KRISTANA ARP

THE JOYS OF DISCLOSURE: SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR AND THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL TRADITION

Simone de Beauvoir is best known to the general public as the author of the feminist classic, *The Second Sex*, first published in 1949. But she also wrote a number of philosophical essays in the 1940s. In them she defended and further developed the philosophy of what came to be known as existentialism. Her existentialism is similar to that of Jean-Paul Sartre, which he presented in his 1943 work *Being and Nothingness*, but it departs from it in interesting ways as well. The culmination of her work from this period is *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, published in 1947. In this work she brings her distinctive philosophical concept of disclosure into the foreground. ("Disclosure" is the English word that her translator chose to render the French word she uses, "*dévoilement*.") In this paper I will explore the philosophical origins and ramifications of this important concept.

In *The Ethics of Ambiguity* Beauvoir writes:

> By uprooting himself from the world, man makes himself present to the world and makes the world present to him. I should like to be this 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. But it is also by this distance that the sky and water exist before me. My contemplation is an excruciation only because it is also a joy.[1]

In this passage Beauvoir describes directly the process by which consciousness discloses the world. By the time *The Ethics of Ambiguity* appeared Beauvoir had been developing her concept of disclosure for some time, as I will show in a moment. But first I want to meditate on this passage itself in order to explore the background and deeper meaning of what she says here.

First, Beauvoir speaks of a human being "uprooting" himself (or herself) from the world. This idea refers back to a central concept of *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, what Beauvoir designates as humans' ambiguity. Ambiguity is usually considered a linguistic phenomenon: a word or phrase is ambiguous in that it can have more than one meaning. This sense of the word lingers in the background in Beauvoir's usage of it. For instance, her ethics is an ethics of ambiguity in that she recognizes that

A.-T. Tymieniecka (ed.), Analecta Husserliana LXXXVIII, 393–406.

moral principles can be ambiguous and it is often difficult to figure out what the right thing to do is. But foremost for her ambiguity is a metaphysical concept: human existence is ambiguous because each of us exists both as a consciousness and as a material reality. For this reason there are several paradoxical aspects to human life. And try as we might we cannot escape from these paradoxes. One way that she puts it is to say that a human being "escapes from his natural condition without, however, freeing himself from it. He is still part of this world of which he is a consciousness."[2] So for Beauvoir a human being is rooted in the material world. But in order to disclose the world, to make it present, she says in the above passage, one must try to uproot oneself from it. Yet, although consciousness continually transcends its material origins, it never leaves them behind. Disclosure is a paradoxical operation in that one is always uprooting oneself from the world one remains rooted in.

To uproot oneself from the world in disclosing it goes against a desire that Beauvoir herself confesses to – to merge with material reality. She would like to *be* the landscape and for the sky and the water to exist within her and to themselves *be* conscious. In *The Second Sex* Beauvoir gives a psychological explanation for this desire: it comes from being separated from the "nourishing body" of the mother as an infant.[3] In *The Ethics of Ambiguity* the implication is that this desire is metaphysical in origin, springing from humans' ambiguous existence.

In order for one to disclose the world one must remain at a distance from it, Beauvoir says. By remaining at a distance from them one makes the sky and the water exist. What does she mean when she says that it makes them *exist*? Beauvoir does not mean that the sky and water are products of consciousness. Consciousness discloses the world; it does not create it. She says elsewhere in *The Ethics of Ambiguity* that "man does not create the world. He succeeds in disclosing it only through the resistance which the world opposes to him."[4] After all, if consciousness created the world what sense would make to talk of uprooting oneself from it or remaining at a distance. The resistance that the world offers testifies to how human existence is ambiguous. As a material thing, a human being can be "a thing crushed by the dark weight of other things."[5]

Beauvoir addresses this possible misconception – that disclosure implies that the existence of the world depends on consciousness – in another forum entirely, the opening pages of her first published novel, *L'invitée*, published in 1943. Beauvoir used this novel to get across some important metaphysical ideas, as she argued in her essay "Literature and Metaphysics" a metaphysical novel is well-equipped to do. Here Beauvoir

first begins to formulate her concept of disclosure, although the technical philosophical term is not used, of course. The part of the narrative that directly concerns Beauvoir's philosophical concept of disclosure comes in the opening pages when Françoise leaves the room where she is working with her colleague Gerbert to walk through the empty theater and across a deserted square. Françoise reflects:

