



**Spring 2017, SARTRE, PHIL 463/563 N.Zack**  
**M nzack@uoregon.edu, 6-8:50 PM Monday.**

**PHIL 453/563 Top Sartre** 4.00 cr.

Repeatable. Concentrates on the work of a single philosopher (e.g., Wittgenstein, Dewey, Quine, Merleau-Ponty, C.I. Lewis, or Foucault). Repeatable when philosopher changes.

Grading Options: Optional for all students

Instructor: Zack N  Office: 239 Susan Campbell Hall  
 Phone: (541) 346-1547

Office Hours: Tues. 1-2:50 and by appointment

CRN	Time	Day	Location	Instructor	Notes
34799/					
<u>34806</u>	1800-2050	m	121 MCK	Zack N	

### **SYLLABUS \*\*\*(see appendix at end)**

The **aim and scope** of this course. We will begin with a shared reading of *Nausea* on Day 1. But the aim and scope of this course is to concisely situate Sartre philosophically in terms of Descartes, Hume, Kant, Heidegger, and Derrida. On that basis, we will then build an understanding of his main ideas and their development over his life. We will read some of his autobiographical writing, fiction, and biographical studies, but concentrate on his ontology, theory of the self, and existential psychoanalysis from Being and Nothingness. Also considered will be Sartre's later Marxism. The pace will be fast in a seminar format.

### **Course Objectives**

- Acquire a familiarity with contemporary key ideas in Sartre's existentialist corpus.

- Critically engage these ideas, philosophically and in terms of real life, literature, and biography.
- Contrast and compare Sartre's philosophical approaches to existentialism with his predecessors and contemporaries.
- Evaluate what's at stake with Sartre's approach to Marxism, in progressive terms.

#### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- ✓ Knowledge acquired of an important 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophical tradition, in both its historical and political context.
- ✓ Skill with Exposition, Interpretation, and Criticism of perspectives and analyses from a distinctive approach in continental philosophy.
- ✓ Strengthening of an understanding of the complexities of human consciousness and ideas of freedom and responsibility.
- ✓ Development of understanding of the relationships between abstract philosophy and human responsibility and political progressivism.

#### **Readings**

Historical background and beyond: (Kant, Husserl, Heidegger, Derrida)

**Jean-Paul Sartre texts:** *Nausea, Baudelaire, Search for a Method*, Selections from *Being and Nothingness*. (all On Reserve)

S. Priest, ed., *Jean-Paul Sartre, Basic Writings*

#### Additional sources

See Sartre on refusing the Nobel Prize at

<http://www.openculture.com/2014/06/jean-paul-sartre-rejects-the-nobel-prize.html>

*Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Paul Sartre*. On reserve

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, on reserve

Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/4280/pg4280.txt>

Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," (Canvas)

Derrida, "The Ends of Man" (Canvas)

Note: *Nausea*, Priest, ed., *Sartre, Basic Writings*, Sartre, *Baudelaire*, and Sartre, *Search for a Method* are all on sale at the Duckstore.

#### **GRADING for 563 – Participation and Attendance> 30%;**

#### **20% -Presentations**

**10 page term paper, polished, suitable for conference submission and/or eventual publication> 50%. NOTE: A preliminary outline/description will be due Monday of Week 6 and a first draft will be due Monday of Week 8. From then on, students will be encouraged to talk about their projects, as relevant and there will be short presentations. You are encouraged to use sources beyond the readings and themes/theses can be comparative, innovatively exegetical, or critical. Final Draft will be due M of Week 11. Topic: Referring to Heidegger and Derrida on humanism, does Sartre fulfill his promise in his "Existentialism is a Humanism," throughout his writings on the ontology of the self and existential psychoanalysis.**

#### **GRADING for 463 – Participation and Attendance>30%**

#### **Presentations – 10%**

#### **Take home exam, 20%> Distributed Week 6--Due M. Week 7.**

#### **5 page term paper, polished, suitable for conference submission or as a writing sample> 40%.**

**NOTE: A first draft will be due Monday of Week 8. Sources beyond the syllabus are optional, but**

more than a report on the readings is required. Your term paper must have a thesis or some original interpretation or criticism. From Week 8 on, students will be encouraged to talk about their projects, as relevant and there may be short presentations. Final Draft will be due M of Week 11. TOPIC – Write an essay in answer to this question. How does Sartre's critique of Marxism in *Search for a Method* contradict or apply the existentialist writings you have read and discussed during Weeks 1-6 of this course?

