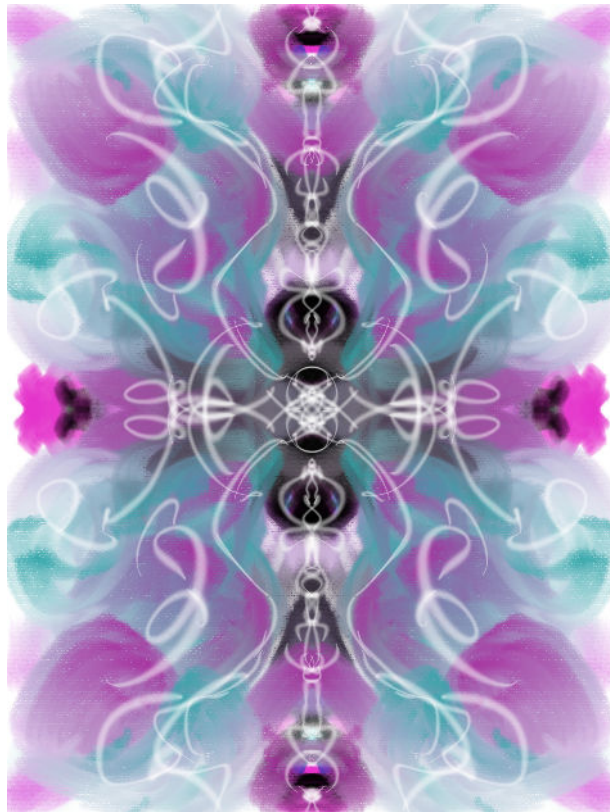# EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY FOR TIMES OF CHANGE AND CRISIS: FREEDOM, RESPONSIBILITY, AND EQUALITY

26-27 August 2021

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ABSTRACTS

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Jon Stewart (Institute of Philosophy, Slovak Academy of Sciences):
The Problem of Nihilism in the Literature of the 19th Century

The problem of nihilism is nothing new and can probably be found in one form or another at most any period of history. However, it is the twentieth century that is best known for thematizing this issue. Dadaism, the theater of the absurd, existentialism and postmodernism have all been closely linked to this concept. Due to these different schools and movements, nihilism has often been seen as characteristic or representative of the twentieth century as a whole. This seems to fit with the historical context of the World Wars and the Holocaust. However, in my paper I would like to argue that this picture is shortsighted since it fails to recognize the historical and cultural background of nihilism that became a particularly widespread problem in the 19th century. This was in many ways a historical precondition for these later movements in the 20th century. Of course, 19th thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are often thought of as proto-existentialists and are associated with nihilism. However, I wish to show there is also a rich literary tradition of 19th century writers who stand alongside these well-known philosophical figures. Philosophers have missed this point largely because these rich literary treatments of nihilism stand outside the philosophical canon and are thus little known to philosophers.

Daniele Fulvi (Western Sydney University):
Freedom as a Matter of Resistance in the Philosophy of Schelling

In this talk, I show that the concept of resistance is fundamental in order to understand Schelling's early account of freedom. First, I identify resistance with *Widerstand*, namely with a concept implying the definition of a way of being, of an ineluctable ontological status. Hence, I begin my analysis by focussing on Schelling's early works – and particularly on his *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism* (1795) and *New Deduction of Natural Right* (1796) – in order to demonstrate that the concept of resistance plays a key role in the interplay between freedom and necessity; that is, Schelling clearly argues that the resistance opposed by nature to our individual will is an essential and fundamental occurrence for us to actualise our freedom and to perform our actions and choices. Moreover, I intend to show how Schelling maintains the centrality of resistance even in his philosophy of nature, by arguing that resistance is that fundamental ontological occurrence which grounds the opposition between the basic forces of matter, and without which matter itself would not exist. Accordingly, resistance is also that material occurrence through which freedom can concretely take place in its being limited and constrained by necessity. On these grounds, I conclude by arguing that freedom can be defined as *a matter of resistance*, since it arises and is made possible only through resistance itself, in the very ontological meaning of *Widerstand*. Indeed, such definition embodies both that freedom in its concrete occurrence cannot be separated from resistance, and that resistance operates as the ontological groundwork of both freedom and matter.

