

WEEK 6 | EXISTENTIALISM

HISTORY

At the close of the 19th century nihilism had taken root in academic and philosophical circles, but it was not until the middle of the next century that it began to affect the common man and woman. The devastation and suffering wrought by two world wars had shattered society's hope that science and technology would usher in utopia. Instead of utopia, the world was coping with the reality that authoritarian governments, having adopted a naturalistic worldview, had shown such an utter disregard for human dignity and value. It was the logical consequence of naturalism—if everything, including humanity, was only matter, then there was no basis for human dignity or value, nor was there a basis for the ethical treatment of others. Nietzsche's Madman prophecy had finally come true: society was beginning to come to grips with the consequences of "killing God," and nihilism ensued.

New answers were needed to meet this cultural crisis, and into the void rose existential philosophy. Albert Camus, one of the leading existentialists of the 20th century, clearly laid out what existential philosophy sought to do, writing, "A literature of despair is a contradiction in terms. . . In the darkest depths of our nihilism I have sought only for the means to transcend nihilism."¹ That is exactly what existentialism claims to do: transcend nihilism. In essence, existentialism claims that meaning can be created in the experience of life itself in spite of the depressing realities of life in a material universe.

Existentialism is a parasitic worldview,² one that draws on the conclusions of and then seeks to transcend another worldview. There are two streams of existentialist thought that one can follow through history—the same parasite attached to two different hosts. Atheistic existentialism begins by accepting the conclusions of nihilism and then seeks to find meaning in this life all the same. Theistic existentialism takes a different route. Arising at an earlier date than its counterpart, theistic existentialism sought to reinsert God where He had been lost. Both sought to address the crisis of modernity in different ways, and both ultimately failed in their task. We will look at them both in turn, noting their differences and similarities.

ATHEISTIC EXISTENTIALISM

In the middle of the 20th century Jean-Paul Sartre laid out the basic tenets of atheistic existentialism which were adopted by others in philosophical circles and were spread largely through literature and works of art. Atheistic existentialism accepts the basic tenets of naturalism (and nihilism in turn): the universe is a closed system composed of nothing but matter, and

¹ Albert Camus, *L'été*, quoted in John Cruickshank, *Albert Camus and the Literature of Revolt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 3.

² Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 108.

history is only an unbroken chain of cause and effect with no overarching purpose of grand metanarrative to speak of. There is no God; matter itself is eternal. Through observation of this material world and the application of autonomous human reason, man can know the universe. Because there is no transcendent, infinite point of reference, there is no foundation for morality and any ethical system is related only to humanity. These are existentialism's basic beliefs.³

As you can see, existentialism shares much with nihilism—its moral relativism, purposeless and meaningless universe, etc.—but does not follow it completely, as seen in its epistemology.⁴ In reality, existentialism transcends the answers nihilism provides in all areas in an attempt to provide meaning to life.

I. ONTOLOGY

While atheistic existentialism shares naturalism and nihilism's views on external reality it draws an important distinction between the objective and subjective reality. That is, there is the universe as it actually is, the world of matter. But there is also the reality as the individual perceives it. Human beings have something that no other creatures have: personality. We have the ability of self-reflection and self-transcendence, the ability to ponder our own existence, our purpose in life, to seek meaning from it and in it. This is the world of the mind.

We know these two worlds differently. The world of matter we know through empirical experimentation—making observations, developing hypotheses, testing and refining these hypothesis in the pursuit of knowledge with the recognition that much will always lay beyond man's ability to know and that no basis for meaning or value will be found. The second world, the world of the mind, cannot be penetrated by science and logic. It is our inner-awareness of ourselves and the world around us, and can only be perceived as a conscious present. It is entirely subjective, "the self's apprehension of the not self."⁵ Jean-Paul Sartre writes, "Existence is not something which lets itself be thought of from a distance: it must invade you suddenly, master you, weight heavenly on your heart like a great motionless beast—or else there is nothing more at all."⁶

Naturalism emphasized the unity of these two worlds, but existentialism emphasizes their disunity and strongly favors the subjective over the objective.⁷ Sartre regards this subjective

³ Sartre himself recognized that "Existentialism is nothing else than an attempt to draw all the consequences of a coherent atheistic position" ("Existentialism" in *Existentialism and Human Emotion* [Citadel, 1987]).