> When she was not there, the smell of dust, the half-light, the forlorn solitude, all this did not exist for anyone; it did not exist at all. Now that she was there the red of the carpet gleamed through the darkness like a timid night light. She exercised this power: her presence revived things from their inanimateness; she gave them their color, their smell. She went down one floor and pushed open the door into the auditorium. It was as if she had been entrusted with a mission: she had to bring to life this forsaken theater filled with darkness. … She alone released the meaning of these abandoned places, of these slumbering things. She was there and they belonged to her. The world belonged to her.[6]

Françoise does not believe that the existence of objects *depends* on someone perceiving them. This is the philosophical position of subjective idealism, which was expounded in its most straightforward form by George Berkeley. Beauvoir does play with this idea in this passage. But Françoise herself realizes that she could not fulfill this function: she would have to be everywhere at once. Later in this opening chapter, reflecting in the midst of a very philosophical conversation with Gerbert, Françoise explicitly concludes: "the corridors, the auditorium, the stage, none of the things vanished when she closed the door on them, but they existed only behind the door at a distance."[7]

The question as to whether the relation between the world and consciousness involved in disclosure implies that consciousness creates the world also surfaces very briefly in the novel that Beauvoir published after *L'invitée*, her novel about the French Resistance, *The Blood of Others*. When the main character in it, Blomart, expresses his feeling of being somehow implicated in the developments leading up to World War II, his lover Hélène reproaches him: "It's as though you imagined that you created the world."[8] Blomart replies that he has always felt that "my eyes are sufficient for this boulevard to exist; my voice is sufficient for the world to have a voice. When it is silent, it's my fault." Blomart concludes, though, that this doesn't mean that the existence of the world depends on consciousness: "I didn't create the world, but I create it again by my presence every moment," he says.[9]

This way of putting it, that consciousness recreates the world every moment by making it present, is one way to retain the connection between

disclosure of the world and the creation of *a* world, at least, without falling into the absurd position of subjective idealism. The connection between disclosure and creation becomes important when one considers disclosure in the realm of aesthetics.

Another place where Beauvoir utilized her concept of disclosure in her writing leading up to *The Ethics of Ambiguity* was in her philosophical essay, *Pyrrhus et Cinéas*. The concept of disclosure actually appears in only one sentence, but it is worthwhile to note because the wording of this sentence raises another philosophical issue. She says there: "there is being only due to the presence of a subjectivity that discloses it."[10] In *The Ethics of Ambiguity* Beauvoir also commonly writes of the human being disclosing *being*. These statements only make sense once one realizes that Beauvoir uses the term "being" in a very loose sense in her philosophical works. It is important to keep this fact in mind when comparing Beauvoir to Husserl and Heidegger, as I will do later.

The best way to see the attenuated sense in which Beauvoir uses the term "being" is by connecting her philosophical perspective to the metaphysics that Sartre lays out in *Being and Nothingness*. She herself alludes at the beginning of *The Ethics of Ambiguity* to Sartre's claim that man is "a being who *makes himself* a lack of being *in order that there might be being*."[11] What makes itself a lack of being is what Sartre calls the for-itself. But the for-itself or consciousness is always conscious *of* something. (This insight lies at the basis of Husserl's concept of intentionality.) In Beauvoir's terms it always discloses being. So in this sense being exists because consciousness is a lack of being. However, the level of being that exists because of and through the activity of the for-itself or consciousness is not what Sartre calls being-in-itself. Rather it is what Sartre calls the "phenomenon of being" in the opening pages of *Being and Nothingness*, or what is present to consciousness. So what consciousness discloses for Beauvoir is not being in the sense of being-in-itself or being in Heidegger's sense, but rather what I have been calling and will continue to call "the world."