*See Appendix for further information of grading and course policy.*

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### **SCHEDULE**

#### **WEEK 1.**

**NAUSEA AND SARTRE'S PREDECESSORS**

#### **WEEK 2.**

**NAUSEA AND SARTRE'S PREDECESSORS**

#### **WEEK 3 -- NAUSEA, SARTRE, "LETTER ON HUMANISM," PRESENTATIONS**

**WEEK 4. NOTE: WEEKS 4, 5, AND 6 CONTAIN THE CORE PHILOSOPHICAL (METAPHYSICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL) MATERIAL/WORK OF THE COURSE. WE WILL RELY ON TBA SELECTIONS IN STEPHEN PRIEST, ED. *JEAN-PAUL SARTRE, BASIC WRITINGS*. BOTH 463 AND 563 ARE ENCOURAGED TO TRACK DOWN THE SOURCES OF THESE EXTRACTS IN SARTRE'S MORE PRIMARY TEXTS, BUT IT IS NOT REQUIRED.**

**BOTH 453 AND 553, ONE PAGE OUTLINE OF TERM PAPER DUE  
M. PRIEST, ED. SARTRE IN THE WORLD, EXISTENTIALISM  
PHENOMENOLOGY**

#### **WEEK 5.**

**BEING, NOTHINGNESS  
THE SELF, TEMPORALITY, FREEDOM, RESPONSIBILITY**

#### **WEEK 6.**

**TAKE HOME EXAMS POSTED/DISTRIBUTED/DISCUSSED  
BAD FAITH, OTHERS, PSYCHOLYSIS  
TAKE HOME EXAM DISTRIBUTED  
PSYCHOANALYSIS, WRITING.**

#### **WEEK 7.**

**TAKE HOME EXAM COLLECTED  
*SEARCH FOR A METHOD***

**NOTE: IN ADDITION TO TBA ASSIGNMENTS IN *SEARCH FOR A METHOD*, SEE ALSO "POLITICS" IN PRIESTLY, ED.**

#### **WEEK 8.**

**BOTH 453 AND 553, DRAFT OF TERM PAPER DUE, EMAIL AS A WORDDOC TO NZACK@UOREGON.EDU**

***BAUDELAIRE***

**WEEK 9.**

***BAUDELAIRE***

**WEEK 10.**

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS ON HEIDEGGER AND DERRIDA/REVIEW/DISCUSSION OF FINAL PAPER

**WEEK 11.**

**MONDAY, 6PM FINAL PAPERS DUE FOR 453 AND 553, EMAIL AS A WORDDOC TO  
NZACK@UOREGON.EDU**

**APPENDIX:** i. Disability, ii.Grades, iii. Academic Honesty, iv. How to Write Good Philosophy Papers.

**i Disability**

Philosophy Department faculty and instructors do their best to comply with Disability Services policy and instructions, as follows. Please see no. 4 in particular.

At a minimum, Instructors have the responsibility to ensure Full access for students with disabilities by responding to a student's need or request for accommodations as outlined below.

**If a student presents you with a notification letter from DS:** You have the responsibility to cooperate with DS in providing authorized accommodations in a reasonable and timely manner. The specific accommodation determines the amount of involvement required. Refer to the section below entitled "Examples of Shared Responsibility" for a description of your involvement in providing the most common accommodations.

1. **If a student does not present you with a notification letter from DS:**
2. If a student requests an accommodation without having presented you with the notification letter from DS, please refer the student to DS. If the student is already on file with DS, a request form just needs to be filled out. If the student is new to DS, the process to review documentation and meet with the student may take some time. If the disability is obvious and the accommodation appears appropriate, you may need to provide the accommodation while awaiting official notification. If you are unsure, please call DS for assistance.
3. **If a student discloses a disability to you:**
4. Ask to see the notification letter from DS. This letter describes the accommodations that the institution is legally mandated to provide. During an office hour or at another convenient time, discuss the letter and the accommodations with the student. Students MUST present a notification letter from DS to receive testing accommodations. If the student does not have a letter, please refer the student to DS. Appropriate accommodations will be determined after reviewing documentation of the disability and the student will be issued the notification letter.
5. **If you have a question about the appropriateness of an accommodation:**
6. Questions about the appropriateness of certain accommodations should be directed to the Director of DS.
7. *If a disability is suspected:*
8. Share your concerns with the student regarding his or her performance. If the concern seems disability-related, ask if he or she has ever received assistance for a disability. If it seems appropriate, refer the student to DS for further discussion and guidance. It is the student's decision whether or not to self-identify to DS; however, to receive accommodations, disclosure to DS with proper documentation is required.

**ii. GRADES** : U of O Philosophy Department Policy **What** kind of paper deserves an “A,” “B,” etc.?

The following reflects the general standards of the Philosophy Department at the University of Oregon.

**A** = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.

**B** = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.

**C** = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.

**D** = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.

**F** = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

Please note: what counts as “excellent” or “OK,” for example, depends in part upon the nature and level of the class in question.

**Discussion** forms an integral part of the course, and your performance will be graded on the basis of the quantity and quality of your participation. You should arrive prepared to discuss the material and course assignments.

**iii. Academic Honesty**

The stiffest punishments possible will be sought for those who plagiarize, fabricate, or cheat. (The usual punishment is an “F” for the course.) The following offers examples of academic dishonesty.

**Plagiarism** Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's product, words, ideas, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. Expectations may vary slightly among disciplines. By placing one's name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. On written assignments, if verbatim statements are included, the statements must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from regular text as indented extracts.

