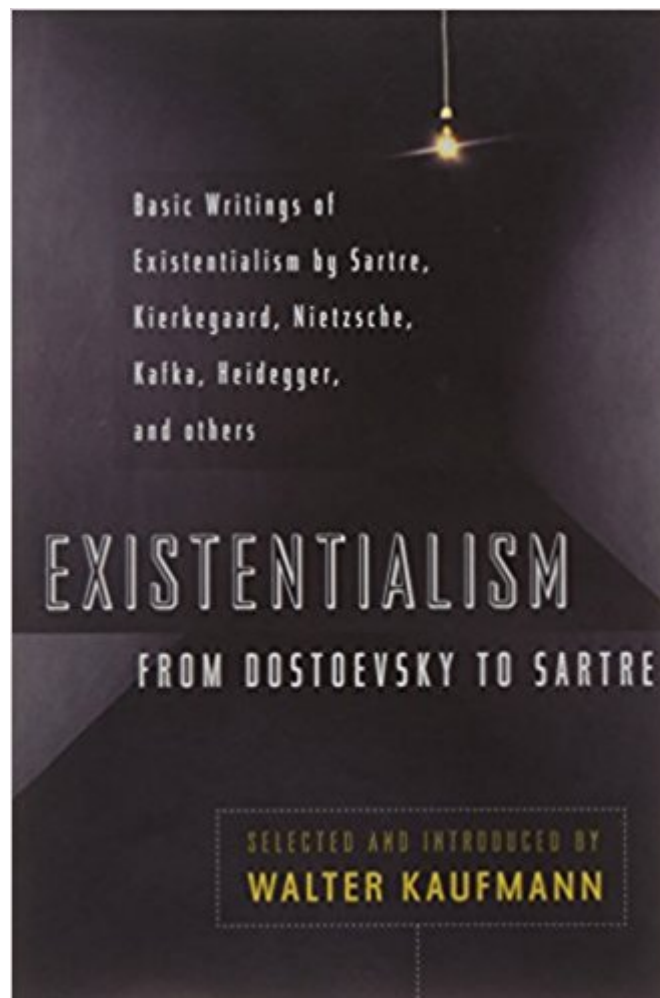




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Existentialism From Dostoevsky To Sartre, Revised And Expanded Edition



Synopsis

This volume provides basic writings of Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Rilke, Kafka, Ortega, Jaspers, Heidegger, Sartre, and Camus, including some not previously translated, along with an invaluable introductory essay by Walter Kaufmann.

Book Information

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: New American Library; Revised & enlarged edition (March 1, 1975)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0452009308

ISBN-13: 978-0452009301

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (43 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #45,791 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Movements > Existentialism #79 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Modern

Customer Reviews

Looking for a textbook? A scholarly exegesis of Being and Nothingness? The final answers to all of life's questions? Then you've come to the wrong place. Looking for a thought-provoking anthology of existentialist (and quasi-existentialist) authors, which flows effortlessly from one section to the next, and brings a smile (or a furrowed brow) to all who read it? Then I can think of no better book. The selections in this book were chosen for their readability, not their weight, so academic philosophers may find this book lacking. But were it not for books like this, which enchant the layman and force him (or her) to examine primary sources, would there be any philosophy majors? From Camus' notion of a sustaining inward rebellion, to Sartre's brilliant reevaluation of ethics (prose in "Self-deception", poetry in "The Wall"), to the great battle over Christianity between Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, there is certainly something of vital importance to most people contained in these pages. As an individual's right is sovereign, I will not urge you to like this book, or even to read it - this, like all things, you must decide for yourself.

... from an under-rated and original thinker in his own right. Along with William Barrett's 'Irrational Man,' this is the best introduction one can find to that much-maligned, much-misunderstood yet

ever-popular chimera of 20th C. philosophy: existentialism. Kaufmann is as objective as one can be, when offering a critique of thinkers and thoughts. HE IS ALSO VERY LUCID. HE WRITES CLEARLY. This is a quality you will not find often when perusing most high-minded 20th C. texts. He doesn't talk down to his audience and presumes a level of cultural literacy, but he steadfastly refuses to fall prey to that most insidious and seductive of academic flaws: jargon juggling. He capably traces the roots of existentialism in various literary works and shows how the sensibilities expressed in existism. are repeatedly expressed throughout western culture. People are divided on both the subject and the book, but that is natural: par example... Students of hermeneutics and disciples of Heidegger feel that Kaufmann is biased against Ole Martin, or that he spends too little time on him. And devotees of Sartre feel likewise. Many think he's too kind to Nietzsche. I disagree with all of the above. I think he treats each thinker succinctly and fairly, rooting them in their context and then looking at what they had to say. Existentialism. This is a word one hears often. It is Misused every day by pretentious half-wits of all variety. Here, in one clear volume, you have a fine key for the door. A great starting place. PS Kaufmann's book on philosophy and tragedy is the finest I have ever read. Used ones abound for under 8 dollars in here.

"The stone is given its existence; it need not fight for being what it is---a stone in the field. Man has to be himself in spite of unfavorable circumstances; that means he has to make his own existence at every single moment. He is given the abstract possibility of existing, but not the reality. This he has to conquer hour after hour. Man must earn his life, not only economically but metaphysically."
--Ortega
Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre, by Walter Kaufmann is a must have for anyone seriously undertaking a jaunt into the Realm of Existentialism and Phenomenology. Although a small book, the paperback edition weighing in at a mere 384 pages, one will find that Kaufmann has packed it to the gills with usable, and reliable, information. Whole chapters are devoted to Existentialist giants like: Dostoevsky: Notes from Underground, Kierkegaard: The First Existentialist, Nietzsche: "Live Dangerously", Rilke: The Notes of Malte Laurids Brigge, Kafka: Three Parables, Ortega: "Man Has No Nature", Jaspers: Existenzphilosophie, Heidegger: The Quest for Being, Sartre: Existentialism, and Camus: The Myth of Sisyphus. One should be aware that there are a lot of different writing styles, because of all the different authors, being introduced in one book. So, in some ways, to the casual reader Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre may seem a bit choppy and academic, intimidating and complex. --Katharena Eiermann, 2005, the Realm of Existentialism
-- Presidential Hopeful

I've thoroughly enjoyed rereading Kaufmann's collection of existential readings. It was originally my first glimpse of the school of thought and it remains my favorite. But reading the other reviews posted here, I am shocked that they attack Kaufmann so singularly and, in my mind, myopically. They're missing the forest for the trees; this is a wonderful overview, an honest and enlightening taste of a variety of existential ideas and, perhaps more importantly, styles. I truly appreciate Kaufmann's insights, and if nothing else, the excerpts are still excellent in themselves. This is a good choice for anyone interested in an intelligent introduction to existentialism.

I read this book for an Existentialism graduate course. It is extremely entertaining (from a literary frame) and does an incredible job displaying the diverse appearances of existentialism from a wide source of writers. It's not too heavy for non-philosophy types and still does each author in it justice.

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