Hjördis Becker-Lindenthal (University of Cambridge):
Face your self and let go: Approaching the selfie culture with Kierkegaard and German mysticism

The paper considers the ethico-religious effects of the excessive picturing of the self and its sharing through social media, magnified in times of social isolation and confinement as experienced in the current pandemic. While the selfie's inherent psychological dangers like dysmorphophobia have been acknowledged in the literature, the ethical implication of the obsession with the virtual image of ourselves often is addressed from a perspective that is restrained to a degradation and sometimes ridiculization of the selfie as a phenomenon of a narcissistic (youth) culture. A more descriptive approach contextualises the selfie in the cultural history of mirrors and self-portraits. This, however, also misses the radically new implications of the selfie for the self's relation to itself and others. In order to approach the phenomenon of the selfie from a perspective of critique, not ressentiment, the

paper turns to three religious thinkers who, albeit not concerned with concrete pictures of the self, develop a theory of personal formation and deformation through images. Initiating a dialogue between Meister Eckhart's and Johannes Tauler's medieval dialectics of *Bildung* (formation, literally: being formed according to an image, becoming like an image) and *Entbildung* (literally: de-image-ing, being cleansed of images) and Kierkegaard's cultural criticism and his description of the process of becoming a follower of Christ, the paper develops a theory of existential kenosis that, paradoxically, might be instigated through exposure to the selfie culture. While the argument takes its starting point in the theological anthropology of Meister Eckhart, Tauler and Kierkegaard, showing the dynamics between the *imago Dei,* imitatio Christi and sinful self-occupation, it moves beyond these particular Christian dogmatics: ultimately, it is the face of the other for which we need to recuperate receptivity and responsiveness.

Oliver Norman (University of Poitiers):
Can a Serious Philosophy of Death be Ethical? Kierkegaard and Jankélévitch on Death, Ethics and Seriousness

Faced with a crisis on a global scale like Coronavirus we can sometimes forget that a crisis is always a point of transition. To be in a crisis is to suffer at the highest point but is also the possibility of a new state that reveals itself. Coronavirus is, of course, a political and social disaster, but it is also an occasion to reflect upon what death means for us and how we should think about it and in particular, how we should take it seriously. The concepts of death and seriousness (*Alvor*/*Sérieux*) have enjoyed antinomic philosophical destinies. Seriousness has often been the brunt of many philosophers and writers as a sort of philosophical hypochondria. Can we consider death seriously? Is it not the one reality which we *must* take seriously? According to Paul Valéry, death does not give seriousness to life but rather it is that which takes it away; there is a fundamental incompatibility with seriousness and death. This presentation will attempt to rehabilitate the concept of seriousness and show how it is necessary in order to conceive death properly through the philosophies of Søren Kierkegaard and Vladimir Jankélévitch. Taking death seriously according to Jankélévitch and Kierkegaard revolves around two main points: effectivity and personal concern. Is ethics possible where the I prevails over the You/Thou? Do Kierkegaard and Jankélévitch try to return us towards a Grecian conception of ethics that we see especially with the Stoics? Ethics today means a relation to the Other, but the Greeks thought of it as fundamentally a relation to oneself, a philosophy of the good life. Faced with crises like Coronavirus this brings up the fundamental question of whether death can be conceived of as a political and/or social question or whether it must always-already be personal first.

Flaviu-Victor Câmpean (Forum of the Lacanian Field, Romania):
The Lacanian "Biology" of the Event within the Age of Dailiness of Death

