To Life Itself!

Phenomenology, Existentialism, Beauvoir

For Employee Name

Month DD, 20XX

I. From Plato To Phenomenology:

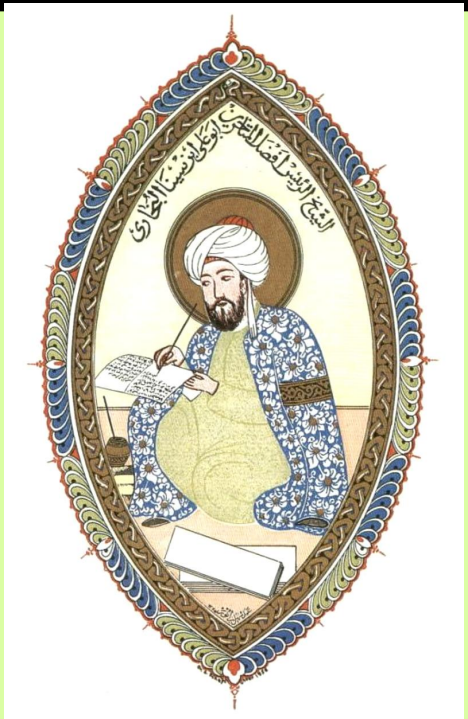
A (Brief!) History of European Philosophy