But if disclosing the world goes against this deep desire Beauvoir identifies to merge back into material reality, how can it bring *joy*? Beauvoir gives one clue, again when she connects up her concept of disclosure to remarks made by Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*. Beauvoir disputes Sartre's assertion there that man is a useless passion. She says it is up to human beings themselves to determine what is useful and useless. There is no truly external standpoint from which one can condemn any human effort. Beauvoir agrees with Sartre that humans all yearn to

escape their lack of being by achieving the status of being. That is what drives them to engage in bad faith. They must necessarily fail in this quest. But if their goal becomes instead to disclose the world they can succeed. Beauvoir says, "It is not in vain that man nullifies being. Thanks to him, being is disclosed and he desires this disclosure. There is an original attachment to being which is not the relationship 'wanting to be' but rather 'wanting to disclose being'. Now here there is not failure, but rather success."[12]

So Beauvoir postulates another desire besides the desire to become being: a desire to disclose being. What concrete forms does this desire take? Beauvoir does not specify. Presumably it is a desire to see, to hear, to taste, to feel – to experience the world. Fulfilling this desire would lead to joy. And of these two desires, only this second one can be fulfilled. Humans cannot fulfill their desire to sink back into being, except in death, and death ends all desires, rather than fulfilling them. Humans are conscious beings not just material ones. That is what Beauvoir calls their ambiguity. Because we can fulfill this second desire that Beauvoir posits, human existence is not a useless passion. As Beauvoir writes: "man also will himself to be a disclosure of being, and if he coincides with this wish, he wins, for the fact is that the world becomes present by his presence in it."[13]

It is fruitful to compare Beauvoir's concept of disclosure to Heidegger's concept of *Erschlossenheit* in *Being and Time*. One scholar claims that there are close connections between the two.[14] Heidegger's work was translated into French in the 1930s.[15] And there is evidence that Beauvoir read Heidegger even before that in the original German.[16] So it is possible that Beauvoir derived her concept of disclosure from him. It is the case that "*Erschlossenheit*" is translated as "disclosure" or "disclosedness" in English translations of *Being and Time* just as "*dévoilement*" is translated as "disclosure" in English translations of Beauvoir. And it is true that Beauvoir was deeply influenced by Heidegger, as was Sartre. But it turns out that Beauvoir's concept of disclosure is quite different from Heidegger's concept of *Erschlossenheit*, and in revealing ways.

For Beauvoir disclosure involves a relationship between two terms. In the opening passages of *L'invitée* the relation is between Françoise and the objects that she surveys in the empty theater. In *Pyrrhus et Cinéas* and *The Ethics of Ambiguity* Beauvoir speaks more abstractly of subjectivity or man disclosing being or the world. The term "subjectivity" is anathema to Heidegger. Nor does he speak of man. The term he uses to refer to the human being in *Being and Time* is "Dasein." "*Da*" in German

means there. "*Sein*" means being. So for Heidegger what surrounds the human being, its "there," is not disclosed by him or her. It does not have to be. Dasein *is* its there. Heidegger is adamant that *Erschlossenheit* does not involve a relation between a subject and the world. Indeed he says even to use the term "between" is misleading.[17] Heidegger criticizes existentialism in his "Letter on Humanism" published in 1947 for retaining the conventional model of subject/object relations that he rejects in *Being and Time*.[18]

Heidegger says in one important passage that "*Dasein ist sein Erschlossenheit*."[19] This sentence is rendered in one translation as "Dasein is its disclosedness."[20] This translation of *Erschlossenheit* as "disclosedness" is apt because it conveys an important feature of *Erschlossenheit* for Heidegger. For him the there that Dasein is has always already been disclosed. By contrast, Beauvoirian disclosure is an ongoing process oriented to the future, as I will discuss. *Dévoilement* is essentially different from *Erschlossenheit* in this way.

Heidegger stresses that Being-in-the-world is a unitary phenomenon. "What is decisive for ontology is to avoid splitting the phenomenon," he says.[21] But in *The Ethics of Ambiguity* Beauvoir sees disclosure to involve a person "uprooting himself from the world."[22] If Heidegger is right and Dasein is its there, is what is disclosed, then in one sense I am the landscape that stretches out before me, and the quiet water and the sky. Contrary to Heidegger, Beauvoir suggests that the world only becomes present if I who am disclosing it put some distance between it and me: "disclosure implies a perpetual tension to keep being at a certain distance, to tear oneself away for the world and to assert oneself as a freedom."[23] In Beauvoir's and Sartre's existentialism the desire to achieve the status of being is the mark of inauthenticity. In Heidegger's phenomenological ontology human beings are part of being from the start.