In *Joyce the Symptom*, the last Lacan defines the psychoanalytic symptom as an *event of the body*. We now live an exceptional time, in the perpetual proximity of a reality of death that it is impossible to grasp and to handle symbolically and even scientifically. Therefore, the question arises as to how the overlapping of this event with the political, the social and even the medically defined symptoms can maintain the uniqueness of the subject's life, death, and ultimately the timeliness of its uniquely defined *jouissance*. Since *jouissance* as such pertains to an *outside of meaning* (*hors-sens*) that is sustained by the equivocality of language, the authenticity of life and death cannot be attained without assuming the cut between the I of existence and the I of meaning that the Cartesian syllogism strived to stich up, according to Lacan. But the psychoanalytic symptom was already defined by Freud as the return of the repressed in the body, and Lacan agrees with this clinical stance while trying to re-read it in the context of his *biology of the event* and of an I-Body, which he thematizes in his later writings, mainly in his 23rd seminar, *Le sinthome*. Here, just like in the aforementioned writing, he approaches the problem of a body beyond the physiologically charged symptom, by way of James Joyce's creation. Hence the necessity of a new Ethic, one of the Other of language, of death as a variant of life

linked to the opaque *jouissance*, that holds on to the subject's own existence, without sinking into a daily necroscopy of the cadaveric spectacle that wears away the subject's singularity.

Maciej Kałuża (Polish Albert Camus Society):
   Oppression, liberty and the absurd: Can we imagine Sisyphus happy, when a factory robot took his job?

In one of the rare passages Camus devoted directly to the *oeuvre* of his mentor, Simone Weil, he remarked, that her passages "on the condition of the factory worker must be read in order to realize to what degree of moral exhaustion and silent despair the rationalization of labor can lead." Oppression of the worker, claimed Camus, rests both on social/economic deprivation and its negative impact on his/her dignity. Reduced to machine-like, repetitive work, underpaid and constantly threatened, the worker's fate is, to a large extent, absurd. Curiously, as scholars have already observed (Aronson 2004, Carroll 2007), *The Myth of Sisyphus* – especially the final part of Camus' 1942 essay, may be interpreted as a post-Marxist work. Carroll observes that Sisyphus' and factory workers' fates are similar: "his [Sisyphus'] condition is that of the worker in modern society, whose 'fate is no less absurd'" (Carroll 2007: 64-65). Understood through Camus' essay, the worker combines the lucidity of the mythical hero with the necessity of physical labor. As such, he may be seen as happy, even though he is alienated from the purpose of his work, as it is the work itself, not the end of his torment, that allows him to gain full consciousness of his condition, while simultaneously rebelling against the hope, inherent in any Marxist form of *Parousia*. 80 years later, the factory worker that Camus envisaged, basing on his studies of Weil, is being replaced by a factory machine, moving the mythical symbolization of worker's fate beyond the imagery of the "rationalization of labor" considered by existential thinkers. The image that needs consideration in the concluding part of my presentation is this: A Sisyphus, deprived of his labor by a new caprice of the gods, can now only observe his former struggle being automatically, effortlessly performed by a machine. Can we still imagine Sisyphus happy?

Mélissa Fox-Muraton (ESC Clermont/University Clermont Auvergne):
   Camus on the (im)possibility of a good life where others are in chains

"Freedom is a prison as long as one single individual is enslaved on Earth," wrote Albert Camus in his play *Les justes* (*The Just Assassins*), first performed in 1949. Camus was speaking of a particular historical context—that of pre-revolution Moscow and the 1905 insurrection, but also by extension that of the Second World War and the Shoah. Over seventy years later, the political landscape has changed, as has much of our daily life-world and many of our concerns; however, Camus' words still find an echo in our modern contexts. In a world where selfish desires, political powers, or socio-economic conditions produce inequalities and servitude, in a world where equal respect of all individuals and fair possibilities are not granted to all, how can any individual be free, how can any individual live a meaningful and authentic life? Camus' affirmation seems to echo Theodor Adorno's claim that there is no good/right life in a bad/wrong one—"*Es gibt kein richtiges Leben im falschen.*" What, indeed, can count as a good life, in a world where others live in such precarious situations that from the perspective of biopolitics, as Judith Butler claims, we can only say that their lives do not matter? The question of the good life, a fundamental question for moral philosophy, but also for each of us as existing human beings, seems to break down in the face of the radical injustices of our shared social sphere. Whatever value we may place on the ideals of humanity and human dignity, however much we may hold onto principles of justice and the intrinsic and inalienable value of human life, the empirical facts of human existence (present and past) confront us with the inescapable admission that not all lives matter equally, that not all individuals have a voice within our societies, that many people throughout the world live in conditions of subservience, poverty, or social invisibility, are victims of systemic discrimination or violence, and die of hunger because we cannot, or do not, provide for an equal or at least fair distribution of resources necessary for their subsistence. We may turn a blind eye