*A student will avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is an acknowledgement of indebtedness. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever:*

1. one quotes another person's actual words or replicates all or part of another's product;
2. one uses another person's ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one's own words;
3. one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials--unless the information is common knowledge.

Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism. If in doubt, consult the instructor or seek assistance from the staff of Academic Learning Services (68 PLC, 346-3226).

In addition, it is plagiarism to submit as your own any academic exercise (for example, written work, printing, computer program, art or design work, musical composition, and choreography) prepared totally or in part by another.

Plagiarism also includes submitting work in which portions were substantially produced by someone acting as a tutor or editor.

**Fabrication**

Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when he or she states or implies otherwise, or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. citing information not taken from the source indicated;
2. listing sources in a reference not used in the academic exercise;
3. inventing data or source information for research or other academic exercises.

**Cheating**

Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. copying from another student's paper, computer program, project, product, or performance;
2. collaborating without authority or allowing another student to copy one's work in a test situation;
3. resubmitting substantially the same work that was produced for another assignment without the knowledge and permission of the instructor;
4. writing a paper for someone else or permitting someone else to take a test for you.

#### **iv. HOW TO WRITE GOOD PHILOSOPHY PAPERS**

Note: When you get your papers back, there will be comments. The letters in parentheses indicate what aspect of your writing might need improvement and you may see them the second or third time this aspect still needs work.

1. CLARITY (CL) Since this is a philosophy paper, make sure that you define your terms and give reasons for claims. All of your ideas should be explicitly stated and not left to the reader to infer. One difference between philosophy and literature is that philosophers spell everything out, while creative writers depend on the imagination of the reader.

2. PRECISION (P) Try not to make vague claims or general statements about the ideas in the readings. Be accurate in reporting the views of others and exact in stating your own.

3. ORGANIZATION (O) Organize the ideas in the paper into a few coherent paragraphs. Summarize the main claims of your paper in 2 or 3 sentences that you write *after* you write the paper, but put at the very beginning of the paper. This is an appropriate introductory paragraph for a philosophy paper, not a filler or a fluffy beginning.

3. WRITING MECHANICS (WR) The mechanics include spelling, punctuation, syntax and complete sentence structure. Make sure that you already have these down or consult a source if you don't. Highly recommended is Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*. This is available on line at [www.bartleby.com/141/](http://www.bartleby.com/141/)

4. ANALYSIS (A) Analyze claims. This means breaking your ideas down into their simpler components, and defining them. Do not start with or rely on dictionary definitions, but use your own words and cite the dictionary only if necessary. Dictionary definitions report usage, whereas a philosophical definition may be critical of current usage or find it vague. Examine the logical consequences of your claims and the claims of others.

5. CITATION (C) Cite the required readings this way in your text: (author's last name, page no.) As well, provide a list of citations at the end of the paper. It is important to do this to show you have done the required reading and are not just recycling notes from class or discussion group lectures. If you do use material from lecture, please make sure to cite that as well.

6. QUOTATIONS (Q) Quotations should be used to illustrate a claim that you are making about an author. They are not a substitute for explaining the author's thought in your own words. A good strategy is to state the author's ideas in your own words first and then "prove" your interpretation with a short quote.

7. DIRECT (D) Be direct. Make sure that you give a direct and focused answer to the question for the paper. This is the most important requirement for papers to reach the B and A range.

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Descartes, *Meditations* John Veitch Translation of 1901

#### **MEDITATION II.**

#### **OF THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN MIND; AND THAT IT IS MORE EASILY KNOWN THAN THE BODY.**

1. The Meditation of yesterday has filled my mind with so many doubts, that it is no longer in my power to forget them. Nor do I see, meanwhile, any principle on which they can be resolved; and, just as if I had fallen all of a sudden into very deep water, I am so greatly disconcerted as to be unable either to plant my feet firmly on the bottom or sustain myself by swimming on the surface. I will, nevertheless, make an effort, and try anew the same path on which I had entered yesterday, that is, proceed by casting aside all that admits of the slightest doubt, not less than if I had discovered it to be absolutely false; and I will continue always in this track until I shall find something that is certain, or at least, if I can do nothing more, until I shall know with certainty that there is nothing certain. Archimedes, that he might transport the entire globe from the place it occupied to another, demanded only a point that was firm and immovable; so, also, I shall be entitled to entertain the highest expectations, if I am fortunate enough to discover only one thing that is certain and indubitable.

2. I suppose, accordingly, that all the things which I see are false (fictitious); I believe that none of those objects which my fallacious memory represents ever existed; I suppose that I possess no senses; I believe that body, figure, extension, motion, and place are merely fictions of my mind. What is there, then, that can be esteemed true ? Perhaps this only, that there is absolutely nothing certain.

