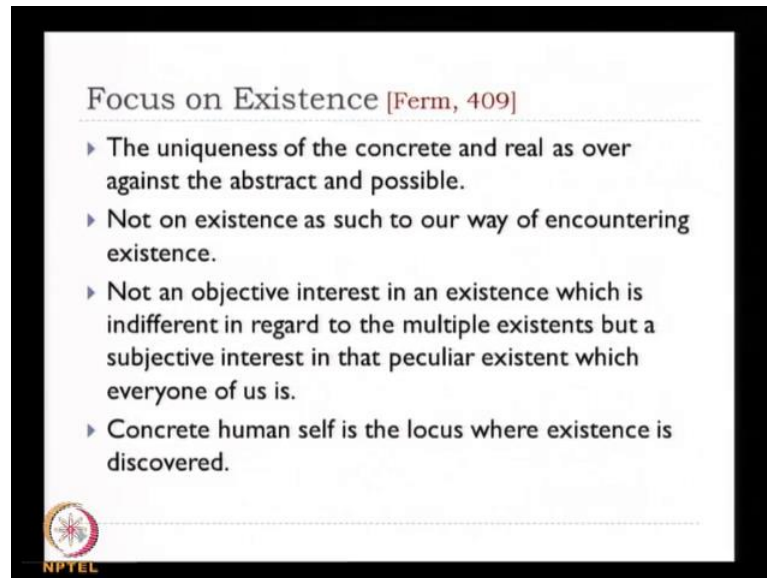
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Here let us see this figure this talks about thinking about human existence traditional and modern philosophical categories are inadequate to understand human reality. So, what happens in traditional systems is say for instance here, man is understood as a thinking substance or a rational being for instance thinking substance by Descartes, rational being which is largely by modern philosophers, epistemological subject by rationalism and empiricism, mind body kind of dualism union whatever which was problematized by the modern philosophers again, and then there are this materialistic tendencies which would identify man essentially as a physical entity.


In all these things you know where is the man the concrete living the man who is in the world relationship with things and other peoples in this world, where is that concrete man in this whole picture. So, that a question existentialist were rising.

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Focus on Existence [Ferm, 409]

- ▶ The uniqueness of the concrete and real as over against the abstract and possible.
- ▶ Not on existence as such to our way of encountering existence.
- ▶ Not an objective interest in an existence which is indifferent in regard to the multiple existents but a subjective interest in that peculiar existent which everyone of us is.
- ▶ Concrete human self is the locus where existence is discovered.

 NPTEL

The uniqueness of the concrete or real as over against the abstract and possible and not existence on as such, to our way of encountering existence and not an objective interest in an existence which is in different in regard to the multiple existence, but a subjective in the peculiar existent which every one of us is. So, this is what when you talk about existence focus of existence does in not I mean it does not mean that you know philosophers are concerned about existence as if very abstract philosophical problem or a philosophical idea.

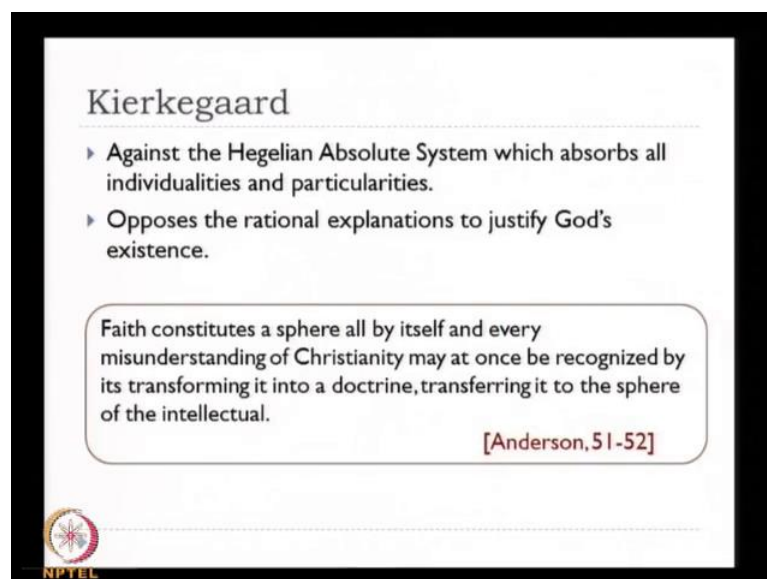
But their concern is not on existence as such, but our way of encountering existence, and each one of us encounter our existence differently that uniqueness is being emphasized each one of us. So, it is not an objective interest in existence, but which is indifferent and we know there are, but the subjective interest in the peculiar existence each individual, what is that kind of, concrete human self is the locus where existence is discovered.

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When we talk about the precursors of modern of this existential movement, I have already mention their names you have Soren Kierkegaard, who is Danish philosopher, then you have Fyodor Dostoevsky who is a Russian writer, and novelist whose novels like crime and punishment brothers Karamazov more prominently they contain a lot of existential ideas Fredrick Neitzsche, which whom a his philosophy we have already discussed and Kafka is another very important writer.

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When you talk about Kierkegaard he pitched it against the Hegelian absolute system which absorbs all individuals and particularizes. So, which does not reserve any space for the individual concrete particular human being so this is something which he challenges for Kierkegaard genuine philosophical experience is a personal experience it is a subjective experience, opposes the rational explanations to justify gods existence, because as I mentioned for Kierkegaard the relationship between man and god is a central problem of philosophy and this relationship cannot be theoreticized, it is something which needs to be experience by every individual, it is an experiential problem rather than a theoretical issue in Kierkegaard.

This is from Andersons book, it is say I quote faith constitutes a sphere of, a sphere all by itself and every misunderstanding of Christianity may at once be recognized as it is transforming it into a doctrine, transferring it into it to the sphere of the intellectual. So, this is complained about the established Christianity though he himself was sort of concerned about the biblical god, Christ experience of god etcetera.