on the world around us, fail (or choose) not to see the sufferings of others, seek refuge in our interiority and our internal sentiment of freedom, flee our responsibilities, or resign ourselves to accept these inequalities. Yet we cannot escape the question: is there any freedom where others find themselves in chains? Is there any possibility for a good life when "life" itself is not a universal good?

Rajesh Sampath (Brandeis University):
>**An Existential and Continental Phenomenological Analysis of the European Crisis of the Times: A Reading of Heidegger, Hegel, and Derrida to unpack the intersections of Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and anti-immigration movements in continental Europe**

This paper begins with a treatment of death and time, particularly 'world-time' and the encounter with Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) in Division II of Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927). We then move to Derrida's later lectures on the death penalty (given in 1999-2001) and sovereignty (given in 2001-2003) as well as his earlier encounters with Heidegger in the 1965 lectures translated as *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History* (2019), which also treats Hegel's system. My hypothesis is that the Derrida's encounter with Heidegger and Heidegger's treatment of Hegel should be revisited so we can better understand the profound ontological conditions by which we understand epochs, temporality, and world-historical time in relation to 'crisis' today. Given the inevitable diversification of continental Europe from its nearly homogenous gentile white identity to increasingly more non-white, multicultural societies, we must try to unpack the complex dynamics stirring both the Islamophobia of the post 9/11 historical period and the post-WWII recurrence of anti-Semitism today. The volume titled *Judeities: Question for Jacques Derrida* (2005) will also be fruitful, particularly the opening chapter by Derrida titled "Abraham, the Other." To truly understand the potential eclipse of pure whiteness that has constituted the European identity, at least for Hegel in his lectures on the *Philosophy of World History* (1830), since the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans to decolonization and dissolution of the European empires in the twentieth century is a daunting task. My specific philosophical, not historical or sociological, question is this: why is there such an atavistic ressentiment - to use the Nietzschean concept from his *Genealogy of Morals* (1887) - in ultra-right wing white nationalist movements and political parties when constructing and encountering the Other. This means not reproducing Nietzsche's views about 'aristocratic' values and 'weak slave morality' in his times when the 'good-bad' distinction mutated in to the 'good-evil' distinction; but rather a transference of the idea of ressentiment from out of his text to a new one- as the underpinning for the deepest motivations of white ethno-nationalism today, particularly in the Europe and the U.S. White nationalism is fundamentally rooted in this shift to ressentiment. In response to it, we can ask about a counter historical future and moral inclusivity of difference. What does it mean to say that Islam and Judaism should, is, and will be a permanent fixture of the European fabric, which would then mean a total reinvention of the idea of white Christian Europe itself? By reading Derrida on Heidegger, we hope to philosophize about these ontological conditions beyond what is merely offered in the texts of either Derrida or Heidegger. Their historical present is not the same as ours.

Alycia LaGuardia-LoBianco (Grand Valley State University):
>**Repairing Moral Damage Through Self-regarding Resistance**

Though not as immediately materially damaging as other forms of oppression like violence or economic exploitation, psychological oppression is nonetheless a deeply painful and harmful part of some victims' lives. The effects of psychological oppression can include internalizing stereotypes and feelings of inferiority about one's social group, which can erode a victim's sense of self-worth and create a "fragmented" self that competes with the victim's authentic self (Bartky 1990). Additionally, prolonged internalization of the objectifying gaze of the oppressor can occlude one's sense of subjectivity, thus serving to freeze one into an object with few perceived avenues of choice (Beauvoir 2011, 1976). By design, this moral damage can hamper a victim's resistance to her own oppression,