I think that Beauvoir's concept of disclosure is actually closer to Edmund Husserl's concept of constitution or *Sinngebung* than to Heidegger's notion of *Erschlossenheit*. Beauvoir was exposed to Husserl's thought as well as Heidegger's. She also read him in the original German and discussed him with Sartre, who went to Germany in 1934–1935 to study his thought.[24] In Husserl's phenomenology the meaning constituting operations of consciousness are revealed by what he calls the transcendental epoche. To perform the epoche one must abstract from the question of whether the objects of consciousness actually exist. Whether these objects really exist or not, they exist for us. They have certain definite meanings. Furthermore, these meanings are bestowed on them by our

consciousness. Whether they exist or not, the objects of consciousness are mind-dependent in this sense. The objects in the world revealed in what Beauvoir calls disclosure are mind-dependent in the same sense. Beauvoir sees disclosure as giving meaning to the world, not as creating or producing it.

Still, there are important differences between Beauvoir and Husserl. For Husserl the ultimate source of these human meanings, of all meanings and significations, is something that he calls the transcendental ego. Beauvoir does not take this further step into philosophical abstraction. She stays within the "human world in which each object is penetrated by human meanings," the world of what Husserl calls the natural attitude.[25] For her human beings are the source of human meanings.

Comparing Beauvoir to Husserl and Heidegger in this way allows us to arrive at a deeper understanding of what Beauvoir means by disclosure. I see Beauvoir as taking over Husserl's concept of constitution and interpreting it in more naturalistic, not strictly phenomenological way. Beauvoir does speak of disclosure in terms of meaning. Meaning, she says, "surges up only by the disclosure which a free subject effects in his project."[26] And the act of disclosing meaning can be a source of joy:

> Every man casts himself into the world by making himself a lack of being; he thereby contributes to reinvesting it with human signification. He discloses it. And in this movement even the most outcast sometimes feel the joy of existing. They then manifest existence as a happiness and the world as a source of joy.[27]

However, it turns out that there are two important factors that influence how joyful one's disclosure of the world is.

First there is the choice that one makes of oneself in the world – one's attitudes, one's character, one's sensibilities. Beauvoir continues the passage quoted just above:

> What is called vitality, sensitivity and intelligence are not ready-made qualities, but a way of casting oneself into the world and of disclosing being. ... There is vitality only by means of free generosity. Intelligence supposes good will ... and sensitivity is nothing else but the presence which is attentive to the world and to itself. The reward for these spontaneous qualities issues from the fact that they make significances and goals appear in the world. They discover reasons for existing.[28]

The characteristics one cultivates in oneself can greatly influence the extent to which the disclosure of the world brings joy. Of course Beauvoir lived before the days of antidepressant drugs. Present day research on the brain suggests that mood is affected by biochemical factors. But I

think that Beauvoir would still insist while brain biochemistry affects behavior, it does not determine it. The physical structure of the brain is an aspect of material reality. Its effect on our lives testifies to the ambiguity of human existence. In this same passage she says: "Doubtless, every one casts himself into it [the world] on the basis of his physiological possibilities, but the body itself is not a brute fact."

So to a certain extent the stance one chooses to take toward the world determines the joy one finds, or does not find in disclosing it. Beauvoir gives some examples of how this is so. In the middle section of *The Ethics of Ambiguity* she presents a hierarchy of personality types, five basic attitudes people can take toward the world and their lives, with each one representing a higher level of morality and freedom. On the lowest rung of the ladder is what she calls the sub-man and on the highest, the one closest to a fully free and ethical existence, is the passionate man.