3. But how do I know that there is not something different altogether from the objects I have now enumerated, of which it is impossible to entertain the slightest doubt? Is there not a God, or some being, by whatever name I may designate him, who causes these thoughts to arise in my mind ? But why suppose such a being, for it may be I myself am capable of producing them? Am I, then, at least not something? But I before denied that I possessed senses or a body; I hesitate, however, for what follows from that? Am I so dependent on the body and the senses that without these I cannot exist? But I had the persuasion that there was absolutely nothing in the world, that there was no sky and no earth, neither minds nor bodies; was I not, therefore, at the same time, persuaded that I did not exist? Far from it; I assuredly existed, since I was persuaded. But there is I know not what being, who is possessed at once of the highest power and the deepest cunning, who is constantly employing all his ingenuity in deceiving me. Doubtless, then, I exist, since I am deceived; and, let him deceive me as he may, he can never bring it about that I am nothing, so long as I shall be conscious that I am something. So that it must, in fine, be maintained, all things being maturely and carefully considered, that this proposition (pronunciatum ) *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true each time it is expressed by me, or conceived in my mind.

4. But I do not yet know with sufficient clearness what I am, though assured that I am; and hence, in the next place, I must take care, lest perchance I inconsiderately substitute some other object in room of what is properly myself, and thus wander from truth, even in that knowledge ( cognition ) which I hold to be of all others the most certain and evident. For this reason, I will now consider anew what I formerly believed myself to be, before I entered on the present train of thought; and of my previous opinion I will retrench all that can in the least be invalidated by the grounds of doubt I have adduced, in order that there may at length remain nothing but what is certain and indubitable.

5. What then did I formerly think I was ? Undoubtedly I judged that I was a man. But what is a man ? Shall I say a rational animal ? Assuredly not; for it would be necessary forthwith to inquire into what is meant by animal, and what by rational, and thus, from a single question, I should insensibly glide into others, and these more difficult than the first; nor do I now possess enough of leisure to warrant me in wasting my time amid subtleties of this sort. I prefer here to attend to the thoughts that sprung up of themselves in my mind, and were inspired by my own nature alone, when I applied myself to the consideration of what I was. In the first place, then, I thought that I possessed a countenance, hands, arms, and all the fabric of members that appears in a corpse, and which I called by the name of body. It further occurred to me that I was nourished, that I walked, perceived, and thought, and all those actions I referred to the soul; but what the soul itself was I either did not stay to consider, or, if I did, I imagined that it was something extremely rare and subtile, like wind, or flame, or ether, spread through my grosser parts. As regarded the body, I did not even doubt of its nature, but thought I distinctly knew it, and if I had wished to describe it according to the notions I then entertained, I should have explained myself in this manner: By body I understand all that can be terminated by a certain

figure; that can be comprised in a certain place, and so fill a certain space as therefrom to exclude every other body; that can be perceived either by touch, sight, hearing, taste, or smell; that can be moved in different ways, not indeed of itself, but by something foreign to it by which it is touched [and from which it receives the impression]; for the power of self-motion, as likewise that of perceiving and thinking, I held as by no means pertaining to the nature of body; on the contrary, I was somewhat astonished to find such faculties existing in some bodies. [L][F]

6. But [as to myself, what can I now say that I am], since I suppose there exists an extremely powerful, and, if I may so speak, malignant being, whose whole endeavors are directed toward deceiving me? Can I affirm that I possess any one of all those attributes of which I have lately spoken as belonging to the nature of body? After attentively considering them in my own mind, I find none of them that can properly be said to belong to myself. To recount them were idle and tedious. Let us pass, then, to the attributes of the soul. The first mentioned were the powers of nutrition and walking; but, if it be true that I have no body, it is true likewise that I am capable neither of walking nor of being nourished. Perception is another attribute of the soul; but perception too is impossible without the body; besides, I have frequently, during sleep, believed that I perceived objects which I afterward observed I did not in reality perceive. Thinking is another attribute of the soul; and here I discover what properly belongs to myself. This alone is inseparable from me. I am—I exist: this is certain; but how often? As often as I think; for perhaps it would even happen, if I should wholly cease to think, that I should at the same time altogether cease to be. I now admit nothing that is not necessarily true. I am therefore, precisely speaking, only a thinking thing, that is, a mind (*mens sive animus*), understanding, or reason, terms whose signification was before unknown to me. I am, however, a real thing, and really existent; but what thing? The answer was, a thinking thing. 7. The question now arises, am I aught besides? I will stimulate my imagination with a view to discover whether I am not still something more than a thinking being. Now it is plain I am not the assemblage of members called the human body; I am not a thin and penetrating air diffused through all these members, or wind, or flame, or vapor, or breath, or any of all the things I can imagine; for I supposed that all these were not, and, without changing the supposition, I find that I still feel assured of my existence. But it is true, perhaps, that those very things which I suppose to be non-existent, because they are unknown to me, are not in truth different from myself whom I know. This is a point I cannot determine, and do not now enter into any dispute regarding it. I can only judge of things that are known to me: I am conscious that I exist, and I who know that I exist inquire into what I am. It is, however, perfectly certain that the knowledge of my existence, thus precisely taken, is not dependent on things, the existence of which is as yet unknown to me: and consequently it is not dependent on any of the things I can feign in imagination. Moreover, the phrase itself, I frame an image (*effingo*), reminds me of my error; for I should in truth frame one if I were to imagine myself to be anything, since to imagine is nothing more than to contemplate the figure or image of a corporeal thing; but I already know that I exist, and that it is possible at the same time that all those images, and in general all that relates to the nature of body, are merely dreams [or chimeras]. From this I discover that it is not more reasonable to say, I will excite my imagination that I may know more distinctly what I am, than to express myself as follows: I am now awake, and perceive something real; but because my perception is not sufficiently clear, I will of express purpose go to sleep that my dreams may represent to me the object of my perception with more truth and clearness. And, therefore, I know that nothing of all that I can embrace in imagination belongs to the knowledge which I have of myself, and that there is need to recall with the utmost