for instance by obscuring the systemic causes of oppression or through a belief that one actually deserves their suffering, so there is nothing and no reason to resist. I argue that existentialist resources can help victims repair the moral damage of psychological oppression by way of cultivating self-regarding resistance. Drawing on Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist ethics and Sandra Lee Bartky's phenomenological account of psychological oppression, I argue that self-regarding resistance to oppression can be one way to help repair moral damage when it involves asserting the subjectivity that is systemically denied to victims. That is, recognition and exercise of one's own agency *is* a form of resistance. However, because moral damage may be deep and victims may have trouble recognizing themselves as subjects to begin with, I argue that one way to start cultivating self-regarding resistance is, somewhat paradoxically, to help other victims repair their own moral damage. Applying Beauvoir's argument that my own freedom can only truly be realized when I recognize the freedom of others, I hold that the reverse is also true: recognizing the subjectivity of other victims—and helping them exercise their agency—can be a way to recognize and exercise my *own* subjectivity. Self-regarding resistance ends up being a shared effort. Taking up a project of resistance as a recognition of one's own freedom and subjectivity can thus offer a way to repair a central part of what oppression tries to take from victims.

Joshua Livingstone (Queen's University):
Hannah Arendt and the Dynamics of Imagination

Hannah Arendt is well known for her insights into the various activities and faculties that shape human existence: labour, work, action, thinking, willing, judging, understanding, and so on. Yet, there is one faculty for which she is curiously quiet—the imagination. This silence appears especially strange given her two bold claims, first in *Lying in Politics* that lying and action "owe their existence to the same source: imagination" and later in *The Life of the Mind* that "Every mental act rests on the […] imagination" While it is clear that the imagination plays a fundamental role in both the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*, it is not clear how we are to understand this essential but obscure mental faculty. What is it and how does it work? Mining Arendt's sporadic but potent references to the imagination, I argue that it functions by enacting a twofold *breaking and bridging* that establishes a temporary space of protection from the converging forces of time and place. To imagine, for Arendt, is to shatter the unity of our self enclosed ways of being while simultaneously bridging the gaps between absence and presence, self and other, self and world. Exploring the dynamics of imagination in Arendt's work, we gain insight into her banister-less approach to thinking as both a response to crisis and the ground for change.

Sebastien Hüsch (University Aix Marseille):
Spiritlessness. On the timeliness of Søren Kierkegaard's reflections on the Self between probability and possibility

One of the most suggestive and provocative concepts developed by the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard is the concept of "spiritlessness." Spiritlessness is conceived of as a state of mind which eliminates transcendent *possibilities*, replacing them with reduced immanent *probabilities*. A reality reduced to mere probabilities, however, hinders the individual from becoming a true Self. The proposed paper will defend the claim that Kierkegaard's conceptualization of "spiritlessness" can be considered as highly insightful for addressing major problems and challenges the individual has to face in the construction of a meaningful self in the framework of 21st century reality. Based upon the Kierkegaardian distinction between the categories of "possibility" and "probability," I will argue that the focus on probabilities, raised to an almost paradigmatic category in contemporary discourse, brings forth an erosion of meaningfulness, whereas the category of possibility can provide a framework the construction of the self can build on productively

Jakub Marek (Charles University):

Existential Anthropology and the Problem of Dignity in Caring for Alzheimer's patients

At the height of the COVID pandemic, most national health systems came close to a collapse, eventually rationing and limiting healthcare to their patients. The quality of treatment, its scope and fairness, have deteriorated below the usual standards. In my presentation, I wish to present the case of Alzheimer's disease patients who – as evidence (for the Czech republic) suggests – were among the most affected by a disrespectful or undignified care. The dignity of a person in medical care depends on a variety of factors, such as the dignity of merit, the dignity of moral or existential stature, the dignity of identity and universal human dignity (*Menschenwürde*) (Nordenfelt, 2004). The "existential stature" here relates to "dignity tied to one's own intentionality and actions but necessarily related to morality in the normal interactive sense" (ibid., p. 74). Let me ask the obvious question: Would an Alzheimer's patient fit the bill of such "dignity"? In medical care, other definitions or points of view (dignity of merit, for example) stress the necessity of treating such patients with dignity. But what about Kierkegaard? Does the existential anthropology of Kierkegaard, or perhaps of Jaspers or even Heidegger, allow for dignified care for a patient suffering from dementia and effectively not knowing who they are? Does existential anthropology truly take into account the case of "medically" inauthentic persons who suffer without being morally accountable for their illness?