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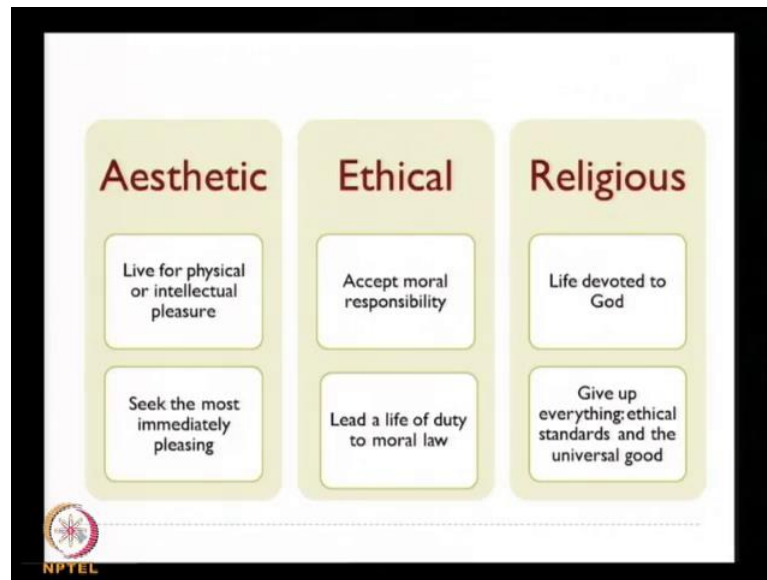
- ▶ Subjective and personal things are more important than objective and universal realities: everything is subjective and personal and objectivity is a myth.
- ▶ Subjective and personal choice is the crux of human existence.
- ▶ There are three spheres of existence an individual can chose to live in:

Below the text are three rounded rectangular boxes labeled "aesthetic", "ethical", and "religious". In the bottom left corner, there is a small circular logo with a star and the text "NPTEL" below it.

And emphasis was on subjective and personal choice, personal things are more important than objective and universal realities, everything is subjective and personal and objectivity is a myth and subjective and personal choice is the crux of human existence, there are and in this context, he refers to three spheres of existence in an individual's life which an individual might undergo. It is not necessary that each one of us would be

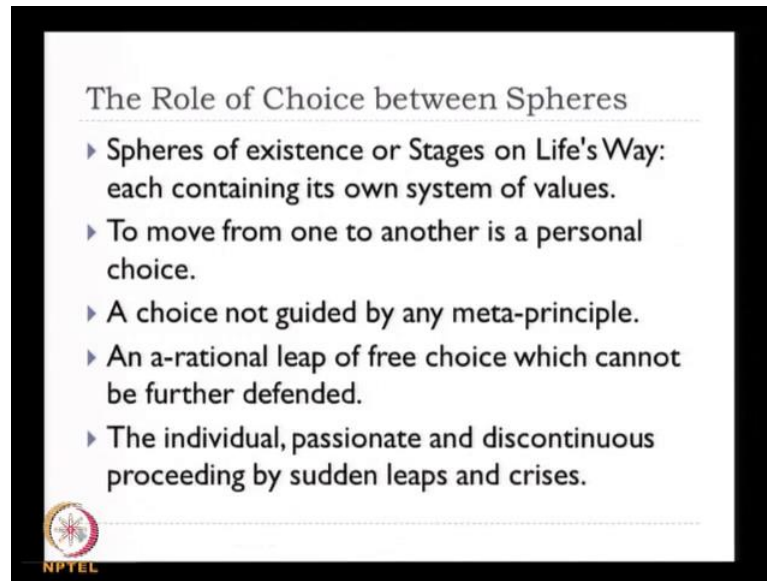
under going all the three stages, but these are the three possibilities according him were one has to were one has to make choices, whether to continuing one particular sphere or move on to the next one, and these are the choices the aesthetic the ethical and the religious.

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The aesthetic is where live for physical or intellectual pressure like (Refer Time: 29:56) who has, who is completely immersed in the world of pressures and were it seeks the most immediately pleasing thing there is absolutely no concern for something which is deeper and in once on life. So, the second one is ethical where there is recognition of some certain common ethical laws except moral responsibility, a lead a life of duty of moral, duty to moral law. So, there is recognition of duty recognition of a moral law which is binding it is the individual, but even this stage it is also has it is problems. So, the next stage is religious stage were life is completely devoted to god and give up everything ethical standards and the universal good, everything is given up complete devotion to god.

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The Role of Choice between Spheres

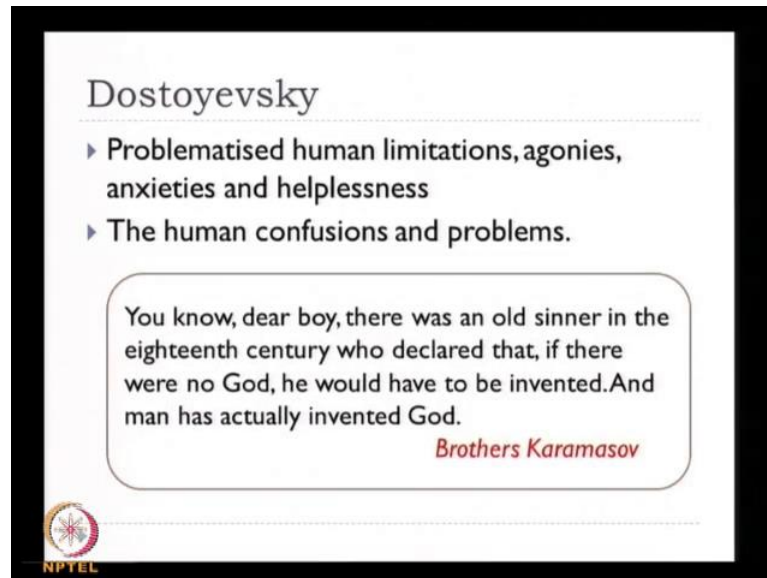
- ▶ Spheres of existence or Stages on Life's Way: each containing its own system of values.
- ▶ To move from one to another is a personal choice.
- ▶ A choice not guided by any meta-principle.
- ▶ An a-rational leap of free choice which cannot be further defended.
- ▶ The individual, passionate and discontinuous proceeding by sudden leaps and crises.