⁴ It should be noted that, as within any philosophy, in existentialism there is a fair amount of diversity. This summary describes it in its most general form.

⁵ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 110.

⁶ Roquentin in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*.

⁷ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 111.

world as “an ensemble of values distinct from the material realm.”⁸ This subjective world, the world of self-consciousness and self-determination, become the givens—the presuppositions—upon which existentialism as a worldview is constructed. As Sire writes,

Science and logic do not penetrate our subjectivity, but that is all right because value and meaning and significance are not tied to science and logic. We *can mean*; we *can be valuable*; or better, we can mean and be valuable. Our significance is not up to the facts of the objective world over which we have no control, but up to the consciousness of the subjective world over which we have complete control.⁹

Existentialism seeks to ground its ontology—reality and existence—in the subjective world of the human mind where the person can exert control and, in theory, produce meaning and value for themselves.

II. ANTHROPOLOGY

Existentialism draws on a dualistic view of the universe that echoes the Greek philosophers of millennia past. Reality is composed of the material and what might be called the spiritual—mind and matter, body and spirit. Understanding the material world alone is inadequate to describe and define what it means to be human,¹⁰ something Christians would heartily agree with.

Critical to atheistic existentialism’s anthropology is the idea that existence precedes essence. Sartre writes, “If God does not exist, there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence, a being who exists before he can be defined by any concept, and. . . this being is man.”¹¹ In shorter—and more familiar—form, “existence precedes essence.” What Sartre meant by this phrase is that there is no formal “human nature” or human essence that transcends the individual. What it means to be human is determined by the individual; we make ourselves who we are, and life is a process of self-discovery. Animals are what they are before they live and act—essence precedes existence. Man, on the other hand, “exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and, only afterwards, defines himself.”¹² There is no set of properties that define what it means to be human—each of us determines that for ourselves by the choices we make. It is in the expression of our self-consciousness and self-determinacy, those critical elements of the personality that Sartre saw as defining the subjective world, that we create ourselves.

⁸ Sartre, “Existentialism.”

⁹ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 111.

¹⁰ <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existentialism/>, accessed October 14, 2021, revised June 9, 2020.

¹¹ Sartre, “Existentialism.”

¹² Ibid.

Sartre himself gives an illustration of how exactly this works in practice:

If people throw up to us our works of fiction in which we write about people who are soft, weak, cowardly, and sometimes even downright bad, it's not because these people are soft, weak, cowardly, or bad; because if we were to say, as Zola did, that they are that way because of heredity, the workings of environment, society, because of biological or psychological determinism, people would be reassured. They would say, "Well, that's what we're like, no one can do anything about it." But when the existentialist writes about a coward, he says that this coward is responsible for his cowardice. He's not like that because he has a cowardly heart or lung or brain; he's not like that on account of his physiological make-up; but he's like that because he has made himself a coward by his acts. There's no such thing as a cowardly constitution; there are nervous constitutions; there is poor blood, as the common people say, or strong constitutions. But the man whose blood is poor is not a coward on that account, for what makes cowardice is the act of renouncing or yielding. A constitution is not an act; the coward is defined on the basis of the acts he performs. People feel, in a vague sort of way, that this coward we're talking about is guilty of being a coward, and the thought frightens them.]. What people would like is that a coward or a hero be born that way.¹³

In other words, what someone *is*, their essence, is determined by what they *do*, their existence—the choices they make and actions they take. For the existentialist, to be human is to have the power of self-creation.

If true, this would be immensely freeing and a significant answer to one of the core elements of nihilism: a loss of freedom. Existentialism transcends the mechanical determinism inherent in a naturalistic worldview and returns to the individual their freedom, freedom not in the objective but in the subjective world. "Each of us," Sire writes, "is monarch of our own subjective world."¹⁴ We are free within, free to make choices that have meaning because they will ultimately define our destiny and who we are.

The idea that existence precedes essence is a radical departure from the Biblical worldview and all worldviews preceding existentialism. Prior to the mid-20th century existence was always understood as the instantiation of essence. That is, essence describes what a thing *is* while existence describes *that* it is. Scripture teaches that our essence, what we are as beings made in God's image, determines the purpose and meaning of our existence. Sartre has turned this

¹³ Sartre, "Existentialism."