The sub-man finds absolutely no joy in existence. Indeed he feels almost nothing at all. The world that he discloses through his subjectivity arouses no reaction: "He discovers around him only an insignificant and dull world. How could this naked world arouse within him any desire to feel, to understand, to live?"[29] The world has no meaning because he gives it no meaning. It is a "bare and incoherent" place where "nothing ever happens; nothing merits desire or effort."[30]

The passionate man, on the other hand, is someone who invests the world with great but very particular significance. It is home to the object of his passion. The object of this passion can be another person, or it can be an object, a "rare treasure," or a country, or something more nebulous. Unlike another personality type that Beauvoir describes, the serious man, the passionate man recognizes that it is his passion that gives value to this object; it does not have it in itself He recognizes it "as a thing disclosed by his subjectivity."[31] Such passion can bring joy because it "helps populate the world with desirable objects, with excited meanings." But he does not represent the highest stage of ethical development because his passion is too exclusive and isolating. Passion can even lead to violence. The world he discloses is distorted: "Only the object of his passion appears real and full to him. All the rest are insignificant."[32]

There is, however, another factor that affects how much joy one takes in disclosing the world. For an existentialist like Beauvoir one can always choose what attitude to take toward the world. But there are many aspects of the particular situation one finds oneself in that one does not choose. The existentialist term for these aspects of the world is facticity, which includes a person's physical make-up, physical environment, social

and historical circumstances, etc. For Beauvoir we are free in disclosing the world, but the world also always pushes back, so to speak. The world opposes our efforts at disclosure with resistance.

Since humans are conscious beings, not just material ones, they always disclose a world. As Beauvoir puts it: "men are always disclosing being in Buchenwald as well as in the blue isles of the Pacific, in hovels as well as in palaces."[33] But she in no way regards these situations as equivalent. Some situations are what she calls "privileged situations" for disclosure. They are those in which disclosure is realized as an "indefinite movement."[34] Human consciousness always strains to break through the limits it experiences – to disclose more and more. Of course certain factors always limit the way that we disclose the world, for instance, material or conceptual factors. But there are other limits imposed by the forms of social organization that humans adopt and these limits can be changed through human effort.

For this reason, Beauvoir pays a great deal of attention to the political dimension of life in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. Living under tyranny and/or being reduced through poverty to the barest level of physical existence severely restricts one's possibilities for disclosure. Beauvoir deploys a complex argument, which I cannot go into here, to show that my ability to disclose the world in new and creative ways – my realizing my freedom – depends on others having the ability to do so as well.[35] Thus in order to live in the best possible situation, one that enables me to find joy in the disclosure of the world, I need to try to guarantee that others can enjoy this privileged situation as well. Beauvoir says: "To will that there be being is also to will that there be men by and for whom the world is endowed with human significations. One can reveal the world only on the basis revealed by other men."[36]

It would be hard to delineate exactly what conditions need to exist for one to bring about this privileged situation for oneself and others. For Beauvoir perhaps the most important issue is whether one "preserves the disposal of his future."[37] Another way that she puts it is that in some situations the future is open and in others it is closed off. The privileged situation for disclosure is where it is open; then disclosure can be realized as an "indefinite movement." There are many factors that might close off a person's future. Being terminally ill is one. But oppressive social institutions and practices can rob people of a future as well. Beauvoir gives the example of a prisoner being made to empty and then fill a ditch over and over again. Being put in this situation keeps a person from engaging constructively with the world.

The upshot of Beauvoir's argument is that in order to will the disclosure of the world oneself, so that one's life is not a useless passion, one needs to have others around who are able to will the disclosure of the world as an indefinite movement toward the future as well: "To want existence, to want to disclose the world, and to want men to be free are one and the same will."[38] That commits one, according to her, to a particular political stance, one which supports liberation struggles and combats oppression. Beauvoir's utopia would be a place where "men will know no other use of their freedom than this free unfurling of itself; constructive activity would be possible for all; each one would be able to aim positively through his projects at his own future."[39] Writing in 1946 in the aftermath of World War II Beauvoir recognizes that such a utopia is just a "dream." It certainly is not a reality today. But Beauvoir also realized that even in the imperfect circumstances that human beings have always found themselves in, and perhaps always will find themselves in, some people can choose to will the disclosure of the world in joy. In what remains of this paper I am going to look at some of the different ways she suggests people do choose to.

For instance, Beauvoir points to science as an example of how humans actively will the disclosure of being. "Being" might even seem to be the right term in this case, given the claims that modern science makes to be able to reveal the world as it really is. Beauvoir, true to her phenomenological origins, criticizes these metaphysical aspirations of science:

> Science condemns itself to failure when, yielding to the infatuation of the serious, it aspires to attain being, to contain it, and to possess it; but it finds its truth if it considers itself as a free engagement of thought in the given, aiming, at each discovery, not at fusion with the thing, but at the possibility of new discoveries; what the mind then projects is the concrete accomplishment of its freedom.[40]

There are many other intellectual activities that might be considered "a free engagement of thought in the given," and would also be a disclosure of the world.