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That is the higher stage and here the interesting point which Kierkegaard's philosophy tells is that these spheres of existence or stages of life's ways each containing its own system of values, when you are in that particular sphere you follow certain value system, and to move from one to another is a personal choice there is nothing like a common a priori given strategy or requirement that you should go I mean there is no teleology that binds you to make a choice in a particular way, it is a personal choice which each person has to experience and do actually make it, a choice not guided by any meta principle an a rational leap.

He says that from one stage to the next is an a rational leap, it cannot be based on certain rational calculations of free choice which cannot be further defended and the individual passionate and discontinuous proceeding by sudden leaps and cries, which he encounters in his life own to his very peculiar historicity's and Situatedness.

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Dostoyevsky

- ▶ Problematised human limitations, agonies, anxieties and helplessness
- ▶ The human confusions and problems.

You know, dear boy, there was an old sinner in the eighteenth century who declared that, if there were no God, he would have to be invented. And man has actually invented God.

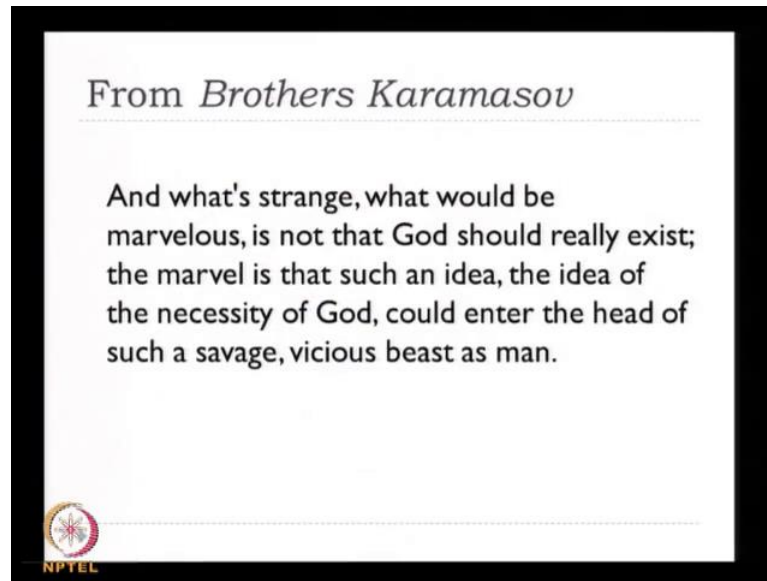
Brothers Karamasov

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And Dostoyevsky as I mentioned is another very important figure, very important influence in the extensile movement, problematized human limitations agonies anxieties and helpless the human confusions and problem through his novels, this is master piece novel brothers Karamasov, the conversation between 2 characters intellectual Ivan and his brother Alyosha, Alyosha is more a kind of god intoxicated man, while Ivan is visibly an intellectual, who lives, who theoratises.

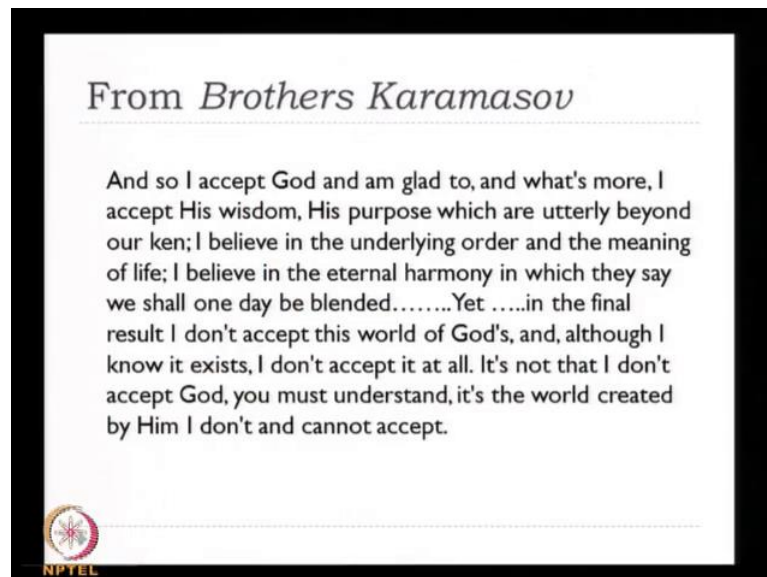
Let us see the conversation so this is Ivan tells Alyosha I quote you know dear boy there was an old sinner in the 18th century, who declared the that there were no god he would have to be invented and man has actually invented god. So, this question whether man is invented god or god made man that is a question that is a problem again it says and what is strange?

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What would be marvelous is not that god should really exist the marvel is that such an idea, the idea of the necessity of god could enter the head of such a savage vicious beast as man again Dostoyevsky again one more passage from brothers Karamasov and this again said by Ivan to Alyosha.

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I accept god and am glad to and what is more I accept his wisdom his purpose which are utterly beyond our ken, I believe in the underlying order and the meaning of life I believe in the eternal harmony in which they say we shall one day be blended, yet in the final

result I do not accept this world of gods, and although I know it exists I do not accept it at all. It is not that I do not accept god, you must understand it is a world created by him I do not and cannot accept and quote.

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Franz Kafka

- ▶ Isolation of the individual.
- ▶ The individual's place in the world.
- ▶ The anxiety and guilt experienced by individuals.



This situates the man a concrete man in a context and Kafka is another very remarkable writer isolation of the individual is. So, prominently characterized by him the individuals place in the world the anxiety and guilt experienced by individuals these things are highlighted by him, and Nietzsche we have already seen you know the way in which he was declaring that all truth is perspectival.