Jakub Gomułka (Pedagogical University of Kraków):

A radical change of worldview: extra-systemic arguments and rationality of emotions

In the paper given at the previous installment of the 'Existential Philosophy for Times of Change and Crisis,' I argued that a part of our job as philosophers is to free people from certain misleading images of how they change each other's minds. I utilized Wittgenstein's fictitious story about the king and Moore from *On Certainty* to pose the question of inter-systemic disputes. The main problem of the paper was the possibility of rational argumentation between different systems of beliefs formed around different collections of 'hinge propositions,' that is, beliefs that cannot be further justified. I put forward the thesis that such argumentation is actually possible, although not in the light of a traditional conception of rationality as a calculus or an ideal machine governed by unbreakable rules. I argued that such a mechanistic image of rationality should be rejected. What I proposed instead was a Wittgenstein-inspired intuition of rationality rooted in a 'form of life' interpreted 'as something animal' (*On Certainty*, §359), something that lies beneath our systems of hinge propositions and expresses itself in emotional primitive reactions. This time, my goal is to elucidate that intuition. Its key element is the idea that emotions are indispensable in making any decision, so they must contribute to rational decision-making too. I would like to merge this idea – which is actually not new and has been explored previously by a number of cognitive researchers, including Robert Audi, Antonio Damasio or Ronald de Sousa – with the Kantian conception of rationality as the faculty of spontaneity and the Sellarsian view that reasons are inevitably propositional. What emerges from all these considerations is the question of human freedom and its conditions of possibility. I will defend the view that one of them is language.

Timur Cengiz Uçan (Bordeau Montaigne University):

Liberatory practices of philosophy in an age of extractivism

What can philosophy and its practice bring to us and us to it, in an age of extractivism? As explained recently both by Gudynas and Bednik, extractivism is a central notion, if not the central notion, of our times to understand anew old challenges and also new ones facing us in philosophy if we endeavour to understand it existentially. Extractivism can be understood as the ideology according to which resources must necessarily be extracted, whatever the consequences. And many structural problems with which we are confronted, such as conflicts for resources, alleged attempts of legitimatizing such

conflicts, forced migrations, structural racism and sexism are inherently related to this ideology. Given the diversity of interrelated problems and aspects of extractivism, it can seem almost unthinkable to address these problems at once, to propose a generic and unified way of addressing them. I want to show that elements of a generic and unified way of addressing these problems simultaneously can be found in the philosophies of Sartre, Wittgenstein, Cavell, and in some contemporary ways of reading their works. Freedom, responsibility and equality are three notions that are internally linked in an adequate conception of liberation. In particular, I want to make explicit the fact that liberation ought to be understood as a practice, and that it is through such understanding of liberation as practice that internal relations between problems inherently related to extractivism can be understood, and that both conceptual dissolution of the conceptual problem, and practical resolutions of practical problems, can be envisaged.

Patrick Miller (University of South Florida):
> **The Ethical Call towards the Third Party: Levinas and Disgust during the Pandemic**

Levinas famously described the experience of encountering the face of the other. In this encounter, one hears a demand to not harm or kill the other. Levinas' phenomenology explicates this experience that grounds his ethics as first philosophy. However, I argue that life during the pandemic has led to an inversion of this call. The United States Centers of Disease Control has encouraged wearing masks while in public to curb the spread of Covid-19. Many individuals have refused to do so. I find myself being disgusted when encountering a naked face in public. The exposure of the other's face does not reveal a call to recognize vulnerability but evokes disdain. This visceral disdain is rooted in a disgust with a failure to recognize the call of the others. Ironically, I still acknowledge the vulnerability of others when the face in donning a mask. Levinas does discuss the possibility of seeing "the face" in locations of than the literal face. However, this disdain in response to the face is different; it is rooted in this face denying the call of other. Levinas does not explore the potential of disgust in his ethics. Disgust can lead to a greater recognition of the ethical demand towards the third party. Levinas describes the third party as interfering with the ethical of the face-to-face. This interference transforms the ethical into political considerations. However, this experience of disgust in the face of the other, in these unique times, indicates that the political influence of the third party can alter the ethical call. You can still recognize the ethical call but experience disgust for another that ignores the call of a third party. This does not alter Levinas' ethical, but does expand the reach of his understanding of the political.