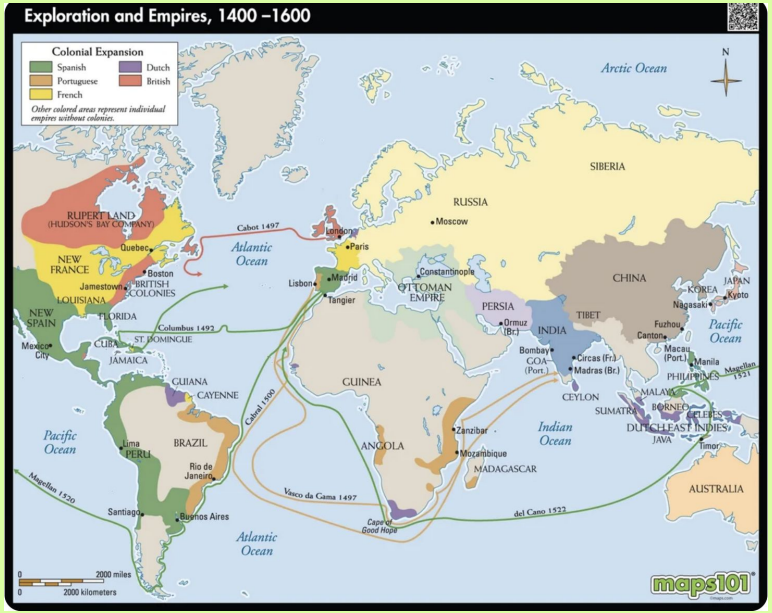
Mediterranean Antiquity

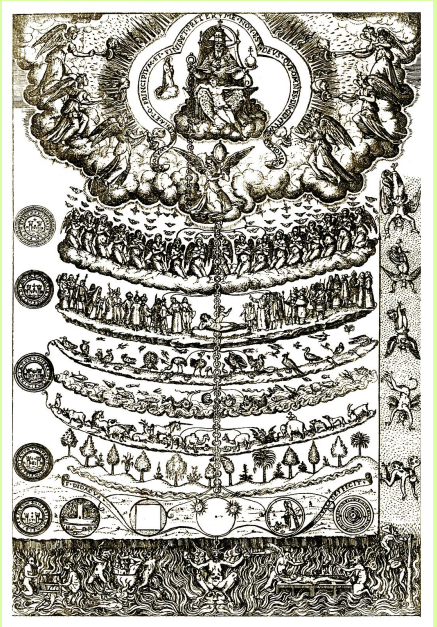




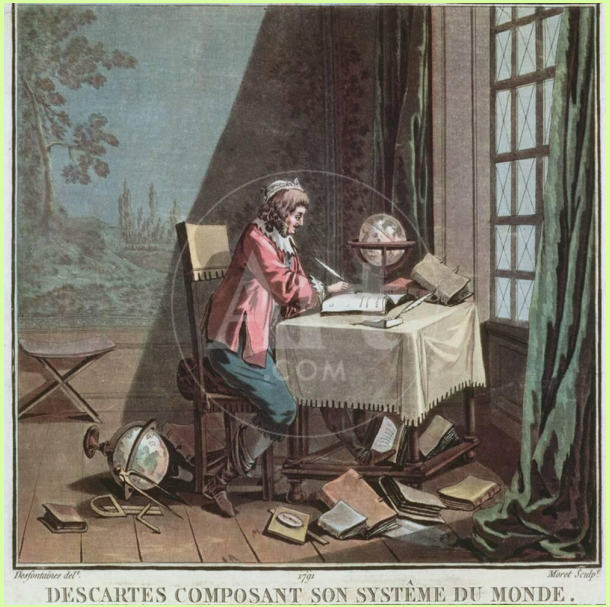


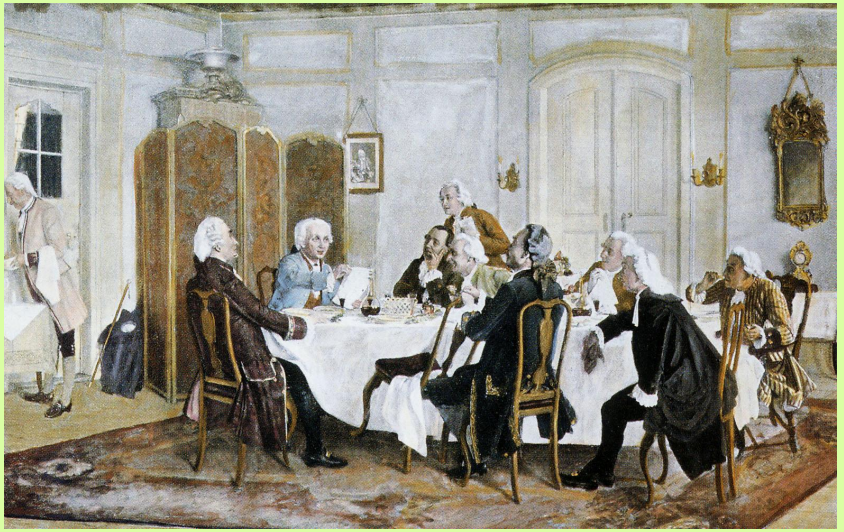
Mediterranean Renaissance



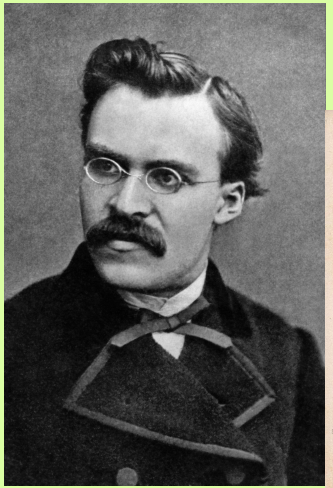


Mapping Reality, Transforming Reality

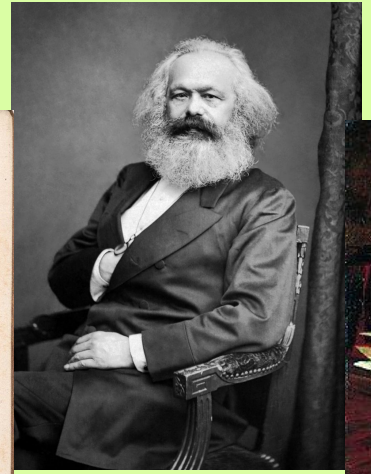


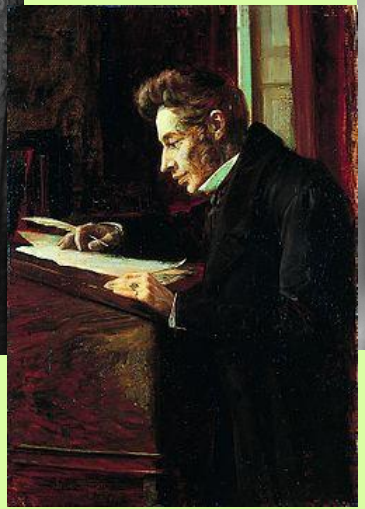


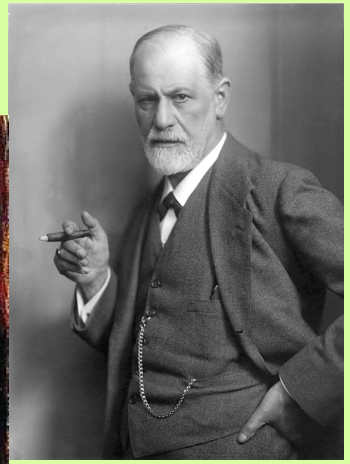
The Enlightenment (Descartes, Kant)











The “post-Enlightenment”



System
der
Wissenschaft
von
Ge. Wilh. Fr. Hegel
D. u. Professor der Philosophie zu Jena,
der Herzogl. Mineralog. Sozietät daselbst Assessor
und andrer gelehrten Gesellschaften Mitglied.

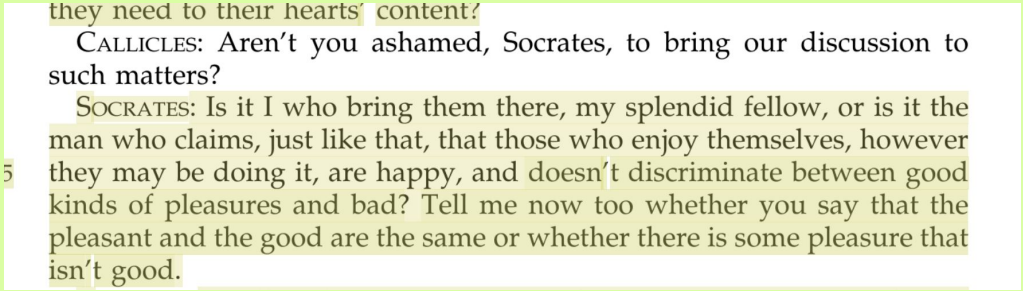
Erster Theil,
die
Phänomenologie des Geistes.

Bamberg und Würzburg,
bey Joseph Anton Goebhardt,
1807.

Hegel, Godfather of “Phanomenologie”



Allegory of the Cave



they need to their hearts' content?

CALLICLES: Aren't you ashamed, Socrates, to bring our discussion to such matters?

SOCRATES: Is it I who bring them there, my splendid fellow, or is it the man who claims, just like that, that those who enjoy themselves, however they may be doing it, are happy, and doesn't discriminate between good kinds of pleasures and bad? Tell me now too whether you say that the pleasant and the good are the same or whether there is some pleasure that isn't good.

Plato and the Cave

quarrel with these claims, I'm willing to submit them for discussion.

So pastry baking, as I say, is the flattery that wears the mask of medicine. b
Cosmetics is the one that wears that of gymnastics in the same way; a
mischievous, deceptive, disgraceful and ill-bred thing, one that perpetrates
deception by means of shaping and coloring, smoothing out and dressing
up, so as to make people assume an alien beauty and neglect their own,
which comes through gymnastics. So that I won't make a long-style speech,

Plato and the Cave

"Generally, isn't it the case that the classes that have to do with the care of the body participate less in truth and being than those having to do with the care of the soul?"

"Far less."

"Don't you suppose the same is the case with body itself as compared to soul?"

"I do."

"Isn't what is full of things that *are* more, and itself *is* more, really fuller than what is full of things that *are* less and itself *is* less?"

"Of course."

"Therefore, if it is pleasant to become full of what is by nature suitable, that which is more really full of things that *are* more would cause one to enjoy true pleasure more really and truly, while what partakes in things that *are* less would be less truly and surely full and would partake in a pleasure less trustworthy and less true."

