

Brief Catalog of Some Beliefs and Worldviews

Atheism : Claims there is no God.

Existentialism: believes that meaning and purpose are found in experience and choice. Absolutes, truth, and external ideas have very little meaning. Everything is about the individual and what they experience, in the quest for self-actualization. The existentialist may choose to help an old lady cross a street or he may choose to push her under an incoming bus, neither matter morally. What matters is which experience makes him feel more alive. Powerful experiences affirm and enliven my existence and that is what matters.

Hedonism: Is a philosophy that stresses the pursuit of pleasure as the greatest good.

Humanism: is a worldview that focuses on man. It has many branches and forms but man is central to all of them. Much of humanism can be seen in the myth of Hercules who, while flawed, through effort becomes equal to and better than many of the gods.

Materialism: has two meanings. On one hand it is commonly used to speak of people who place undue value on material possessions. In this sense of the word people are said to be materialistic. But the meaning of the word that we are concerned with is the worldview that says the universe contains nothing but matter. People who believe this are materialists.

Nihilism: claims that life is without meaning, purpose or value. It is the darkest and most pessimistic worldview we will discuss, but arguably it is the logical conclusion of materialism.

Pantheism: in basic terms believes that there is no difference between god and the universe; they are one and the same. At times this results in nature worship, other times it results in radical humanism. But it consistently denies the existence of a personal god that is distinct in any way from nature and the universe.

Polytheism: is a belief in many gods. In some systems these Gods are competing in others the gods complement each other.

Postmodernism: is a worldview that rejects most forms of authority especially epistemological authority. It is best understood as a reaction against the ideas of modernism that are rooted in the enlightenment.

Pragmatism: is a philosophical emphasis on utility. At times it is circular as it takes practice and from what is done effectively distills policy and then uses that policy as a basis for practice. It emphasizes utility over other theoretical considerations.

Socialism: properly considered socialism is not a worldview, it is an economic system. Socialism is the economic wing of stateism. It is the exaltation of the good of society over individual good. It also argues that the state is better equipped to handle and distribute property and therefore argues against personal property in favor of communal ownership and distribution of wealth and property.

Theism: is not to be confused with Christianity, it is simply the belief that at least one deity exists.