care the mind from this mode of thinking, that it may be able to know its own nature with perfect distinctness.

8. But what, then, am I ? A thinking thing, it has been said. But what is a thinking thing? It is a thing that doubts, understands, [conceives], affirms, denies, wills, refuses; that imagines also, and perceives. 9. Assuredly it is not little, if all these properties belong to my nature. But why should they not belong to it ? Am I not that very being who now doubts of almost everything; who, for all that, understands and conceives certain things; who affirms one alone as true, and denies the others; who desires to know more of them, and does not wish to be deceived; who imagines many things, sometimes even despite his will; and is likewise percipient of many, as if through the medium of the senses. Is there nothing of all this as true as that I am, even although I should be always dreaming, and although he who gave me being employed all his ingenuity to deceive me ? Is there also any one of these attributes that can be properly distinguished from my thought, or that can be said to be separate from myself ? For it is of itself so evident that it is I who doubt, I who understand, and I who desire, that it is here unnecessary to add anything by way of rendering it more clear. And I am as certainly the same being who imagines; for although it may be (as I before supposed) that nothing I imagine is true, still the power of imagination does not cease really to exist in me and to form part of my thought. In fine, I am the same being who perceives, that is, who apprehends certain objects as by the organs of sense, since, in truth, I see light, hear a noise, and feel heat. But it will be said that these presentations are false, and that I am dreaming. Let it be so. At all events it is certain that I seem to see light, hear a noise, and feel heat; this cannot be false, and this is what in me is properly called perceiving (*sentire*), which is nothing else than thinking.[

10. From this I begin to know what I am with somewhat greater clearness and distinctness than heretofore. But, nevertheless, it still seems to me, and I cannot help believing, that corporeal things, whose images are formed by thought [which fall under the senses], and are examined by the same, are known with much greater distinctness than that I know not what part of myself which is not imaginable; although, in truth, it may seem strange to say that I know and comprehend with greater distinctness things whose existence appears to me doubtful, that are unknown, and do not belong to me, than others of whose reality I am persuaded, that are known to me, and appertain to my proper nature; in a word, than myself. But I see clearly what is the state of the case. My mind is apt to wander, and will not yet submit to be restrained within the limits of truth. Let us therefore leave the mind to itself once more, and, according to it every kind of liberty [permit it to consider the objects that appear to it from without], in order that, having afterward withdrawn it from these gently and opportunely [ and fixed it on the consideration of its being and the properties it finds in itself], it may then be the more easily controlled.

11. Let us now accordingly consider the objects that are commonly thought to be [the most easily, and likewise] the most distinctly known, viz, the bodies we touch and see; not, indeed, bodies in general, for these general notions are usually somewhat more confused, but one body in particular. Take, for example, this piece of wax; it is quite fresh, having been but recently taken from the beehive; it has not yet lost the sweetness of the honey it contained; it still retains somewhat of the odor of the flowers from which it was gathered; its color, figure, size, are apparent ( to the sight ); it is hard, cold, easily handled; and sounds when struck upon with the finger. In fine, all that contributes to make a body as distinctly known as possible, is found in the

one before us. But, while I am speaking, let it be placed near the fire--what remained of the taste exhales, the smell evaporates, the color changes, its figure is destroyed, its size increases, it becomes liquid, it grows hot, it can hardly be handled, and, although struck upon, it emits no sound. Does the same wax still remain after this change ? It must be admitted that it does remain; no one doubts it, or judges otherwise. What, then, was it I knew with so much distinctness in the piece of wax? Assuredly, it could be nothing of all that I observed by means of the senses, since all the things that fell under taste, smell, sight, touch, and hearing are changed, and yet the same wax remains.

