

YALE FRENCH STUDIES
Existentialism - Winter 1955 and 1956

This review begins with an interview with Sartre, in which he makes a reference to Kafka: "I am very anxious to try to explain why I write. This was Kafka's preoccupation when he said, 'I have a commission but no one gave it to me.'" Sartre then claimed that he has ~~been~~ ^{been} for the last 10 years, "heaped up thousands of pages of notes, two-thirds of which I'll have to burn before I can give my publisher a possibly worthwhile essay on Existentialism and Marxism." I wonder why ~~part~~ part of this was used in the 1955 article under that name, since, in one case, (1952) he was at his loudest fellow-travelling, and in the second (1955-56) he was "participating in" de-Stalinization, Polish and Hungarian style.

SB

1952

The best of the articles by Hyppolite, Arnaud, Guicharnaud. Jean Hyppolite "A Chronology of French Existentialism" lists four periods, 1st, he calls the preparatory and it's the period of 1939-42, but actually includes #1 from 1929 (Jean Wahl) and, of course, the 1 by Kojève in the mid-30s. This is the period of the Hegelian studies renaissance when Existentialism sprang from both direct influence of Hegel and a protest against the system.

1939

J.H. says "It was also during this preparatory period that the influence of contemporary German philosophy was felt, of Husserl and Heidegger." Sartre, through a masterly misinterpretation of Heidegger, derived from him an atheistic and humanistic philosophy.

The 2nd period is the immediate post-war period when Existentialism is at its height. 3rd period, he considers existentialism's decadence but actually doesn't specify the years but for the 4th period, we are in 1955 and Merleau-Ponty's break with Sartre and, finally, to the psycho-analytic trend.

2nd Jean Wahl
1945-46

B.N.
Wahl

Pierre Burgelin - "Existentialism and the Tradition of French Thought": "It is most paradoxical, if one bears in mind the anti-Hegelian origins of Existentialism, to watch that doctrine change its course, after it has discovered the impossibility of cutting itself off from a philosophy of history: the most absolute claim to freedom accepts a reading of the future. The creative thrust is becoming institutionalized one wonders whether the element of pathos in Existentialism will not appear as rhetoric ..."

no

Pierre Arnaud - "Aftermath - A Young Philosopher's View"
This article is good at catching the fact that Existentialism treated "philosophy as a way of living" and he refers to a Mille Brehier's statement, "Existentialism is essentially the novel of the isolated man." and the author develops the fact that Existentialism is not just Phenomenology: "That, when they delved into existence, is what Sartre and

Phil. as way of living

"Camus believed they had discovered, but in reality merely rediscovered, what they took for a dimension of Existence was only a truncated description, narrowly limited to a situation in history - as it is, too, in the broad field of philosophy. In trying to give a universal metaphysical value to mere emotional states, Existentialism did not render them unrecognizable, and the catchword was quickly spotted, at least by those for whom history began before 1945. These pathos filled analyses of time's fleetingness (pompously renamed 'historicity')... far from embracing the whole of man, was based largely on the literary testimony of distinguished solitaires and worthy pessimists who had no claim to speak in the name of humanity"

I don't know to whom he refers but he puts in quotes, the following description of Sartre, "nothing puts an end to the volubility of his intellect." Then, he concludes: "the Existentialist is alone in the world finding his reality and his substance (neither in historical tradition nor in a social group, he is constantly thrown back on himself."

Jacques Guicharnaut - "Those Years: Existentialism 1943-1945"

The author, here, is very good at catching the spells under which he himself was of Existentialism's glory years, although it is clear that he no longer is one. He, too, brings in the name of Kafka stating that the "apprenticeship" to Existentialism, 1943-44 meant the reading of Kafka, Sartre's Nausea and the Stranger by Camus. He also takes up the question that in the "gala" years (1944-45), "the notion of the literary man, of the uncommitted writer, had disappeared from the French intellectual landscape." And then shows that actually the disintegration of the gala years came over the attitude to be taken to the Concentration Camps in the USSR, to NATO and to the Indo-Chinese War.

Key

Yes
According to
15 July

Travis
Ponderous
Historicity

St G
10/25/45
met or
9/11/45
metaphysical
emotional state

But in those years
Historicity
late 1945

Yes when
13/4
Historicity
they called it
was not the