Shai Frogel (Kibbutzim College of Education & Tel Aviv University):
> **Fear and Anxiety**

Traditional philosophy since Socrates sees fear as the central obstacle in the way of ethical improvement. The existentialists follow this tradition but see fear not only as an obstacle but also as a characterization of authentic existence. In one of Kierkegaard's central books, entitled *Fear and Trembling*, he attempts showing that Abraham's fear and trembling is a precondition for existential elevation. Sartre also sees fear as a positive state of mind when it is an anxiety resulting from the awareness of our freedom. Our capability to act from this state of mind rather than escape from it by self-deception is, according to Sartre, the key to authentic life. For Heidegger, it is important to distinguish between fear and anxiety for distinguishing between authentic and inauthentic states of the *Dasein*. Fear is of something particular whereas anxiety is nothing in particular, but being in the world, and as such it is an authentic state of the *Dasein* which manifests both its contingency and freedom in the world. The claim of the paper is that in times of crisis, when existential fears can turn into feelings of terror, existentialism can illuminate the potential for turning it into authentic anxiety. Terror is defined in the paper as a state of mind in which one is paralyzed by fears and loses the sense

of freedom. It is an inauthentic mode of existence and a fruitful ground for authoritative and oppressive politics. Anxiety, on the other hand, is an authentic mode of existence since it confronts us with our contingency and freedom. It can bring about existential confusion and distress but also, as existential philosophy shows, existential and ethical achievements. The paper uses Heidegger's idea of care, Camus' idea of absurd freedom and Sartre's link between freedom and responsibility to advance this thesis.

Chloe Nicole D. Piamonte (Polytechnic University of the Philippines):
Revisiting the Sartrean View on Love for Times of Change and Crisis

In *Being and Nothingness,* Sartre advances the third facet of *being* entrenched in his notion of freedom—being-for-others (*l'être pour autrui*). Humans as free are thrown into the world full of other people who are equally characterized by their being free. With this, Sartre argues that conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others because to be in relation with all others is to struggle against *another freedom*. Sartre's 1944 play, "No Exit", portrays what hell is like, that is, simply to be trapped in the presence of others. Attempts to unite with an Other are doomed to fail. This is the same with loving relationships. For Sartre, in love, one wants to be loved by a freedom but demands that such freedom should no longer be free. It is in the primacy of the project of unification with the Other that makes it bound to failure. It is interesting to revisit an existentialist view on love amid an era of change and crisis brought by the coronavirus pandemic. Nationwide lockdowns, community quarantines, and physical distancing were among the initial safety measures implemented in many countries. We are forced to embrace a new norm where we will be separated from all others and thereby limit our projects of unification. This paper inquires on the (im)possibility of loving relationships at a time where separation is necessary. If our freedom is, in a sense, restricted, would it mean that conflict with the Other could be avoided? Or could this separation with the Other rather induce more conflict? This paper maintains that whatever the set-up, conflict remains to be the essential structure of being-for-others. This claim will be grounded on Sartre's notion of being-for-others and revisit its creative portrayal in his play, "No Exit". To end, it will be shown that the Sartrean view on love is relevant today more than ever.

