Existentialism And Determinism: Influence On College Students' Life

Existentialism and determinism are questions that make humans think of their purpose in life, like what happens once they die? Why were they put in this world? At one point in life, most people start to think of their purpose in life and how they can help the world become a better place. People in this world are free to do whatever they want since no matter what they do they will go back into the original path set for them; obviously, they have limited free will, but there are still actions that people are able to do in order to feel fulfilled. Determinism is the doctrine that all events, including human action, are ultimately determined by causes external to the will. Some philosophers have taken determinism to imply that individual human beings have no free will and cannot be held morally responsible for their actions. It seems like college students are just meant to get drunk and experience life since that is what is considered fun during those years, it seems like a natural reaction to finally feel free after living at home for several years, it is the first taste of liberty. There is a higher power guiding people on the path they have to follow, same call this destiny, the universe, God, and so many different forces could be driving college students onto the path put at their feet; since some power already set up a path for college students to follow, then they have free will in their hands since no matter what they do, they will always be following or going back to, the path that is already made for them, this usually means whether they graduate from college or not.

Existentialism is a philosophical theory that emphasizes the existence of the individual person as a free and responsible agent determining their own development through acts of the will (Lewis). In the West, the Ancient Greek atomists Leucippus and Democritus were the first to anticipate Determinism when they theorized that all processes in the world were due to the mechanical interplay of atoms (Lewis). Many cultures have different beliefs on who or what defines the path that they will follow. Determinism is at times understood to preclude free will because it entails that humans cannot act otherwise than they do (Nadelhoffer). If a mind, at any given moment, could know all of the forces operating in nature and the respective positions of all its components, it would thereby know with certainty the future and the past of every entity, large or small. Everything that happens in our life was always meant to happen, no matter what actions we make trying to avoid an event, the event will eventually happen sooner or later. This is the main reason for determinism and college students are examples of this since a lot of them seem to not put any effort into their education, yet they are able to pass classes and many times even graduate (Wardell).

Some people are more valuable than others, and in a survival scenario, any person can get the short end of the stick. People in the United States do not value all human lives equally, it is just a question of what the valuation criteria are that determines if it is morally acceptable or not (Nadelhoffer). Some lives are more valuable than other lives. It would be a huge mistake to simply say all lives are of equal value, under any circumstances. Some lives are of huge benefit to the community, while other lives can be a huge burden upon the community. Many cultures have different perspectives on who or what determines their future; it is sometimes called destiny, the future, God, and many other higher authorities that guide people. As a Roman Catholic, I really believe that God is the one who guides us, but other religions may feel the same way about their god or higher power, so there’s not one sure answer to this. Everything

that a person accomplishes has been decided already by a higher authority and they follow what has been set up for them without noticing, it just happens. This is the reason why college students, regardless of their religion, are free to do as they please since something, or someone, with more power than them already decided whether or not they graduate and how they live before accomplishing that goal (Wardell).

With determinism, there may be some disagreement since it's uncomfortable to think that someone has already determined what is good or bad for a person, it just happens without that person thinking about it. They may see it as free will and they decide what they want to do when in reality something has already been decided on their actions before they really think about them. Yes, what has been done in the past has also been decided by a higher power because it was considered the future at some point, everything that has been done was already decided on by a higher power. Major events are decided on a higher power, whatever actions are taken before reaching that event is mostly free will since a person is free to do what they want and still do what they are "destined" to do. Therefore, college students whose destiny is to graduate and be successful can do whatever they want because they will achieve that because it has been decided for them already.

Everyone is free to do whatever they want, following the law, because no matter what they do or how they do it won't affect the end result. They still have free will because their actions don't affect the result that is already decided upon. For this topic, free will is not being taken away from us, but on smaller cases, yes, we have limited free will when it comes to government issues. Determinism and free will may be understood as similar terms, but determinism does not affect our free will. The free will vs determinism debate revolves around the extent to which our behavior is the result of forces over which we have no control or whether people are able to decide for themselves whether to act or behave in a certain way (CrashCourse). A pure deterministic or free will approach does not seem appropriate when studying human behavior (Wilks). Most psychologists use the concept of free will to express the idea that behavior is not a passive reaction to forces, but that individuals actively respond to internal and external forces (Wilks). With free will, a person is free to do whatever actions they want, no one is trapped to follow the exact path that is set up for them as long as they reach the destination that is meant for them; the end goal is the important thing indeterminism. Everyone who acts by themselves believes in free will. They might not all know that they do, but they do.

Existentialism and determinism are theories that try to define who each one is as a human being and what's the purpose in life, not one theory is right since there are different beliefs on these questions. A normal person may have different purposes in life and accomplishing them may be complicated if they don't know how to solve it; that is why philosophers try to give people reasons on why they live here at this time. Determinism is beneficial for society since no matter the route they take to reach a goal, a higher power already determined whether or not they reach it; they have total free will to do what they want to achieve the goal but is not up to them to decide whether they get to their goal or not. Determinism is a philosophy that many follow because sometimes, no matter how hard they try to achieve something they end up not getting it because it just wasn't meant for them (Nadelhoffer). On the other hand, when someone may want to avoid a situation where they are not beneficiated, but no matter how hard they try to avoid it, they are gonna end up experiencing that situation.

In America, college students are people who decide to continue and pursue higher education after finishing and graduating from high school. According to a study by the Bill and Melinda

Gates Foundation, the main reason why students dropped out of college in 2009 was this conflict of interest between school, the job, and the family. “Many students who drop out of college have to work while enrolled in college” (Daley). Many college students are unable to complete their degrees because of poor planning. College students need to consider their resources, their strengths as well weaknesses when they plan for their college life (Run-xian). College students are free to decide what to do during their college experience, they can enjoy the time or focus strictly on academics; with determinism, it is believed that a higher power or authority already determined if a student graduates or not. College students in America may be beneficiated with determinism because if they party all day, yet study hard at the same time; it is more likely that they will get a passing grade on exams if that’s what the higher authority permits and have planned already. There are many examples where studying too hard can still end in failure. For example, a straight A’s student may not graduate because an event, out of the student’s reach, may make it impossible for the student to graduate, this demonstrates how no matter how hard we try, success or failure has been determined for everyone already.

When people make mistakes is because they are using their free will to do what they want to do freely. The beauty of life is that no one knows what’s going to happen next. Once mistakes are done, there’s no way to fix them, what can be changed are future experiences by learning from past mistakes. With determinism, there is no path to follow, everyone is free to follow their dreams and do what they want because with determinism only meaningful events are set for people already, and no matter what they do before reaching that event is each person’s own path that they make themselves. Determinism doesn’t excuse the mistakes made because each individual has free will to do what they want and nothing stops them from reaching a goal that they have. Determinism explains that no matter what a person does, they will end up doing what they are destined to do. Even though it is very repetitive, with determinism everyone has their free will to do things that they want, but no matter what actions they take, whatever has been decided upon them is what will be accomplished.

Determinism is beneficial for college students because regardless of “partying too much” or “studying too little” they will pass or fail their classes since that’s already determined for them by a higher power that has different names depending on each individual’s beliefs. College students can live their life however they want since based on determinism they already have a grade in their future, they don’t know what it is but regardless of what they do they will end up receiving that grade, whether they like it or not. Determinism is also applicable to each person of society because they also have a goal set up for them and they are able to use their free will to do what they like and end up with what has been decided for them. Determinism is not just causality. Determinism goes far beyond causality, and certainly much farther than psychological science requires. Determinism is a belief in the inevitability of causation (Wardell). Everything that happens is the only possible thing that could happen.