12. It was perhaps what I now think, viz, that this wax was neither the sweetness of honey, the pleasant odor of flowers, the whiteness, the figure, nor the sound, but only a body that a little before appeared to me conspicuous under these forms, and which is now perceived under others. But, to speak precisely, what is it that I imagine when I think of it in this way? Let it be attentively considered, and, retrenching all that does not belong to the wax, let us see what remains. There certainly remains nothing, except something extended, flexible, and movable. But what is meant by flexible and movable ? Is it not that I imagine that the piece of wax, being round, is capable of becoming square, or of passing from a square into a triangular figure ? Assuredly such is not the case, because I conceive that it admits of an infinity of similar changes; and I am, moreover, unable to compass this infinity by imagination, and consequently this conception which I have of the wax is not the product of the faculty of imagination. But what now is this extension ? Is it not also unknown ? for it becomes greater when the wax is melted, greater when it is boiled, and greater still when the heat increases; and I should not conceive [clearly and] according to truth, the wax as it is, if I did not suppose that the piece we are considering admitted even of a wider variety of extension than I ever imagined, I must, therefore, admit that I cannot even comprehend by imagination what the piece of wax is, and that it is the mind alone (*mens*, Lat., *entendement*, F.) which perceives it. I speak of one piece in particular; for as to wax in general, this is still more evident. But what is the piece of wax that can be perceived only by the [understanding or] mind? It is certainly the same which I see, touch, imagine; and, in fine, it is the same which, from the beginning, I believed it to be. But (and this it is of moment to observe) the perception of it is neither an act of sight, of touch, nor of imagination, and never was either of these, though it might formerly seem so, but is simply an intuition (*inspectio*) of the mind, which may be imperfect and confused, as it formerly was, or very clear and distinct, as it is at present, according as the attention is more or less directed to the elements which it contains, and of which it is composed.

13. But, meanwhile, I feel greatly astonished when I observe [the weakness of my mind, and] its proneness to error. For although, without at all giving expression to what I think, I consider all this in my own mind, words yet occasionally impede my progress, and I am almost led into error by the terms of ordinary language. We say, for example, that we see the same wax when it is before us, and not that we judge it to be the same from its retaining the same color and figure: whence I should forthwith be disposed to conclude that the wax is known by the act of sight, and not by the intuition of the mind alone, were it not for the analogous instance of human beings passing on in the street below, as observed from a window. In this case I do not fail to say that I see the men themselves, just as I say that I see the wax; and yet what do I see from the window beyond hats and cloaks that might cover artificial machines, whose motions might be determined by springs ? But I judge that there are human beings from these appearances, and thus I

comprehend, by the faculty of judgment alone which is in the mind, what I believed I saw with my eyes.

14. The man who makes it his aim to rise to knowledge superior to the common, ought to be ashamed to seek occasions of doubting from the vulgar forms of speech: instead, therefore, of doing this, I shall proceed with the matter in hand, and inquire whether I had a clearer and more perfect perception of the piece of wax when I first saw it, and when I thought I knew it by means of the external sense itself, or, at all events, by the common sense (*sensus communis*), as it is called, that is, by the imaginative faculty; or whether I rather apprehend it more clearly at present, after having examined with greater care, both what it is, and in what way it can be known. It would certainly be ridiculous to entertain any doubt on this point. For what, in that first perception, was there distinct? What did I perceive which any animal might not have perceived? But when I distinguish the wax from its exterior forms, and when, as if I had stripped it of its vestments, I consider it quite naked, it is certain, although some error may still be found in my judgment, that I cannot, nevertheless, thus apprehend it without possessing a human mind. [L][F]

15. But finally, what shall I say of the mind itself, that is, of myself? for as yet I do not admit that I am anything but mind. What, then! I who seem to possess so distinct an apprehension of the piece of wax, do I not know myself, both with greater truth and certitude, and also much more distinctly and clearly? For if I judge that the wax exists because I see it, it assuredly follows, much more evidently, that I myself am or exist, for the same reason: for it is possible that what I see may not in truth be wax, and that I do not even possess eyes with which to see anything; but it cannot be that when I see, or, which comes to the same thing, when I think I see, I myself who think am nothing. So likewise, if I judge that the wax exists because I touch it, it will still also follow that I am; and if I determine that my imagination, or any other cause, whatever it be, persuades me of the existence of the wax, I will still draw the same conclusion. And what is here remarked of the piece of wax, is applicable to all the other things that are external to me. And further, if the [notion or] perception of wax appeared to me more precise and distinct, after that not only sight and touch, but many other causes besides, rendered it manifest to my apprehension, with how much greater distinctness must I now know myself, since all the reasons that contribute to the knowledge of the nature of wax, or of any body whatever, manifest still better the nature of my mind? And there are besides so many other things in the mind itself that contribute to the illustration of its nature, that those dependent on the body, to which I have here referred, scarcely merit to be taken into account.

16. But, in conclusion, I find I have insensibly reverted to the point I desired; for, since it is now manifest to me that bodies themselves are not properly perceived by the senses nor by the faculty of imagination, but by the intellect alone; and since they are not perceived because they are seen and touched, but only because they are understood [or rightly comprehended by thought], I readily discover that there is nothing more easily or clearly apprehended than my own mind. But because it is difficult to rid one's self so promptly of an opinion to which one has been long accustomed, it will be desirable to tarry for some time at this stage, that, by long continued meditation, I may more deeply impress upon my memory this new knowledge.