The material improvements of life that come from the practical application of scientific results often serve as a social justification of science, Beauvoir remarks. But "pure" science, as a disclosure of the world, needs no such justification. Besides the development of technology is not an end in itself. It too is in need of justification. The time that all our time-saving devices save us cannot be stored up in a warehouse, she points out. Time "exists only by being spent."[41] What is important is how we spend it. Further development of technology can be justified if it "aims

at an indefinite disclosure of being by the transformation of the thing into an instrument and at the opening of ever new possibilities for man."[42]

If the privileged situation for disclosure of the world is one in which it can realize itself as an indefinite movement toward the future, what attitude should one take toward the past? Of course our only access to the past is by means of "the disclosure of being realized by our ancestors": the writings, the buildings, the artworks and other artifacts. The times during which they were created and used do not exist any more. Beauvoir criticizes what she calls a contemplative aesthetic attitude toward the past in which one "faces history, which he thinks he does not belong to, like a pure beholding."[43] This disengaged mode of disclosing the world is "a way of fleeing the truth of the present."[44] But it is also wrong to ignore the past completely in order to focus on the present, she says: "To abandon the past to the night of facticity is a way of depopulating the world ... if the disclosure of being achieved by our ancestors does not at all move us, why be interested in that which is taking place today; why wish so ardently for future realizations?"[45] To disclose a world without a past is to disclose an impoverished world. From these statements I infer that Beauvoir would also recognize the historian as effecting a disclosure of the world – not a world of facts, but a world shaped by past human activities.[46]

Beauvoir definitely sees both the visual and literary artist to be engaged in the disclosure of the world. (Perhaps in regard to the individual art or literary work it might be better to say the disclosure of *a* world.) The artist does not take the detached contemplative attitude toward the world that the aesthete does. An artist does not just behold the world. His or her art is a project, a way of intervening in the world. In this project the artist interacts with the material world and transforms some small portion of it. Like every human being, the artist encounters the limits posed by facticity, but in a special way. They become "the limits the artist gives himself in choosing himself."[47] The individual artwork is in a way an absolute – a finite absolute – for Beauvoir. But art is also a continuing cultural activity. And the disclosure of the world as an indefinite movement is realized through it: "painting is not given completely either in Giotto or Titian or Cezanne: it is sought through the centuries and never finished."[48]

In *The Ethics of Ambiguity* Beauvoir mentions writing but discusses disclosure mainly in terms of the visual arts. In a previous work, however, she explicitly identifies literature as a disclosure of the world. Her essay "Literature and Metaphysics" published in *Les Temps modernes* in 1946

is about the metaphysical novel, the type of novel she intended *L'invitée* to be. In it she says, "A metaphysical novel that is honestly read, and honestly written, brings a disclosure (*dévoilement*) of existence which no other mode of expression supplies."[49] Some novels create their own world. What is called escape fiction and science fiction and fantasy fall into this category. (Where is it after all that one escapes *to* by reading escape fiction?) Beauvoir implies in this essay that the metaphysical novel, or more serious novels generally, disclose something important about our world.

It turns out that Beauvoir's conception of literature as a disclosure of the world, and her general concept of disclosure, had a strong influence on Sartre, at least on his essay on aesthetics, "What is Literature?" published in *Les Temps modernes* starting in 1947 (in the same issue the last installment of *The Ethics of Ambiguity* was published). Sartre announces in this essay that "human reality is a 'disclosing' (*dévoilante*), that is, it is through human reality that 'there is' being."[50] He goes on:

> It is our presence in the world which multiplies relations. It is we who set up a relationship between this tree and that bit of sky. Thanks to us, that star which has been dead for millennia, that dark river are disclosed (*se dévoile*) in the unity of a landscape. It is the speed of our car and our aeroplane which organizes the great masses of the earth.