Plato and the Cave

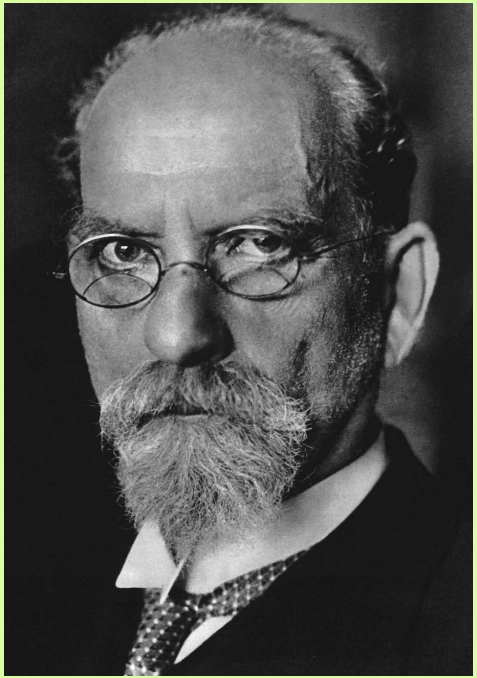
The objects we intuit in space and time are appearances, not objects that exist independently of our intuition (things in themselves). This is also true of the mental states we intuit in introspection; in “inner sense” (introspective awareness of my inner states) I intuit only how I appear to myself, not how I am “in myself”

Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*

Phenomena vs. Noumena

Philosophizing About Noumena:

I. Proceeds from not-knowing to knowing
II. Proceeds from uncertainty to certainty
III. Proceeds from material particulars to abstract concepts/categories





“To The Things Themselves!”

Philosophizing about Phenomena…

I. Useful because phenomena are not, in fact, flat shallow surfaces

Ex: This is a photograph of where Beauvoir and Sartre *should* be….



Philosophizing About Phenomena…

II. Necessary because there isn't anything else….If noumena aren't accessible through the senses, why assume they are even accessible through reason? Why assume they even exist in any meaningful sense?









Enter Phenomenology!

II. Existentialism:

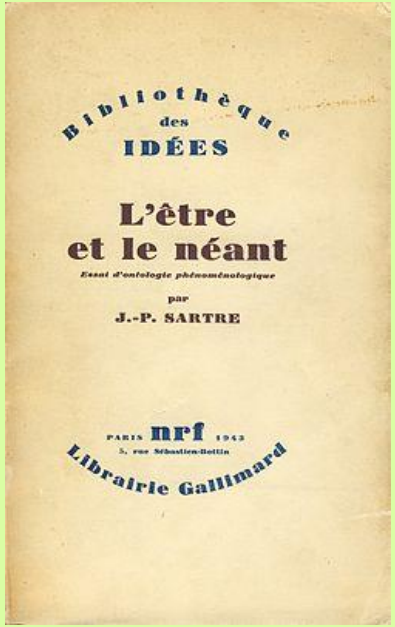
A Humanism?