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Nietzsche

- ▶ Truth is perspectival
- ▶ The death of God: nihilism of morals.
- ▶ Everything is permitted, as truth is perspectival
- ▶ Knowledge and truth are provisional and change over time and with the ruling class

“there are many kinds of ‘truths,’ and consequently there is no truth”




Will to Power




And again with this declaration of the death of god how he propagated a kind of nihilism of morals everything is permitted as truth is perspectival there is nothing like the path. So, in that way you know he was also advocating a very unique kind of philosophical position, knowledge and truth are provisional and change over time and with the ruling class and there are many kinds of truth and consequently there is no truth and quote this is from will to power.

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Truth

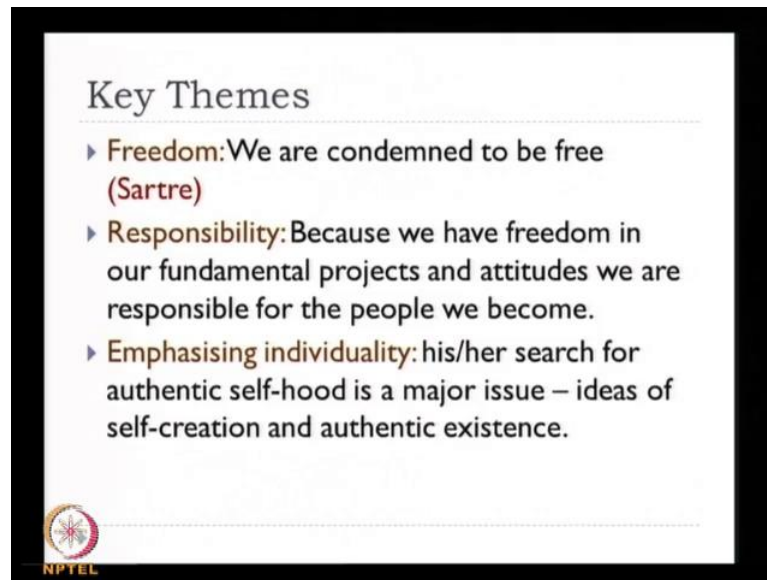


- ▶ Truth is an edifying name for what are really vital lies: **Nietzsche**
- ▶ Objective truth is existentially irrelevant: **Kierkegaard**
- ▶ No universal truth: **Sartre**



You have a very interesting concept of truth, here by Nietzsche he says truth is an edifying name for what are really vital lies and Kierkegaard says is objective truth is existentially irrelevant, and what Sartre says is no universal truth.

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Key Themes

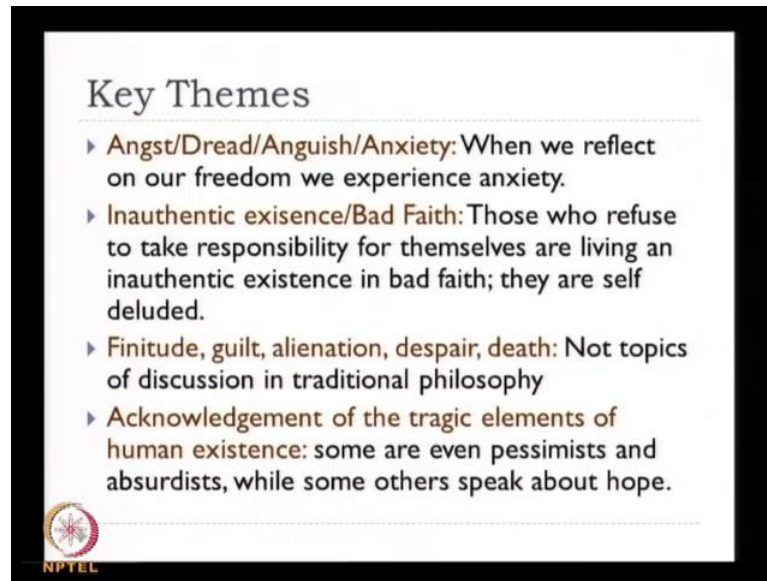
- ▶ **Freedom:** We are condemned to be free (Sartre)
- ▶ **Responsibility:** Because we have freedom in our fundamental projects and attitudes we are responsible for the people we become.
- ▶ **Emphasising individuality:** his/her search for authentic self-hood is a major issue – ideas of self-creation and authentic existence.

NPTEL

With this you know let us re visit the key themes of existentialism there is an emphasis on freedom were we are condemned to be free this is by Sartre very famous statement by Sartre we will address this problem in the next or some of the subsequent lectures, then the concept of responsibility, because we have freedom in our fundamental projects and attitudes we are responsible for the people we become.


This is again a very concrete problem not a problem which, which is an abstract philosophical issue which human beings are facing, but a concrete problem which every individual would be face differently or the intensity would also be different, there are different types of people right, there are different types peoples temperament different from each other. So, accordingly you know way in which they conceive their problems also would change, emphasizing individuality his or her search for authentic self food is a major issue ideas of self creation and authentic existence become important in this context, we have already examined how Heidegger problem probematises the problem of authentic existence.