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## David Hume

### Of Personal Identity

#### **Selection from Book I, Part 4, Section 6 of *A Treatise of Human Nature***

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##### **SECTION VI: OF PERSONAL IDENTITY**

There are some philosophers who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our self; that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence; and are certain, beyond the evidence of a demonstration, both of its perfect identity and simplicity. The strongest sensation, the most violent passion, say they, instead of distracting us from this view, only fix it the more intensely, and make us consider their influence on self either by their pain or pleasure. To attempt a further proof of this were to weaken its evidence; since no proof can be derived from any fact of which we are so intimately conscious; nor is there any thing of which we can be certain if we doubt of this.

Unluckily all these positive assertions are contrary to that very experience which is pleaded for them; nor have we any idea of self, after the manner it is here explained. For, from what impression could this idea be derived? This question it is impossible to answer without a manifest contradiction and absurdity; and yet it is a question which must necessarily be answered, if we would have the idea of self pass for clear and intelligible. It must be some one impression that gives rise to every real idea. But self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, through the whole course of our lives; since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other, and never all exist at the same time. It cannot therefore be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is derived; and consequently there is no such idea.

But further, what must become of all our particular perceptions upon this hypothesis? All these are different, and distinguishable, and separable from each other, and may be separately considered, and may exist separately, and have no need of any thing to support their existence. After what manner therefore do they belong to self, and how are they connected with it? For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep, so long am I insensible of myself, and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions removed by death, and could I neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate, after the dissolution of my body, I should be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is further requisite to make me a

perfect nonentity. If any one, upon serious and unprejudiced reflection, thinks he has a different notion of himself, I must confess I can reason no longer with him. All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular. He may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continued, which he calls himself; though I am certain there is no such principle in me.

But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. Our eyes cannot turn in their sockets without varying our perceptions. Our thought is still more variable than our sight; and all our other senses and faculties contribute to this change: nor is there any single power of the soul, which remains unalterably the same, perhaps for one moment. The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no simplicity in it at one time, nor identity in different, whatever natural propension we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity. The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place where these scenes are represented, or of the materials of which it is composed.

What then gives us so great a propension to ascribe an identity to these successive perceptions, and to suppose ourselves possessed of an invariable and uninterrupted existence through the whole course of our lives? In order to answer this question we must distinguish betwixt personal identity, as it regards our thought or imagination, and as it regards our passions or the concern we take in ourselves. The first is our present subject; and to explain it perfectly we must take the matter pretty deep, and account for that identity, which we attribute to plants and animals; there being a great analogy betwixt it and the identity of a self or person.

### Selection from Appendix of *A Treatise of Human Nature* on Personal Identity

I had entertain'd some hopes, that however deficient our theory of the intellectual world might be, it wou'd be free from those contradictions, and absurdities, which seem to attend every explication, that human reason can give of the material world. But upon a more strict review of the section concerning personal identity, I find myself involv'd in such a labyrinth, that, I must confess, I neither know how to correct my former opinions, nor how to render them consistent. If this be not a good general reason for scepticism, 'tis at least a sufficient one (if I were not already abundantly supplied) for me to entertain a diffidence and modesty in all my decisions. I shall propose the arguments on both sides, beginning with those that induc'd me to deny the strict and proper identity and simplicity of a self or thinking being.

When we talk of self or substance, we must have an idea annex'd to these terms, otherwise they are altogether unintelligible. Every idea is deriv'd from preceding impressions; and we have no impression of self or substance, as something simple and individual. We have, therefore, no idea of them in that sense.

Whatever is distinct, is distinguishable; and whatever is distinguishable, is separable by the thought or imagination. All perceptions are distinct. They are, therefore, distinguishable, and separable, and may be conceiv'd as separately existent, and may exist separately, without any contradiction or absurdity.

When I view this table and that chimney, nothing is present to me but particular perceptions, which are of a like nature with all the other perceptions. This is the doctrine of philosophers. But this table, which is present to me, and the chimney, may and do exist separately. This is the doctrine of the vulgar, and implies no contradiction. There is no contradiction, therefore, in extending the same doctrine to all the perceptions.

In general, the following reasoning seems satisfactory. All ideas are borrow'd from preceding perceptions. Our ideas of objects, therefore, are deriv'd from that source. Consequently no proposition can be intelligible or consistent with regard to objects, which is not so with regard to perceptions. But 'tis intelligible and consistent to say, that objects exist distinct and independent, without any common simple substance or subject of inhesion. This proposition, therefore, can never be absurd with regard to perceptions.

When I turn my reflection on myself, I never can perceive this self without some one or more perceptions; nor can I ever perceive anything but the perceptions. Tis the composition of these, therefore, which forms the self. We can conceive a thinking being to have either many or few perceptions. Suppose the mind to be reduc'd even below the life of an oyster. Suppose it to have only one perception, as of thirst or hunger. Consider it in that situation. Do you conceive any thing but merely that perception? Have you any notion of self or substance? If not, the addition of other perceptions can never give you that notion.