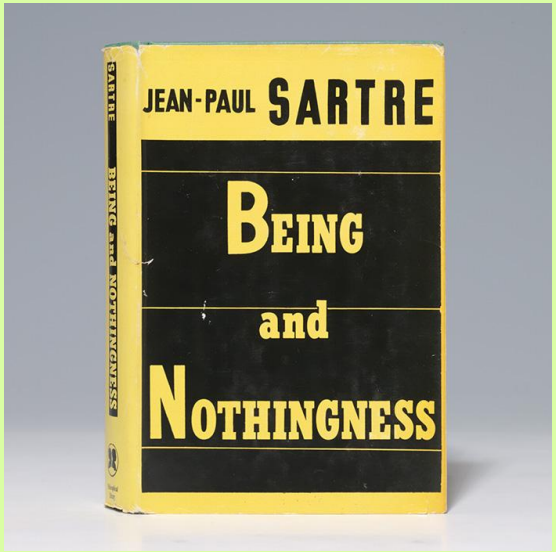


La Reine et Le Roi

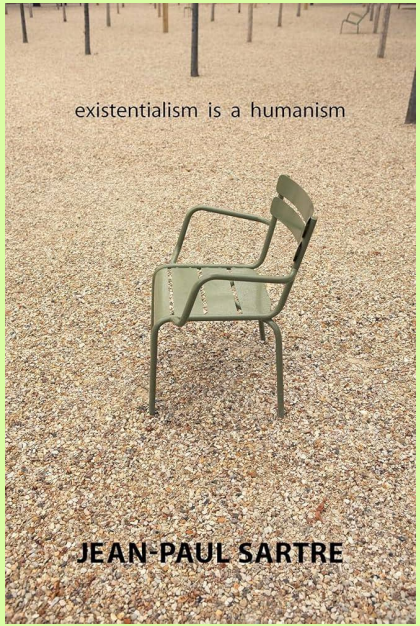


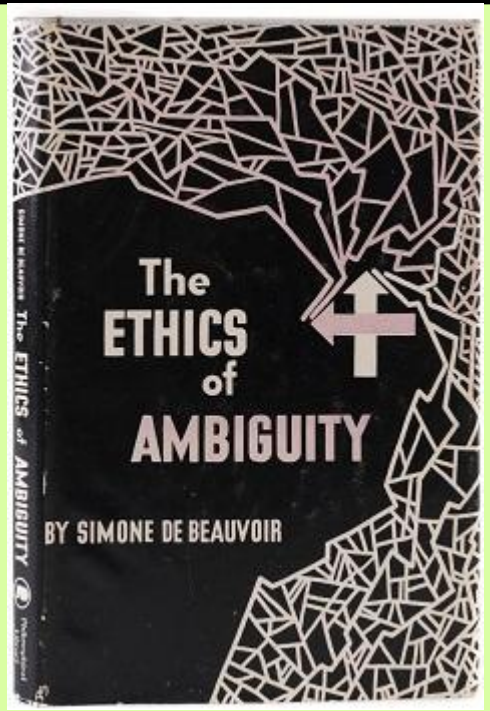
The Cocktail That Launched Ten Thousand Philosophies....



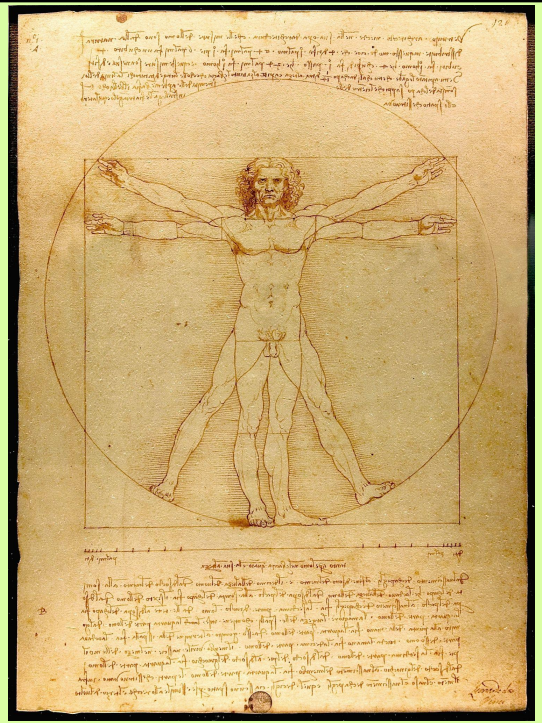


Sartrean Phenomenology





The Transition to Existentialism



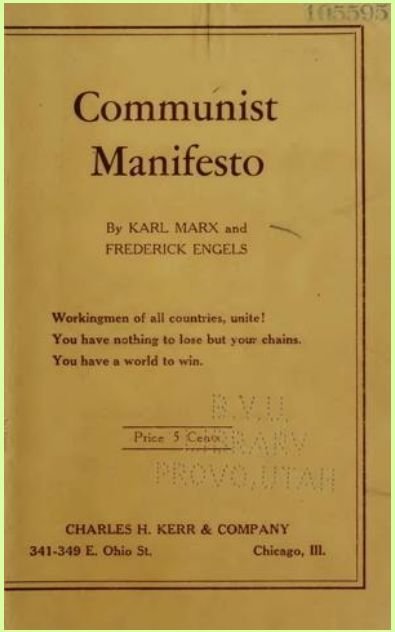
Noumena, Essences, and “Humanity”



Platonic Humanism?