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Key Themes

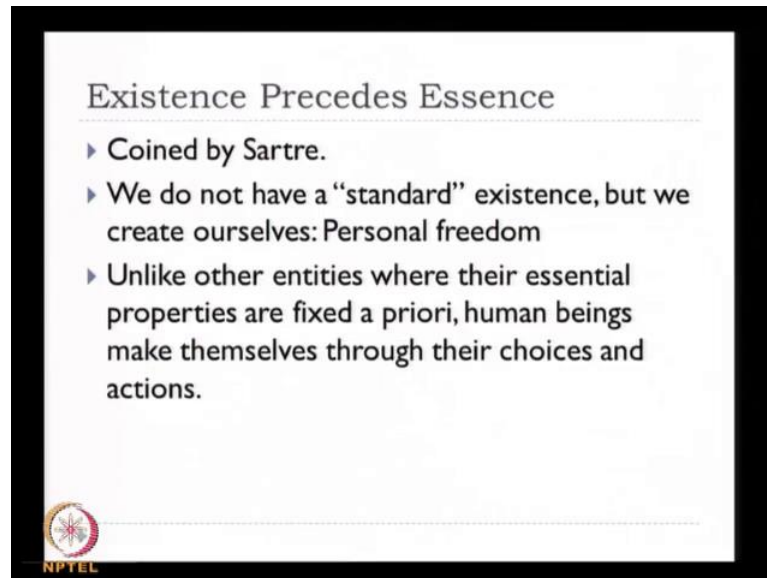
- ▶ **Angst/Dread/Anguish/Anxiety:** When we reflect on our freedom we experience anxiety.
- ▶ **Inauthentic existence/Bad Faith:** Those who refuse to take responsibility for themselves are living an inauthentic existence in bad faith; they are self deluded.
- ▶ **Finitude, guilt, alienation, despair, death:** Not topics of discussion in traditional philosophy
- ▶ **Acknowledgement of the tragic elements of human existence:** some are even pessimists and absurdists, while some others speak about hope.

 NPTEL

Then again the this problems like angst dread anguish anxiety when we reflect on our freedom we experience this kind of and is capable anxiety, and inauthentic existence and bad faith we have already made reference 2 those who refuse to take responsibility for themselves and living an inauthentic existence in bad faith, they are self deluded and again finitude guilt alienation despair death they are not topics of discussion in traditional philosophy, but these thinkers take up them with some very remarkable originality.

Acknowledgement of the tragic elements of human existence some are even pessimists and absurdist's while some are, some others speak about hope see for instance Albert Camu begins his famous book myth of Sisyphus with the statement that the most serious philosophical problem of 20th century is that of murder and suicide, see the kind of tragic element is being highlighted, and there are of course, philosophers like Kierkegaard who talk about hope.

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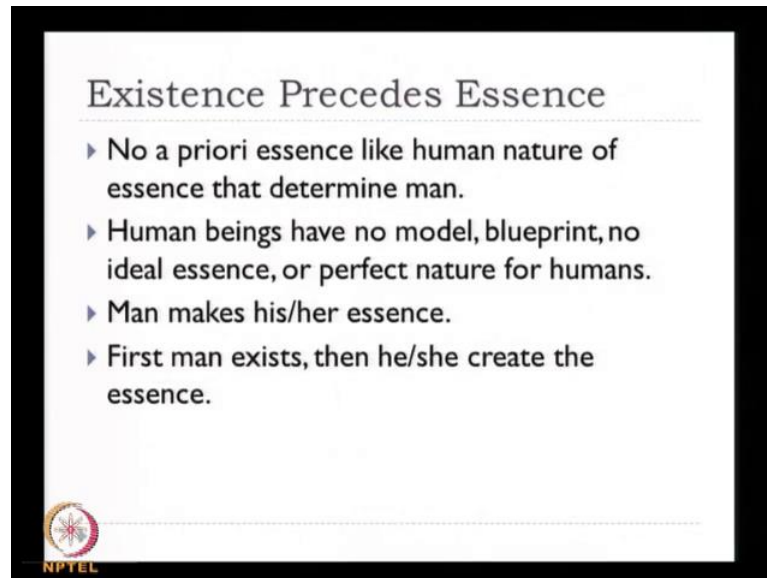


The slide features a white background with a black border. At the top, the title "Existence Precedes Essence" is written in a serif font. Below the title, there are three bullet points, each starting with a right-pointing triangle. The first bullet point says "Coined by Sartre." The second says "We do not have a 'standard' existence, but we create ourselves: Personal freedom". The third says "Unlike other entities where their essential properties are fixed a priori, human beings make themselves through their choices and actions." In the bottom left corner, there is a circular logo with a red and white design, and the text "NPTEL" is written below it.

You cannot say that you know all of them belong to one particular school, but they all reflect certain common concerns, the best one the I mean probably the ideal candidate for a common theme in the works of all existentialist philosophers would be this existence precedes essence, which is actually co I believe it is coin by Sartre, because it is in his book in his various articles he has written about it, we do not have a standard existence, but we create ourselves there is lot of emphasis on personal freedom there is nothing like you know I model myself on a universal humanity. But there is nothing like a standard norm given to me on which I can model my existence, but my existence is a very concrete process were, because I find myself in a very unique situations which is not there for others and my historicity is different my relationship context are different everything is different.


The way in which I create myself since I have freedom to create myself is definitely going to be different from the ways in which other people would be creating themselves, unlike other entities were there essential properties are fixed a priori human beings make themselves through their choices and actions.

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Existence Precedes Essence

- ▶ No a priori essence like human nature of essence that determine man.
- ▶ Human beings have no model, blueprint, no ideal essence, or perfect nature for humans.
- ▶ Man makes his/her essence.
- ▶ First man exists, then he/she create the essence.

 NPTEL


And again there is no a priori essence like human nature or essence that determines man we will probably discuss this again in the next lecturer when we analyze when we try to understand Sartres position. Again human beings have no model blueprint no ideal essence or perfect nature for humans man makes his or her essence, first man exists and he or she create the essence.

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Man's being and Existence

- ▶ Passions, emotions and instincts are not irrelevant
- ▶ Nietzsche's concept of will to power
- ▶ Passion to exist: Kierkegaard
- ▶ Heidegger: Dasein is mine and is Being-in-the-world.
- ▶ Sartre: Being-in-itself and for-itself

 NPTEL

This is something which characterizes human existence from are the existence of other objects, that he first exist and then creates his essence unlike other objects it is say for

example, a pen which initially I mean which first the essence of this pen is already there before it is creation, the man who created it the man who produced it must be having a blueprint idea about it what is going to produce, but in the case of man there is nothing of that is sort, passions, emotions and instincts are not irrelevant when I create my myself, see it is a process in which I create myself through living through, various things I do, through my actions, and thoughts and feelings, and emotions, all these things play a very important role in this process of self creation.

