

Philosophy 101



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of Existentialism and The Value of Philosophy The main theme in existential philosophy can be expressed by the following phrase, attributed to Jean Paul Sartre: “ existence precedes essence” (Kelly 271). This phrase signifies a denial of predetermined essences in all human beings. Sartre, in his Existentialism is a Humanism, justifies the aforesaid phrase by arguing that humans are thrown into the world without meaning and subsequently fashion their essences accordingly through their volitions. Based on this argument, existentialism holds that there is no general essence among individual selves. It asserts that one’s identity and purpose is fashioned by the individual subject alone. In this light, philosophy enables the individual subject to reflect on one’s purpose in life, which in turn defines one’s authenticity. An authentic lifestyle entails the affirmation of individual responsibility. It contends that humans must become highly reflective of the possible outcomes of their desired course of action. Such an act of cognition shall facilitate both prudent and moral conduct that contributes to the emancipation of the individual self. This shows how philosophy encourages us to become resolute in our own beliefs and convictions regardless of what traditional society or religion dictates. By this, we shall find value in life, in our pursuit of knowledge and meaning in the world, for such can lead to the acquisition of a deeper and holistic understanding of life. Herein is the value of philosophy. For through it, we are able to exercise human freedom, and take hold of our own lives, based on our own choices and actions. It enables us reflect on the meaning of the most important and simple things in life, and most importantly, exalt individualism. Works Cited Kelly, Eugene. The Basics of Western Philosophy. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004. Print. Sartre, Jean Paul. Existentialism is a Humanism. Ed. John Kulka. New Haven: <https://assignbuster.com/philosophy-101/>

Yale University Press, 2007. Print. Name of Student Name of Professor Title
of Course Date of Submission Descartes' Quest for Truth and Certainty