¹⁴ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 112.

relationship on its head and, in so doing, he has elevated mankind to the position of God in determining what it means to be human and what our purpose is.¹⁵

III. EPISTEMOLOGY

As noted above, atheistic existentialism largely accepts the epistemology of naturalism in regards to attaining knowledge about reality; what it seeks to do is find a source in meaning in light of reality as it is. Thus, we do not need to repeat that epistemology here.

IV. ETHICS

It is perhaps in the realm of ethics that we see atheistic existentialism's attempt to transcend nihilism most clearly. Existentialist philosophy recognizes that facts of the objective, natural world are in stark contrast to the realities of the subjective world where meaning, value, and purpose lie. These two worlds do not have to correspond; in the objective a person who leaps off a building will fall if not supported, no matter how long they might wish and dream that they will just float to the ground safely. Thus, there is a certain absurdity to life. In order to transcend nihilism, one must embrace this absurdity and create meaning for themselves in spite of it. As Sartre writes,

If I've discarded God the Father, there has to be someone to invent values. You've got to take things as they are. Moreover, to say that we invent values means nothing else than this: life has no meaning *a priori*. Before you come alive, life is nothing; it's up to you to give it meaning, and value is nothing else but the meaning you choose. In that way, you see, there is a possibility of creating human community.¹⁶

What is key for Sartre and for the ethic of existentialism is that we *choose*. "To choose to be this or that is to affirm at the same time the value of what we choose, because we can never choose evil. We always choose the good."¹⁷ The "good" is a part of the subjective world; it is whatever one chooses and is not measured by an objective standard outside the subject. To go further, this choice must be *authentic*, that is, it must be made "*as my own*, something to which, apart from its social sanction, I commit myself."¹⁸ If a person were to make a choice based on social convention, a choice because that is what "one" does (in other words, a choice based on essence,

¹⁵ In many ways this shift happened long before Sartre. It can be seen in the rationalist philosophy of Descartes who grounded his worldview in a radical self-reflection on his own existence: "I am." Descartes, however, immediately returned to the former relationship by "characterizing his existence as that of a substance determined by an essential property, 'thinking' (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existentialism/#ExiPreEss>). Nevertheless, the seed had been planted.

¹⁶ Sartre, "Existentialism."

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existentialism/#Aut>

what one *is*) this choice would be *inauthentic*. In this situation the person has done what is “good” but they have not been authentic to themselves. In other words, authenticity is taking ownership of my choices and what I become—not blaming them on external norms or standards—and thus producing meaning and value.

Obviously, several issues arise about this ethical system. First, it leads to solipsism,¹⁹ “the affirmation that each person alone is the determiner of values and that there are as many centers of value as there are persons in the cosmos at any one time.”²⁰ Morality is completely relativized down to the level of the individual. Sartre seeks to counter this objection by claiming that “nothing can be good for us without being good for all.”²¹ He believes that we will recognize we are all in this absurdity together and our actions affect each other. If people are living authentic lives, they will choose to create value not just for themselves but for others too. His answer is unconvincing. Inevitably people’s subjective choices will come into conflict; at that point, whose choice is “good?” Sartre fails to account for human depravity and the reality that people do not always choose “good,” nor are people naturally concerned with others in their decision-making.

Beyond this, one must ask: if it is true that “we can never choose evil” when acting authentically, what meaning does good have? In Sartre’s mind, good is intentionally and passionately choosing and evil is not choosing. Evil is passivity, living at the direction of others, not being authentic. Yet, how many evils have been perpetrated on humanity by people who authentically chose an evil path? If “good” is grounded in the authentic, subjective choice of the individual, the door is open for great evil to be done with no way of calling it evil. Sire writes,

Placing the locus of morality in each individual’s subjectivity leads to the inability to distinguish a moral from an immoral act on grounds that satisfy our innate sense of right, a sense that says others have the same rights as I do. My choice may not be the desired choice of others though in my choosing I choose for others, as Sartre says. Some standard external to the “subject” involved is necessary to shape truly the proper actions and relationships between subjects.²²

In the end, the ethic of existentialism is a cover for libertinism by removing any sort of objectivity in the realm of morality. *Ought* is now defined by personal taste. For this ethic to work it must presuppose a moral standard of *oughtness* for which it has no basis. Sire summarizes the situation well when he writes, “Atheistic existentialism goes beyond nihilism only to reach solipsism, the lonely self that exists four score and seven. . . then ceases to exist.