European Humanism

The essence of Dasein [i.e. the human] lies in its existence. The characteristics to be found in this [phenomenon] are thus not present “attributes” of an objectively present being which has such and such an “outward appearance,” but rather possible ways for it to be, and only this. All being, one way or another, of this phenomenon is primarily existence [Sein]. Thus the term “Da-Sein,” which we use to designate this phenomenon, does not express its essence…but rather existence.

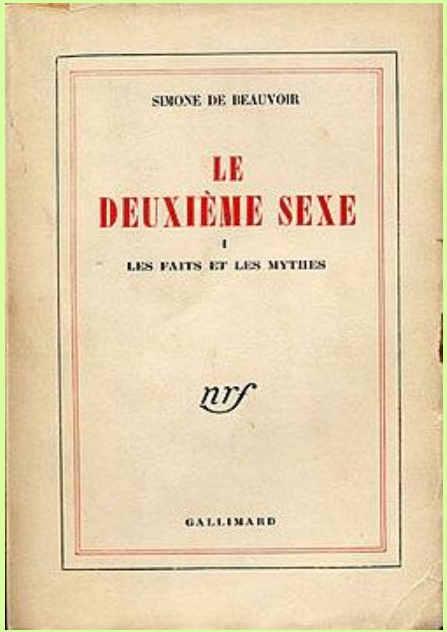
Heidegger, *Being and Time*

“Existence Precedes Essence”

“What I will try to describe is how woman is taught to assume [*assumer*] her condition, how she experiences this, what universe she finds herself enclosed in and what escape mechanisms are permitted her…

When I use the words ‘woman’ or ‘feminine’ I obviously refer to no archetype, to no immutable essence; ‘in the present state of education and customs’ must be understood to follow most of my affirmations. There is no question of expressing eternal truths here, but of describing the common ground from which all singular feminine existence stems…

One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, physical, or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society; it is civilization as a whole that elaborates this…”



Existentialism: A Phenomenological Humanism

Basic Existential Distinctions:

1. In-itself
    a. Externality
    b. Facticity
    c. The appearance of presence (things)

2. For-itself
    a. Internality
    b. Freedom
    c. the appearance of a nothingness (consciousness)
    d. the baseline appearance of the human

Basic Existential Distinctions:

1. Surpassing (*Aufhebung*)
   a. Revaluation by abstraction
   b. Flight from ambiguities of the non-abstract
   c. “One can thus repose in a marvelous optimism where even the bloody wars simply express the fertile restlessness of the spirit”

2. Assumption (*Assumer*)
   a. Revaluation by acceptance
   b. Resulting inhabitation of what is accepted is “genuine” (*authentique*)
   c. “The failure is not surpassed, but assumed.”

