

'Existentialism'

by Grischka *Monday, Apr 28 2014, 12:54pm*

international / prose / post

Man after the second fall

in order to understand the human condition, I wrote this article, trying to write about two 'common' assumptions used by many people: the first is religious, assuming that there is a God who can do miracles for us. The second one is what we find in existentialism. Here we find no assumption of God, but an insistence on "existential being," which is supposed to be a better quality of life than our ordinary, everyday life. [If we take a giant disconnected leap] it would seem that a second "fall of man" has occurred. Not only are 'we' (?) kicked out of paradise, but we also cannot believe in paradise any more, because of what modern 'science' [Existentialism is a philosophy?] teaches us. Could existentialism be our new "religion"?

Introduction

The reason for writing this document is the ongoing philosophical and theological debates about faith in God.

The world is a complex and frightening place, and our human governments are not always able to help us in our time of need. They will say everything is very complex, and that some problems are simply too difficult to solve, even by our experts. Yet in many places you will find some religious or philosophical approach, trying to find some power greater than ourselves, that can solve our problems, and not in the least, they'll tell you they have faith in such a higher power which they call God.

This is very appealing. The amount of philosophical and religious writings is overwhelming and therefore often confusing. Also, there are many writings that say such a belief is nonsense. This document examines a few religious and philosophical questions, working from the premise that even such questions need to be and can be addressed in a manner that is clear, jargon-free, and accessible. For this purpose, this document tries to dig beneath the assumptions that often go unquestioned.

The first assumption is truly religious, assuming that there really is a God, who can do miracles for us. The second one is what we find in existentialism. Here we find no assumption of God, but they insist on "existential being" which is still supposed to be a better quality of life than our ordinary, everyday life.

What is faith?

What is faith? [notwithstanding that all faith is BLIND] It is a small, but important word. People might not always admit that they have faith, but in times of troubles they often do, and not in the least they put faith in God.

Many modern people are critical of [blind] faith. Christian faith, they say, this one-world government (?) by God, is a simplification. They say, for example, that we are influenced by our environment.

This is a serious argument. But it's difficult to reject all faith in God [no it isn't!] . Faith offers us the ultimate [dream/escape] 'solution' to deal with our problems. [Deluded] Christians can believe that only one person, God, has the key to a solution of our problems. Christians therefore can direct themselves to God, for help in time of need, without having to search for a solution for their problems elsewhere, such as in the structures of this world.

(Prof.Dr. A.A. van Ruler, "Ultra-Gereformeed en Vrijzinnig", paraphrase)

Christian faith

Paradise

In Christian [blind] faith there is one person, God, who has the key to a solution of our problems. He is supposed to form a much higher power than any human government ever had. This is not the end, though. It is clear that people want that God's government is not something abstract, but that it is something concrete. This is something that needs explanation. It is clarified in the story of paradise, it is said that people can have high expectations of God: the expectation to live in paradise.

There is also a warning, though: Adam and Eve are instructed not to eat of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" under pain of death if they do. There are numerous interpretations of this story. So what does this warning imply or reveal? Looking at the word "knowledge", it suggests it's a warning against getting too much knowledge of this world, because knowledge is actually functioning to reveal this world. The phrase "knowledge of good and evil" implies knowledge is intentional, it suggest that the warning not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is against searching a solution for our problems in this world, rather than waiting for a solution in 'God's [dream] world.'

So the explanation I suggest would go like this:

tree = a vertical element, either pointing up, to God, or down, to the world
tree of life = faith in God, that he will help us when we're in need; tree of knowledge of good and evil = faith that we'll rather have to find a solution for our problems in the world; knowledge = knowledge of this world, as knowledge is basically about revealing this world; eating from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil = searching for a solution for our problems in this world rather than waiting 'forever for a non-existent divine solution from a man made God.'