¹⁹ Solipsism is the epistemological belief that the only thing one can be sure of is that one’s own mind exists, and that knowledge about anything outside one’s own mind is unsure. Thus, something like ethics would have to be grounded in one’s mind because that alone would provide a certain foundation.

²⁰ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 115.

²¹ Sartre, “Existentialism.”

²² Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 116.

Many would say that that is not to go beyond nihilism at all; it is only to don a mask called value, a mask stripped clean away by death.”²³ Or, as Solomon would say, “All is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

THEISTIC EXISTENTIALISM

The roots of theistic existentialism are different from those of its atheistic counterpart, for it leeches off of a different worldview: theism. Its ideas originated in the mid-19th century with the Danish philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard as he attempted to address the theological nihilism and dead orthodoxy of the Church of Denmark. Perhaps the earliest existential thinker, Kierkegaard’s ideas were revived a century later in response to the rise of liberal theology in the west. God had been reduced to Jesus who had been reduced to a good man and teacher, nothing more. The gospel had been watered down to a system of morality—good works. Scripture was nothing more than the work of men in which could be found some good moral direction. It was into this crisis that neo-orthodoxy was developed by men such as Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Reinhold Niebuhr. Neo-orthodoxy was their attempt to reconstruct Christianity along existential lines and put God back into the picture.²⁴

Theistic existentialism, being a parasitic worldview, begins by accepting many of the core propositions of Christian theism. It largely affirms a Biblical ontology; its anthropology is largely Biblical but has significant divergences that will be discussed. It is in the realms of epistemology and ethics where the greatest divergence will be seen.

I. ONTOLOGY

While largely affirming a Biblical ontology, atheistic existentialism differs at one significant point. As Sire writes, “Theistic existentialism does not start with God. This is its most important variation from theism. With theism God is assumed certainly to be there and of a given character; then people are defined in relationship to God. Theistic existentialism arrives at the same conclusion, but it starts elsewhere.”²⁵ Unlike classic Biblical theism, theistic existentialism begins with man’s self-awareness—the certainty of one’s own consciousness, existence, and self-determinacy. Man’s self-awareness of his own personality becomes his philosophical foundation. Though theistic existentialism will ultimately arrive at the same ontological conclusions, this new starting point will have significant effects on its epistemology.

II. ANTHROPOLOGY

²³ Ibid., 121.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 122-23.

Theistic existentialism's anthropology is deeply connected to its epistemology and ethical system; given the emphasis on the subjective and the subject, this is not surprising. These issues become difficult to delineate and evaluate separately, so instead we will develop the unique features of theistic existentialism's anthropology in the following sections.

III. EPISTEMOLOGY

As noted above, rather than beginning with God, theistic existentialism begins with man's self-awareness. It also shares with atheistic existentialism the duality between the objective and subjective world. The objective world seems to provide no basis for meaning or values. It is cold and impersonal, full of evil, pain, and suffering. The application of reason and observation of this natural world alone (allegedly) leads one to atheism and, eventually nihilism. Despite this, in the subjective world of the mind, human beings have an innate desire for meaning and purpose, for something transcendent that the universe does not seem to be able to satisfy. Thus, it arrives at the same absurdity that men like Sartre lived in: a seemingly irreconcilable conflict between the objective and subjective. It is here that the theistic existentialist makes a choice—a choice to believe in a good, personal God despite all the evidence to the contrary. This is the existential leap of faith, an effort to transcend the nihilism that arises from the objective world alone.