There is you know this Nietzsche's concept of will to power becomes extremely relevant in this context and passion to exist Kierkegaard says is Heidegger says is that Dasein is mine, and is being in the world and Sartre says being in itself and being for itself we will explicate what this is in the next lecture, but just to mention being in itself is the things which were essence precedes existence, but being-for-itself is where you know the being-of-man were existence comes first and then through living, through choices he makes he creates his essence.

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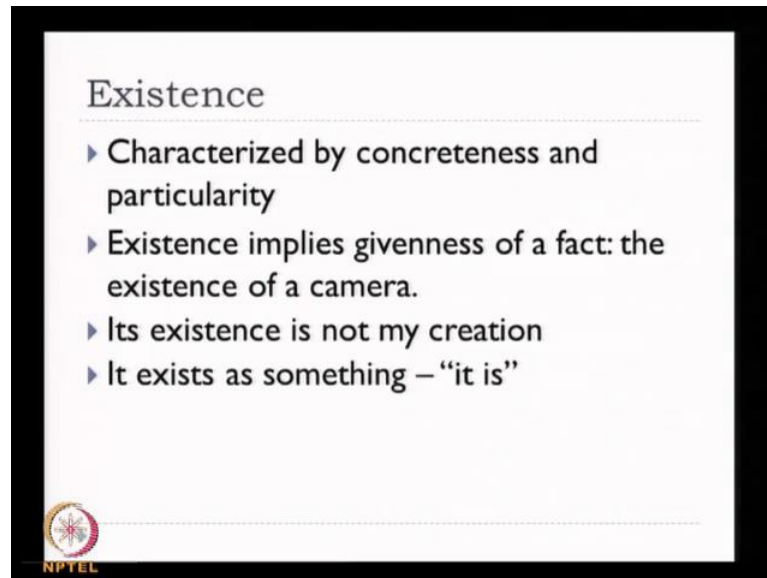
The slide is titled "Essence and Existence" and is divided into two columns. The left column is headed "Essence" and lists four bullet points: "What a thing is.", "That which is definable in a thing we call its essence.", "What is intelligible about an object", and "Many considered essence as superior to existence and even absorbed it into essence: Hegel". The right column is headed "Existence" and lists three bullet points: "That the thing is.", "Not easily definable.", and "Existentialism gives priority to existence over essence." In the bottom left corner of the slide, there is a circular logo with a star and the text "NPTEL" below it.

Essence	Existence
▶ What a thing is.	▶ <i>That</i> the thing is.
▶ That which is definable in a thing we call its essence.	▶ Not easily definable.
▶ What is intelligible about an object	▶ Existentialism gives priority to existence over essence.
▶ Many considered essence as superior to existence and even absorbed it into essence: Hegel	

When we try to distinguish these 2 important terms essence is what a thing is that which is definable in a thing we call it is essence. So, when we define in an object we often isolate the essence of that object and say that this is what the object is. So, what is intelligible about an object and many considered essence as superior to existence and even absorbed we to do essence like Hegel, on the other hand existence is that the thing

is, not easily definable because it is something which keeps on changing again
existentialism gives priority to existence over essence.

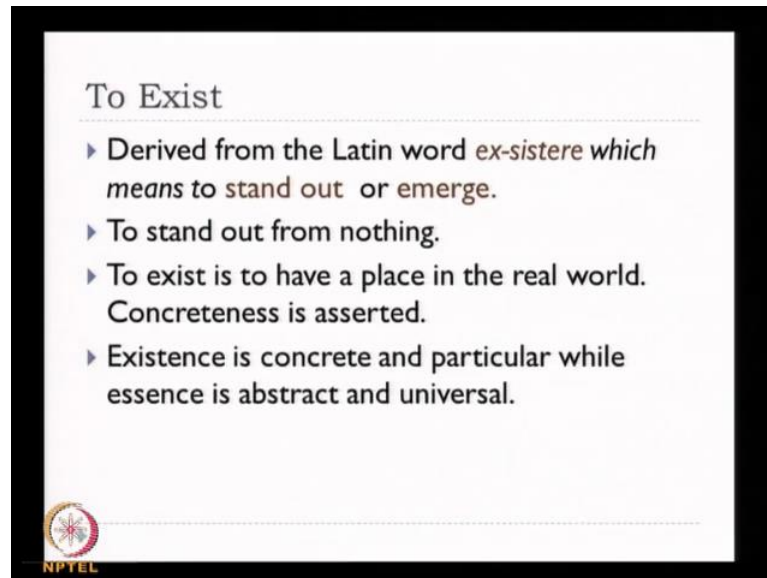
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And see it is very important to note this distinction that man is rational animal or a thinking substance there is all an a tendency to essentialize man that man is a thinking being, or a thinking animal rational animal where which denies man a freedom narrowing down human existence to that, but what Sartre would argue is that it is not so.


There is no in the case of man the existence precedes essence and then I make myself, weather I am going to a painter or musician or whatever, it is my choices which would enable we to achieve my essence existence is characterized by concreteness and particularity, it implies givenness of a fact the existence of a camera or a pen or whatever you have, it is existence is not my creation for instance it exist as something “it is”, it is there the camera, the pen, the book, the computer, there all there.

