



UCDAVIS

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[Week 6]

# EXISTENTIALISM

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Subjectivity is Truth

**Subjective**  
(belief)

thrown absurdity anxiety

Authenticity

suicide

Existence

**inwardness**  
(faith)

Essence

Principle of  
Sufficient Reason

# Why Vote?

Lived  
Forward

Good Faith  
(creating values)

to be lived

Radical Freedom  
(condemned)

**Leap of Faith**  
(choice)

**Responsibility**

Human world  
(intersubjectivity)

Understood  
Backward

Bad Faith  
(conforming to values)

not to be solved

**Objective**  
(belief)

Meaning

groundlessness

It is perfectly true, as the philosophers say, that **life** must be **understood backwards**.  
But they forget the other proposition, that it must be **lived forwards**.

It is with **subjectivity** that **Christianity** is concerned,  
and it is only in subjectivity that its **truth exists**, if it exists at all;  
**objectively**, Christianity has **absolutely no existence**.

**Subjectivity is truth.**

An **objective uncertainty**, held fast in an appropriation-process of  
the most **passionate inwardness**, is the truth, the highest truth there is for an existing person.

Having to exist with the help of the **guidance of pure thinking** is  
like having to travel in Denmark with a small map of Europe  
on which Denmark is no larger than a steel pin-point – indeed, even more impossible.

**Faith** begins precisely where **thinking** leaves off.

Søren Kierkegaard

[Journals and Notebooks, p. 179; Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 116, p. 203, p. 182, p. 310; Fear and Trembling, p. 82]

**Life is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be lived.**

**Gabriel Marcel**  
**[The Mystery of Being, p. 117]**

**Existence precedes essence.**

In **choosing** for himself he **chooses** for all men.

If a voice speaks to me, it is still **I myself** who must **decide** whether the voice is or is not that of an angel.

Man is **condemned** to be **free**; condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty, and from the moment that he is **thrown** into this world he is **responsible** for everything he does.

What is more, to say that we **invent values** means neither more nor less than this: life has **no meaning** a priori ... value is nothing more than the meaning that we **give** it.

By subjectivity we also mean the **intersubjectivity** which constitutes the **human world**.

Jean-Paul Sartre  
[**Existentialism Is a Humanism**, p. 22, p. 24, p. 29, p. 30, p. 43, p. 23]

The waiter in the café engages in a **play-acting**; his movement is ‘a little too precise, a little too rapid’... he is in **bad faith** because he attempts to be nothing but a waiter, **denying the freedom** that makes him more than that.

**Freedom** is what we do with what is done to us.

To **be man** is to reach toward **being God**. Or, if you prefer, man fundamentally is the **desire to be God**.

Jean-Paul Sartre  
[**Being and Nothingness**, p. 59, p. 485, p. 566]

**One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.**

**Simone de Beauvoir**  
**[The Second Sex, p. 283]**

There is but one **truly serious philosophical problem**, and that is **suicide**.  
Judging whether life is or is not **worth living** amounts to  
answering the fundamental question of philosophy.

The **absurd** is born of the confrontation between the **human need** and  
the unreasonable **silence** of the world.

The **struggle** itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart.  
One must imagine Sisyphus **happy**.

Albert Camus  
[The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 3, p. 28, p. 123]

Man is always more than he **knows** of himself.

Karl Jaspers  
[Philosophy of Existence, p. 71]