Sartre makes these remarks in order to introduce his thesis that literature is a type of disclosure as well. But Sartre goes beyond Beauvoir in insisting that it not just the writer of literature who discloses a world: the reader needs to disclose it as well in order for it to exist at all. For instance, Sartre says, referring to the protagonist of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*: "the literary object has no other substance than the reader's subjectivity. Raskolnikov's waiting is *my* waiting which I lend him. Without this impatience of the reader he would remain only a collection of signs."[51]

These examples that Beauvoir gives of free active disclosure of the world are not meant to be exhaustive. Many other human activities could be explained in these terms as well. There are many ways to do as Beauvoir prescribes and "will the disclosure of being in the joy of existence."[52] Beauvoir does not scorn even the most trifling occupations of someone's time – a child playing, a man sitting on a bench or drinking a glass of wine – if they bring real joy, if even for the moment. If we cannot take joy in these casual moments, she points out, then all the efforts we make to improve our lives and others' lives or to justify them

through philosophizing would be pointless: "If we do not love life on our account and through others, it is futile to seek to justify it in any way."[53]

Long Island University
Brooklyn

NOTES

[1] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Bernard Frechtman (trans.) (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1991), p. 12.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 7.
[3] Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe*, Vol. II (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), p. 14. My translation.
[4] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Bernard Frechtman (trans.) (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1991), p. 28.
[5] *Ibid*., p.7.
[6] Simone de Beauvoir, *L'invitée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), p. 8. My translation.
[7] *Ibid*., p. 13.
[8] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Blood of Others*, Roger Senhouse and Yvonne Moyse (trans.) (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), p. 145.
[9] *Ibid*., p. 146.
[10] Simone de Beauvoir, *Pyrrhus et Cinéas* (Paris: Gallimard, 1944), p. 111.
[11] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Bernard Frechtman (trans.) (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1991), p. 11.
[12] *Ibid*., p. 12.
[13] *Ibid*., p. 23.
[14] See Eva Gothlin, "Reading Simone de Beauvoir with Martin Heidegger," in *The Cambridge Companion to Simone de Beauvoir*, Claudia Card (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 47.
[15] *Ibid*., p. 46.
[16] See Simone de Beauvoir, *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre*, Patrick O'Brian (trans.) (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 172.
[17] See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (trans.) (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 170.
[18] See Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, David Farrell Krell (ed.) (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), p. 252. Heidegger wrote this essay in response to Sartre's essay "Existentialism is a Humanism."
[19] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Hiemayer, 1986), p. 133.
[20] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (trans.) (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 171.
[21] *Ibid*., p. 170.
[22] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Bernard Frechtman (trans.) (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1991), p. 12.
[23] *Ibid*., pp. 23–24.
[24] See Simone de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life*, Peter Green (trans.) (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1962), p. 162.

[25] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Bernard Frechtman (trans.) (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1991), p. 74.
[26] *Ibid*., p. 20.
[27] *Ibid*., p. 41.
[28] *Ibid*., pp. 41–42.
[29] *Ibid*., p. 43.
[30] *Ibid*., pp. 44–45.
[31] *Ibid*., p. 64.
[32] *Ibid*., pp. 65–66.
[33] *Ibid*., p. 74.
[34] *Ibid*., p. 32.
[35] See Kristana Arp, *The Bonds of Freedom: Simone de Beauvoir's Existentialist Ethics* (Chicago: Open Court, 2001).
[36] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Bernard Frechtman (trans.) (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1991), p. 71.
[37] *Ibid*., p. 30.
[38] *Ibid*., pp. 86–87.
[39] *Ibid*., p. 81.
[40] *Ibid*., p. 79.
[41] *Ibid*., p. 80.
[42] *Ibid*.
[43] *Ibid*., p. 75.
[44] *Ibid*., p. 76.
[45] *Ibid*., p. 92.
[46] "If the past concerns us, it does so not as a brute fact, but insofar as it has human signification," she says. *Ibid*., p. 93.
[47] *Ibid*., p. 129.
[48] *Ibid*.
[49] Simone de Beauvoir, "Litterature et metaphysique," in *L'existentialisme et la sagesse des nations* (Paris: Les Éditions Nagel, 1986), p. 104). My translation.
[50] Jean-Paul Sartre, *"What is Literature?" and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 48. Translation altered.
[51] *Ibid*., p. 53.
[52] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Bernard Frechtman (trans.) (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1991), p. 135.
[53] *Ibid*., pp. 135–136.