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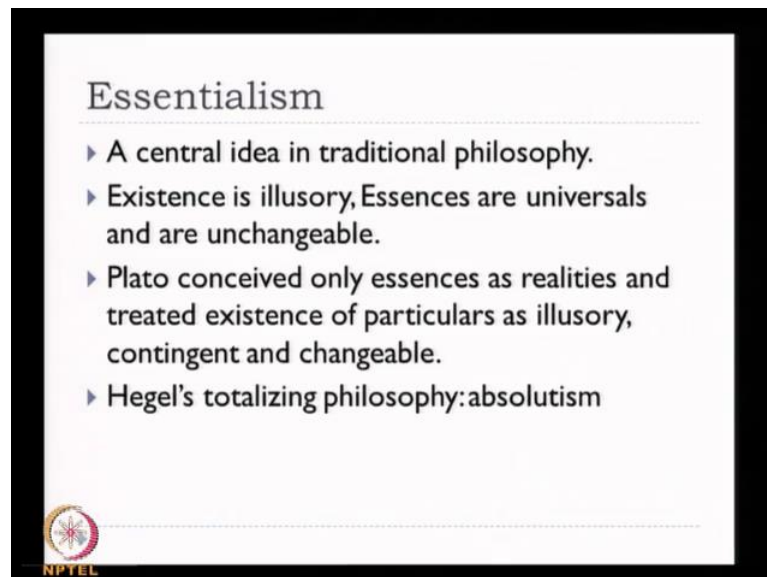
To Exist

- ▶ Derived from the Latin word *ex-sistere* which means to stand out or emerge.
- ▶ To stand out from nothing.
- ▶ To exist is to have a place in the real world. Concreteness is asserted.
- ▶ Existence is concrete and particular while essence is abstract and universal.

 NPTEL


And to exist is derived from the Latin word *ex-sistere*, which means to stand out or emerge to stand out from nothing, to exist is to have a place in the world real world concreteness is asserted existence is concrete and particular while essence is abstract and universal.

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Essentialism

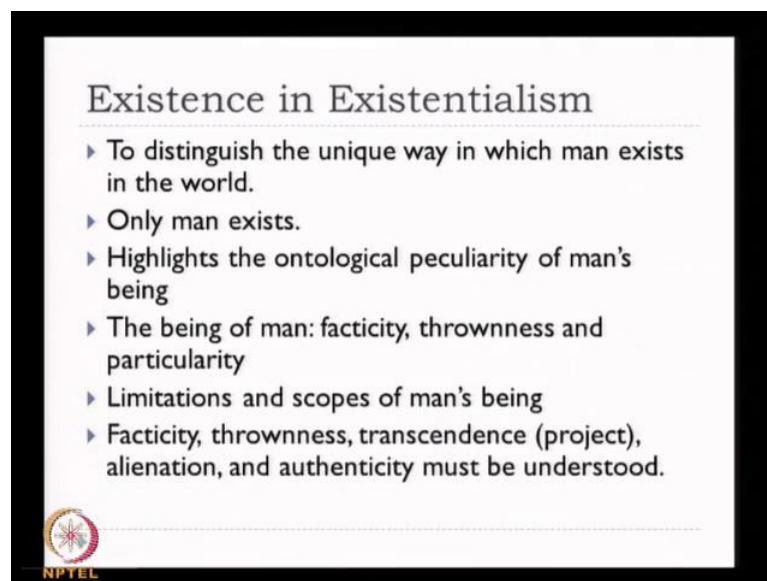
- ▶ A central idea in traditional philosophy.
- ▶ Existence is illusory, Essences are universals and are unchangeable.
- ▶ Plato conceived only essences as realities and treated existence of particulars as illusory, contingent and changeable.
- ▶ Hegel's totalizing philosophy: absolutism

 NPTEL

In this context I mean it is important to distinguish existentialism from essentialism or essentialism from existentialism, we have seen that you know all this traditional philosophers have been emphasizing a lot on the problem of essence. The problem of


abstract essences, and essence have always been a central idea in traditional philosophy and were a predominantly you know this tradition philosophers considered existence is illusory, essences are universal and are unchangeable the notable I mean a striking example is that of Plato everything is a copy and essence is alone are real, Plato conceived only essence as realities and treated existence of particular as illusory contingent and changeable and Hegel's totalizing philosophy everything is absorbed into the absolute.

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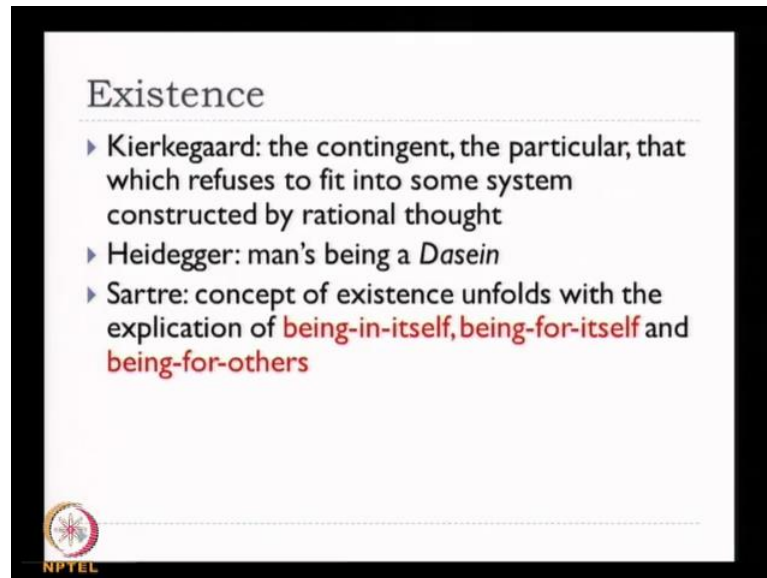
Existence in Existentialism

- ▶ To distinguish the unique way in which man exists in the world.
- ▶ Only man exists.
- ▶ Highlights the ontological peculiarity of man's being
- ▶ The being of man: facticity, thrownness and particularity
- ▶ Limitations and scopes of man's being
- ▶ Facticity, thrownness, transcendence (project), alienation, and authenticity must be understood.