William C. Pamerleau (University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg):
Being-in-the-World and Being-with-Coronavirus: a Heideggerian Analysis of Life During the Pandemic

For Heidegger, human experience is about being-in-the-world: our manner of relating to things and people reveals the nature of the world as it is experienced and at the same time constitutes the nature of the self. And while our life as we disclose it is historically situated and contingent, we do not usually see it as such. Rather, from our average, everyday engagement in the world we consider it all as given facts. This way of being is inauthentic; we accept and conform to the meanings others have established. It is possible, however, to engage the world authentically, whereby we own and affirm our manner of engagement. Authenticity, however, often requires something to alter our accustomed perspective and remind us of the contingent nature of being-in-the-world. What effect, then, might the pandemic, which so markedly disrupts our everydayness, have on that accustomed perspective? Faced with the inability to carry out our normal way of relating to the people and things, one reaction is to retain our accustomed perspective, and covid conditions would be seen as a disruption – something to wait out until we can return to normal. Our experience is then one of loss or separation from the engagement that continues to define us. But another possible reaction is to become aware of alternative ways of being in the world and the contingency of what we had taken for granted, thereby adopting a more authentic, and more meaningful, perspective. In fact, data from psychological studies on this issue as well as anecdotal accounts confirm both outcomes. Heidegger's philosophy, in sum, provides an effective means of understanding reactions to pandemic conditions and how they can

range from loss and meaninglessness on the one hand to newly found (or at least newly appreciated) and more authentic meanings on the other.

Skye Cleary (Barnard College and City College of New York):
  Simone de Beauvoir and the Responsibility of Privilege

For Simone de Beauvoir, an authentically meaningful life is one that opens out into an endless and immense sky, but all too often our surges are broken by oppressive bonds which creates a moral emergency. Everyone benefits from getting rid of oppression because every person's freedom is a condition of, and amplifies, everyone else's. Authentic freedom surges up with and in relation to others. However, Beauvoir argues in *The Second Sex*, "justice can never be created within injustice," and so long as oppression exists, the authentic response is rebellion—social and political struggle—against unjust structures and towards creating new foundation of the world: on human freedom instead of domination and suppression. This transformation is, according to Beauvoir, the real task of feminism. But how do we act both authentically and ethically, that is, in a way that doesn't trample on others, so that everyone can fully assume the human condition? This is especially problematic when so many mystifications push all of us to accept the status quo, and when for many women, as attorney and political philosopher Rafia Zakaria points out, resilience is more feminist than rebellion? The answer is: with great difficulty. This paper aims to construct a few guide posts, inspired by Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, to help shed light on this challenge. It draws on examples of some of the most harmful mystifications of our time—such as gaslighting, conspiracy theories, fake news, and fascism—and contextualizes the responsibility of those in privileged positions who, like myself and and unlike people who are multiply oppressed, have no excuses for participating in and complying with oppression. To know, and still to be complicit, is to act in bad faith.

William Parkhurst (University of South Florida):
  Nietzsche in the Anthropocene: Archival Evidence, Climate Ethics, and Future Generations

For Nietzsche, plagues and epidemics point to a deeper phenomenon in human psychology. In plagues we both pity and are repulsed by those who are sick. We fail to attain true compassion because we dehumanize, pity, and blame the sick. However, this reaction points to the more primordial existential phenomenon we are avoiding: disgust [*ekel*] with human finitude itself. Nietzsche suggests that epidemics and plagues (such as the Black Death pandemic) reveal one's character and can provide the catalyst to change it. In drafts of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* it is a plague that triggers Zarathustra to overcome his disgust with human finitude and feel authentic compassion for future generations. The coronavirus crisis today provides us the rare opportunity to prepare for what Nietzsche saw as authentic compassion. New archival evidence has revealed that Nietzsche argued for an extramoral reason to care about future generations in his drafts of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. An analysis of the genesis of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* reveals the following line. "To discern the conditions under which future humans will live - because such *discernment* and *anticipation* have the **force** *of a motive*: *the future*, as something that we *will, acts* upon our now" (Nietzsche 2019, 7[6]. p.212). In extramoral thinking, it is our anticipation of the future itself that motivates, shapes, and attunes our values today. An extramoral kind of thinking would understand the value of the present as a consequent of our magnanimity towards the future. This love of creators towards future generations is a kind of extramoral temporal magnanimity. Coronavirus, therefore, offers us not only an existential wake up call, but also the opportunity to foster an authentic compassion. Such authentic compassion would force us to confront how our decisions today negatively impact future generations. Perhaps the most significant issue we would have to address is how our actions contribute to climate change and its destructive effect on future generations.