After the fall of man

The fall of man leads to a particular outcome: that there's no paradise in this world. Man cannot find paradise in the outside world any more, whether he is kicked out of Paradise or 'just' lost a previous more positive outlook on the world. Anyway, when man cannot find Paradise in the outside world, it means that he has to turn inward. [Good point, and find the solution, as Buddha and many others have done, within!]

The result of these pursuits is that humankind either 'discovers reality or deludes itself.'

The faith in a monarchic God as divine autocrat/King/ruler is clearly not evident, but was fabricated in the past in various texts WRITTEN BY MEN, namely there really (?) was a paradise, which shall be revealed again in the future, in a reinstatement of paradise. This means a new faith [FICTION], in a paradise-to-come. This faith we see in the [determination] of Jesus Christ. He had to face many seductions and sufferings, but he managed to cope with all challenges and doubts due to his principles and beliefs that everything would be 'alright in the end excepting the zillions of souls that

are relegated to eternal torture in hell.'

Yet, even now there is a warning. [That we MUST take responsibility for all our actions and the totality of our lives]. The 'warning' (threat?) that we need support from the Holy Spirit, and may not sin (?) against the Holy Spirit. Holy [is a cultural value] which means belonging to God, keeping distance from the world. So again a warning, quite similar to the warning not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This new warning again suggests we should not get too involved with the world [for fear of taking responsibility and harmonizing with nature as all other life forms do instinctively] religion says it is a mistake to gain knowledge; it suggests we should not dig in the structures of this world, for a solution for our problems. Deferring the REAL world to a fictive dream world is the height of folly.]

Modern science, "second fall"

There is an increasing number of [enlightened] people that do not have faith in God. A recent internet article (?) suggests that this is a kind of "second fall of man". The first fall of mankind is the fall in Genesis, when man get's knowledge from the world and finds out there is no paradise. The second fall would be taking place right now, when man get's knowledge of the structures of this world, and loses his belief in a paradise-to-come. The revelations of modern science show mankind the internal structures of this world, and we can see that reality is in no way comparable to the fictions of Scripture.

Consequently, mankind can give up all faith, and live with it (or become insane), or again look for a new place to find release. The question is could we ever find it? Some say we can, when we go further inward to see something of paradise. There seems something of this thought to be present in existentialism. Here we find no assumption of God, creating a paradise for us, but they insist on "existential being" which is still supposed to be a better quality of life than our ordinary, everyday day-to-day [SLAVE] existence.

A lot about being and time is written by Heidegger in "Being and Time" [makes sense].

He wrote that an authentic existence is never the same as the given moment, is never the same as actuality. This is something really new, and appealing. I'll try to explain this it by making a few comparisons to Christian teachings:

Paradise: that offered us a physical, true escape from reality; support from the Holy Spirit: offered us a mental escape from reality because of the believe in a better future; being: doesn't offer us an escape from reality, [thank Christ for that !] but from the actuality of the moment.

The purpose of the last isn't - vertical - reaching a higher, ideal world. The purpose isn't either - horizontal - to reach a better future. The purpose is that people should not allow their state of mind be controlled by the (given) moment, or by actuality, for example, by special, exceptional, beautiful or impressive, moments. So losing [an assumed] paradise, and the decreasing faith in a better [dream] future, leaves us perhaps one other option: to intensify particular moments. Not to go vertical, or horizontal, but go deeper into the meaning of certain moments [or the NOW, which is the only locatable Reality.]

References:

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The original text in Dutch:

<http://louisseeksunderstanding.blogspot.nl/>

Editorial comment:

The above contribution has been edited for purposes of clarity and correct grammar; it was also (voted) deemed to be an unsuitable publication for this site; however, a member drew attention to its humour value, and so it was published on that basis. This site does not support or favour delusory material of any kind.

<http://louisseeksunderstanding.blogspot.nl/>

Jungle Drum Prose/Poetry. <http://jungledrum.lingama.net/news/story-1113.html>