The annihilation, which some people suppose to follow upon death, and which entirely destroys this self, is nothing but an extinction of all particular perceptions; love and hatred, pain and pleasure, thought and sensation. These therefore must be the same with self; since the one cannot survive the other.

Is self the same with substance? If it be, how can that question have place, concerning the subsistence of self, under a change of substance? If they be distinct, what is the difference betwixt them? For my part, I have a notion of neither, when conceiv'd distinct from particular perceptions.

Philosophers begin to be reconcil'd to the principle, that we have no idea of external substance, distinct from the ideas of particular qualities. This must pave the way for a like principle with regard to the mind, that we have no notion of it, distinct from the particular perceptions.

So far I seem to be attended with sufficient evidence. But having thus loosen'd all our particular perceptions, when<sup>(23)</sup> I proceed to explain the principle of connexion, which binds them together, and makes us attribute to them a real simplicity and identity; I am sensible, that my account is very defective, and that nothing but the seeming evidence of the precedent reasonings cou'd have induc'd me to receive it. If perceptions are distinct existences, they form a whole only by being connected together. But no connexions among distinct existences are ever discoverable by

human understanding. We only feel a connexion or determination of the thought, to pass from one object to another. It follows, therefore, that the thought alone finds personal identity, when reflecting on the train of past perceptions, that compose a mind, the ideas of them are felt to be connected together, and naturally introduce each other. However extraordinary this conclusion may seem, it need not surprize us. Most philosophers seem inclin'd to think, that personal identity arises from consciousness; and consciousness is nothing but a reflected thought or perception. The present philosophy, therefore, has so far a promising aspect. But all my hopes vanish, when I come to explain the principles, that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness. I cannot discover any theory, which gives me satisfaction on this head.

In short there are two principles, which I cannot render consistent; nor is it in my power to renounce either of them, viz, that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences, and that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences. Did our perceptions either inhere in something simple and individual, or did the mind perceive some real connexion among them, there wou'd be no difficulty in the case. For my part, I must plead the privilege of a sceptic, and confess, that this difficulty is too hard for my understanding. I pretend not, however, to pronounce. it absolutely insuperable. Others, perhaps, or myself, upon more mature reflections, may discover some hypothesis, that will reconcile those contradictions.

Excerpt with commentary from Kant, *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, commentary by Jonathan Bennett

Well, I can be more conscious or less conscious, so my mental representations can be clearer or less clear, and this gives to my faculty of consciousness—I call it ‘Self-awareness’—a degree ‘of reality’, and we can even say that the substance of my soul has such a degree; and none of this in any way requires that any substance come into existence or go out of existence. This faculty of Self-awareness can gradually diminish, to the point where it finally goes right out of existence, so the substance of the soul can gradually go out of existence. [In this sentence and the preceding one, Kant doesn’t say that the soul is a substance; he speaks of the ‘substance of the soul’. He doesn’t explain the ‘substance of’ locution (which occurs nowhere else in this work, and nowhere in the *Critique of Pure Reason*). It does save him from having contradicted himself about whether substances can go out of existence.] If a thing has parts external to one another, the only way it could go out of existence gradually is by being slowly dismantled, pulled apart; but the soul can go out of existence gradually in a different way, through being gradually lessened and eventually extinguished. [Kant’s next sentence is hard to follow. In it he sketches, in a condensed form, some doctrine from the *Critique of Pure Reason*. He is facing the challenge ‘Don’t we know that the soul is a substance? Isn’t it obvious that when I say “I see something red” I am attributing the predicate “sees something red” to the mental thing, the substance, that I call “I”?’ Kant rejects this, and gestures towards the *Critique*’s account of how ‘I’ does work in all its uses. Fortunately, we don’t really need that account for present purposes. All that matters here (and even it doesn’t here matter *much*) is his negative thesis that ‘I’ or the German *Ich* does not serve to pick out an individual thing, and therefore isn’t the name of a substance. Kant winds this up by saying that the person who uses ‘I’ isn’t employing any concept of himself as a substance, and he is clearly implying that there is no such concept. Then:] In contrast with that, 543

the concept of a portion of matter as substance is the concept of *something that is movable in space*. So it's not surprising that the permanence of substance can be proved of matter but not of the soul. This is because from the concept of matter as *what is movable in space* it follows that the quantitative or *how-much* aspect of matter depends on there being many real parts external to one another—and thus many substances. Thus, the going out of existence of a portion of matter would involve the going out of existence of many substances, and that is impossible according to the law of permanence. [Kant has *Gesetz der Stetigkeit* = 'law of continuity' here, an obvious slip.] (The portion of matter could be diminished by being taken apart, but that isn't the same as going out of existence.) The thought 'I', on the other hand, isn't a *concept* at all but only an inner perception. And nothing follows from this thought (except that an object of inner sense is completely distinct from anything that is thought of merely as an object of outer sense); so the permanence of the soul as substance doesn't follow from it.