Classical Christian theism would explain the absurdity of the universe as a consequence of the fall narrated in Genesis 3; theistic existentialism assumes that God Himself is directly and immediately responsible for the absurdity yet chooses to believe in Him and that He is good regardless. Rather than accept the conclusions of reason, we must take this leap of faith in order to transcend nihilism and imbue this life with meaning and purpose. This is a significant departure from Christianity. Christianity relies on faith, but that faith is reasonable and rational, built upon objective truth revealed by God in nature and in His word. Theistic existentialism says faith is irrational, that objective knowledge about God is not attainable. It is up to the individual, the subject, to *choose* to be a theist, despite what their perception of the objective world might be. When this choice is made, “a whole panorama opens. Most of the propositions of traditional theism flood in. Yet the subjective, choice-centered basis for the worldview colors the style of each Christian existentialist's stance within theism.”²⁶

Theistic existentialism's emphasis on the subjective renders all genuine human knowledge subjective. Facts and truth become personal. Kierkegaard writes,

What I really need is to become clear in my own mind what I must do, not what I must know—except in so far as a knowing must precede every action. The important thing is to understand what I am destined for, to perceive what the Deity wants me to do; the point is to find the truth for me, to find that idea for which I am ready to live and die. What good would it do to me to discover a so-

²⁶ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 124.

called objective truth, though I were to work my way through the systems of the philosophers and were able, if need be, to pass them in review?²⁷

In other words, what is important about facts is that they are facts *for me*. Knowledge is related to the knower; knowledge is subjectivity. Truth exists in the paradox of contradictory thoughts, paradoxes we cannot untangle but must choose to live out. As an example, there is the paradox of God's sovereignty and human responsibility. Truth is not found in favoring one side or the other in order to resolve the tension in these doctrines, but in living out that paradox.

Clearly this epistemology—and the ethic that flows from it—would have shortcomings. Not every action can be the embodiment of a paradox. Some sets will be inherently contradictory. For example, how can one live out the contradiction of “Love your neighbor, hate your neighbor?” There must be a noncontradictory proposition governing which paradoxes we live out. In theistic existentialism, the Bible as God's revelation fills this role, providing boundaries for which contradictions are encouraged or forbidden.²⁸

Yet, how can one ever truly affirm a contradiction? Alasdair MacIntyre captures well the issues with this reasoning:

What logic does is to articulate and to make explicit those rules which are in fact embodied in actual discourse and which, being so embodied, enable men to construct valid arguments and to avoid penalties of inconsistency. . . . A pupil of Duns Scotus demonstrated that. . . from a contradiction any statement whatsoever can be derived. It follows that to commit ourselves to asserting a contradiction is to commit ourselves to asserting anything whatsoever, to asserting anything whatsoever that it is possible to assert—and of course also to its denial. The man who asserts a contradiction thus succeeds in saying nothing and also committing himself to everything; both are failures to assert anything determinate, to say that this is the case and not this other. We therefore depend upon our ability to utilize and to accord with the laws of logic in order to speak at all, and a large part of formal logic clarifies for us what we have been doing all along.²⁹

In other words, we cannot live according to contradictions, for we begin to affirm everything and nothing at the same time. This is absurdity. An important takeaway from this epistemological system is the idea that truth is related to the subject: truth is something realized by the impact on it has on the subject, not an objective fact in and of itself. This is a classic element of neo-

²⁷ Søren Kierkegaard, from a letter quoted by Walter Lowrie in *A Short Life of Kierkegaard* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1942), 82.

²⁸ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 127.

²⁹ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Herbert Marcuse: An Exposition and a Polemic*.

orthodoxy. Its influence can be seen in the common question asked at Bible studies: “What does this mean to you?”

Another is the emphasis on narrative. Given its view of truth as subjective, theistic existentialism has a low view of Scripture. Because of the findings of higher criticism in Biblical scholarship in the middle of the 19th century, the accuracy of the Biblical account was called into question. Miracles were deemed myths and legends because they did not fit the naturalistic worldview that had prevailed in the academy. In response, rather than reject the presuppositions of higher criticism, theistic existentialists abandoned the facticity of Scripture and instead emphasized the morals embedded in the stories it tells. It is in the story, the narrative, where truth lies. Though theistic existentialism might share some doctrinal convictions with Christian theism, its historical foundation has been lost.

The stories of Scripture are personalized and reenacted by each individual on their religious journey, so that faith becomes personal and personalized—something not unexpected given the emphasis on the subject, the individual. This is where religious meaning and significance is found: in the individual connecting with the stories of Scripture in their own life. Their truthfulness or historicity is not the issue, only the subject’s experience while reading them.