 NPTEL


Is absolutism and now when you try to understand the concept of existence in existentialism it is to distinguish the unique way in which man exists in the world, only man exists, in the case of other objects as I already mentioned essence is prior, but in the case of man existence is prior highlights the ontological peculiarity of man's being the being of man is understood in terms of facticity, thrownness and particularity. We have already discussed these concepts when we discussed Heidegger's philosophy, what do they mean like facticity somewhere thrownness, I find myself in a world in a world of objects and other people in the middle of this world and particularity, all these are my experiences limitations and scopes of man's being are the problems here facticity thrownness transcendence on the one hand there is facticity, I find myself in a particular situation and to some extent I am constrained by I am limited to that situation, but at the same time there is transcendence, like I have certain projects objects have certain meaning for me.

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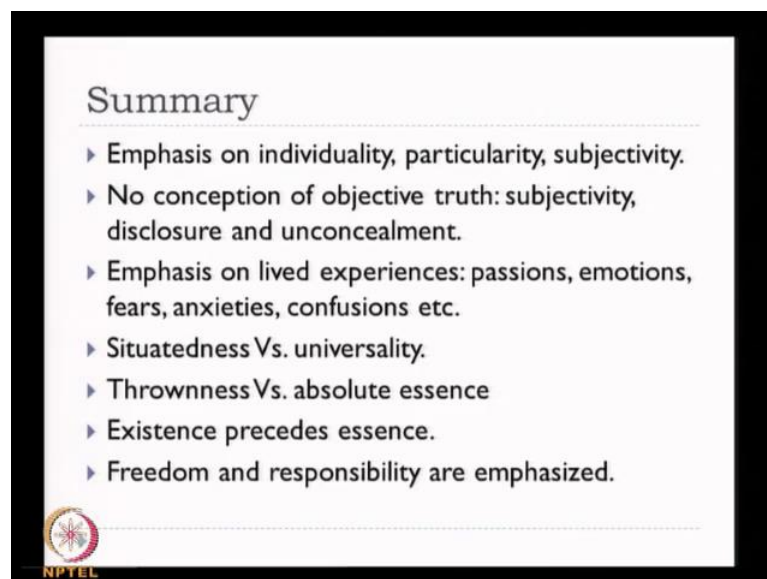
Existence

- ▶ Kierkegaard: the contingent, the particular, that which refuses to fit into some system constructed by rational thought
- ▶ Heidegger: man's being a *Dasein*
- ▶ Sartre: concept of existence unfolds with the explication of **being-in-itself, being-for-itself and being-for-others**

 NPTEL


I approach the world with certain projects I have plans aspirations desires and then again there are problems like alienation and authenticity must be understood in this context. So, existence for Kierkegaard is the contingent the particular that which refuses to fit into some system constructed by rational thought and Heidegger calls it mans being a dasien and Sartre concept of existence unfolds with the explication of being-in-itself, being-for-itself, and being-for-others this will these concept will examine in detail in subsequent lectures.

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Summary

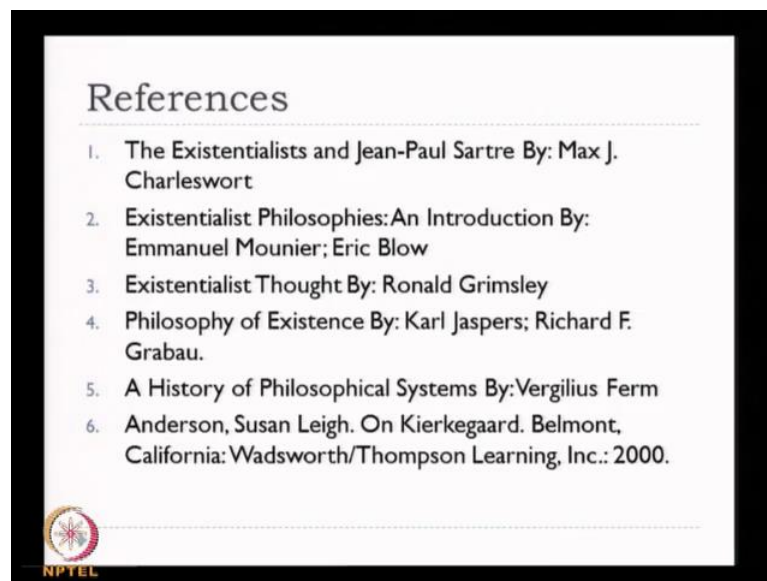
- ▶ Emphasis on individuality, particularity, subjectivity.
- ▶ No conception of objective truth: subjectivity, disclosure and unconcealment.
- ▶ Emphasis on lived experiences: passions, emotions, fears, anxieties, confusions etc.
- ▶ Situatedness Vs. universality.
- ▶ Thrownness Vs. absolute essence
- ▶ Existence precedes essence.
- ▶ Freedom and responsibility are emphasized.

 NPTEL

These are this is let us now wind up this lecture we will summarize the topics which we have discuss today, we have seen the emphasis the kind of emphasis existential philosophers give into individuality particularity and subjectivity and there is no conception of objective truth subjectivity disclosure and unconcealment are concepts which we are emphasize. We have seen this when we discussed Heidegger how Heidegger conceives truth as disclosure or unconcealment, and when it comes to Nietzsche, Nietzsche says that all truths are lies, truth become perspectival.

And a perspectival truth is not truth at all. So, these are some kind of things which we have in examine and emphasis on lived experiences like passions, emotions, fears, anxieties, confusions, etcetera, and then we have seen the kind of tensions between universality the situatedness of human experience and the kind of universality which will be further explicated in the next lectures and thrownness verses absolute exist essence, existence precedes essence, which is probably arguably the most important concept and freedom and responsibility are emphasized in this context.

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We will wind up this lecture here, this lecture on existentialism and introduction it was basically, and now we will see in the next 2 lectures endeavor in the philosophy, the existential philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre, who is probably can be considered as most important philosopher among the in existential it is movement.

We will see that in the next lectures this lecture we will wind up here now.

Thank you.