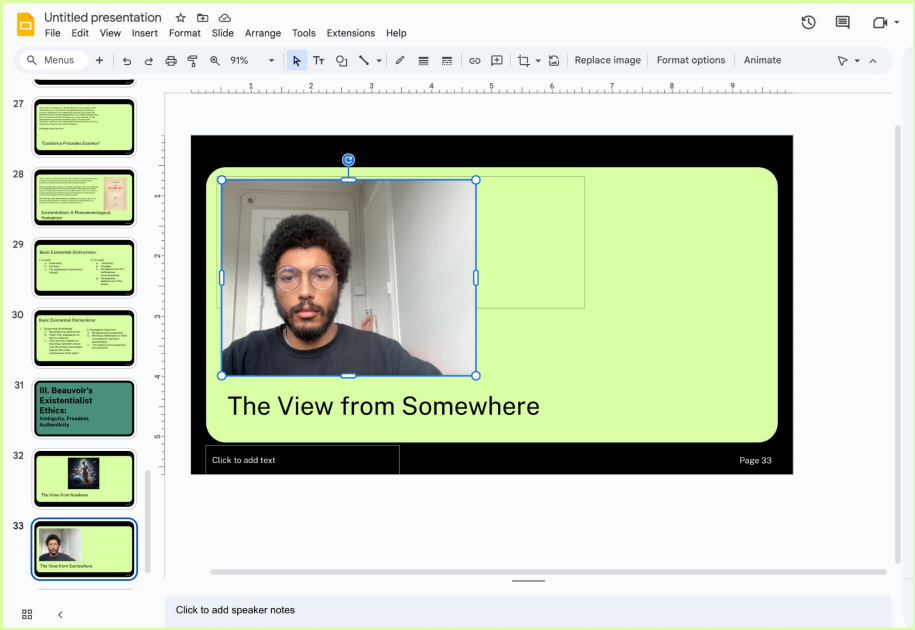
III. Beauvoir's Existentialist Ethics:

Ambiguity, Freedom, Authenticity



The View from Nowhere





The View from Somewhere

I. Life is dying
II. Only the present exists, but only the past and the future can be identified
III. The in-itself is capable of being for-itself.
    A. In other words, to exist, matter must annihilate itself
    B. In other words, *I am not what I am*
IV. The for-itself experiences itself as distinct from a reality of in-itself, but also experiences other beings as the for-itself.

An Ambiguous Existence

A View from Nowhere: Ambiguities are phenomenal, and philosophy can dissolve them by excavating the noumenal reality

A View from Somewhere: Ambiguities are phenomenal, and philosophy can help us exist within that phenomenal situation *better*.



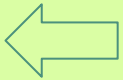
Noumena vs. Phenomena

Beauvoir on Ambiguity

"Let us try to assume our fundamental ambiguity. It is in the knowledge of the genuine (*authentique*) conditions of our life that we must draw our strength to live and our reason for acting."

After all…

"…The most optimistic ethics have all begun by emphasizing the element of failure involved in the condition of man; without failure, no ethics; for a being who, from the very start, would be an exact co-incidence with himself, in a perfect plenitude, the notion of "having to be" [or, *ethics*] would have no meaning. **One does not offer an ethics to a God**."



Here, "failure" refers not to a fatal flaw in the essence of the human but rather an inescapable fact about real human existence

“[Man is] a being who makes himself a lack of being in order that there might be being…”

Failure 1
“[Man’s] passion is not inflicted upon him from without. He chooses it…There exists no absolute value before the passion of man, outside of it…”

Failure 2
“I should like to be the landscape which I am contemplating, I should like this sky, this quiet water to think themselves within me, that it might be I whom they express in flesh and bone, and I remain at a distance.”

Freedom as Failure

“But it is also by this distance that the sky and the water exist before me. My contemplation is an excruciation only because it is also a joy…It remains foreign, forbidden, but I take delight in this very effort toward an impossible possession.”

Failure as Success



“It is not granted [Man] to exist without tending toward this being which he will never be. But it is possible for him to want this tension even with the failure which it involves. His being is lack of being, but this lack has a way of being which is precisely existence…

To attain his truth, man must not attempt to dispel the ambiguity of his being but, on the contrary, accept the task of realizing it. He rejoins himself only to the extent that he agrees to remain at a distance from himself..

Existentialism: a Route towards Assumption



I tried to drink it away
I tried to put one in the air
I tried to dance it away
I tried to change it with my hair
I ran my credit card bill up
Thought a new dress make it better
I tried to work it away
But that just made me even sadder
I tried to keep myself busy
I ran around circles
Think I made myself dizzy
I slept it away, I sexed it away
I read it away
Away, away, away, away, away, away
Away, away, away, away, away
Well, it's like cranes in the sky
Sometimes I don't wanna feel
those metal clouds