We would counter this on at least two fronts. First, we recognize that theistic existentialism operates on naturalistic presuppositions that are unfounded: 1) miracles are impossible and 2) the Bible is untrustworthy. Neither of these is backed by evidence and they need not be accepted. This is a case of elevating human reason over Divine revelation—it’s an issue of presuppositions, not a conclusion based on evidence. Second, if our faith and theology are built on myth rather than history, we are saying that they are grounded in a non-event. How can this be? How can an event that did not happen have any meaning or provide any sort of hope for redemption? It cannot. Sire writes,

There must be an event if there is to be meaning. If Jesus arose from the dead in the traditional way of understanding this, then we have an event to mean something. If he stayed in the tomb or if his body was taken elsewhere, we have another event and it must mean something else. Do a theist refuse to give up the historical basis for faith and challenges the existentialist to take more seriously the implications of abandoning historical facticity as religiously important. Such abandonment should lead to doubt and loss of faith. Instead it has led to a leap of faith. Meaning is created in the subjective world, but it has no objective referent.³⁰

The Apostle Paul would most certainly agree (1 Corinthians 15:1-19).

IV. ETHICS

³⁰ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 132.

We should recognize that, based off its epistemology, this worldview both redefines salvation and shifts the responsibility for that salvation from God to man. Salvation is no longer about redemption from sin but about choosing a personal relationship with the personal God. Certainly this is an element of salvation, but not an exhaustive description. Second, it is the individual that must choose to belief in God, an affirmation that would seem to directly contradict Paul’s words to the Romans: “So then [salvation] depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy” (Romans 9:16). The following chart is a helpful visual. On the left is the dead orthodoxy of liberal theology, and on the right theistic existentialism:³¹

	Depersonalized	Personalized
Sin	Breaking a rule	Betraying a relationship
Repentance	Admitting guilt	Sorrowing over personal betrayal
Forgiveness	Canceling a penalty	Renewing fellowship
Faith	Believing a set of propositions	Committing oneself to a person
Christian Life	Obeying rules	Pleasing the Lord, a person

One can see the attractiveness of theistic existentialism’s offerings when viewed in light of liberal orthodoxy, yet Christians would contend that the second column remains insufficient. First, the column on the right demands the column on the left, i.e. having sorrow over personal betrayal implies guilt for having broken a rule against that person. You cannot have the second column without the first. Secondly, vibrant Christianity has always held both columns to be present in a holistic view of salvation.

This view of salvation stems from the ethic of theistic existentialism which values the personal above all else. Rather than focusing on how we relate to reality objectively (*I-it* relationships), we must transcend the objective to the subjective and encounter subjects, *thous*, especially the highest *Thou*, God Himself. Martin Buber writes,

Men do not find God if they stay in the world. They do not find Him if they leave the world. He who goes out with his whole being to meet his Thou and carries to it all being that is in the world, finds Him who cannot be sought. Of course God is the “Wholly Other”; but He is also wholly the Same, the Wholly Present. Of course He is *Mysterium Tremendum* that appears and overthrows; but He is also the mystery of the self-evident, nearer to me than I.³²

Makes sense, right? Clearly there is a high degree of mysticism (and some incoherence, it would seem) involved. From Buber’s statement God is both utterly transcendent and unknowable, and

³¹ Ibid., 125, adopted from a lecture by Harold Englund at the University of Wisconsin in the early 1960s.

³² Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Charles Scribner, 1958), 29-30.

yet simultaneously “nearer to me than I.” This seems to be a contradiction that theistic existentialism would call us to embrace and live out. The Bible, however, teaches that there is no contradiction: God is both transcendent and immanent. His “greatness is unsearchable” (Psalm 145:3) yet He has revealed Himself in His word. We can know God truly, though not exhaustively.

Beyond this, the ethic of theistic existentialism would likely mirror the moral code of classical Christian Theism, yet we see that its foundation is very different and, in reality, essentially non-existent.

CONCLUSION

Both forms of existentialism, despite their different histories and peculiarities, have at least one thing in common: they promote belief in make-believe. The atheistic version says that we can create meaning in the subjective world despite its lack of correspondence to reality; theistic existentialism says the same thing, just with a religious twist. Both should be rejected as nonsensical and insufficient for building a life of meaning and purpose on.