UK Sartre Society conference 2022

Maison Française d'Oxford

4 – 5 July

Schedule and Abstracts

Monday 4th July

Room 1	*Room 2*
1.00 Registration	
	1.10 – 3.00 ***Les Jeux sont faits*** film screening

– Coffee –

Room 1	*Room 2*
3.20-4.00 **Ambiguity, Freedom, and Virtue:** **Reading Simone de Beauvoir as a Virtue Ethicist** David Collins (University of Oxford)	3.20-4.00 **Reapproaching Sartre:** **New Developments in the Reception of Sartre's Thinking** Alfred Betschart (independent scholar)
4.00-4.40 **Complicity in One's Oppression** **as an Ethical Fault** Filipa Melo Lopes (University of Edinburgh)	4.00-4.40 **Sartre's Theology-Proof** **Ontology** Matthew C. Eshleman (UNC Wilmington)

4.50-6.00
Keynote Address

Beauvoir and the Greeks:
Tragedy, Philosophy, History
Meryl Altman
(DePauw University)

Room 1	Room 2

10.00-10.40
Pictures of Parenthood and Childhood
in Sartrean Existentialism
Ciro Adinolfi
(Catholic Institute of Toulouse)

10.00-10.40
Thinking Shyness
Through Sartre
Darren Gillies
(independent scholar)

– Coffee –

11.00-11.40
Exalting Black Thought: Jean-Paul Sartre's Commitment to
Black Existence and Black Liberation
LaRose T. Parris
(Lehman College, City University of New York)

11.00-11.40
Sartre's Simple Indeterminism
Joshua Tepley
(St Anselm College)

11.40-12.20
Dismantling Fused Groups:
A Sartrean Account of Political Solidarity
Maria Russo and Francesco Tava
(MR: Vita-Salute San Raffaele University, Milan)
(FT:University of the West of England)

11.40-12.20
Lived Value and the Experiential Self:
An Alternative Account of Pre-Reflective Self-Consciousness
Robin Pawlett-Howell
(University of York)

– Lunch –

1.00
UK Sartre Society
AGM

– Coffee –

1.40-2.20
Reading Simone de Beauvoir's Old Age in the 21st Century:
Is this critical essay still relevant?
Marlene Bichet
(independent scholar)

1.40-2.20
Identifying with the Reflected Object:
Theoretical Relevance of the Mirror Theme in *Huis clos*
Simone Villani
(Università degli Studi di Padova)

2.20-3.00
Sartre's and Beauvoir's
Divergent Philosophies of Death
Kiki Berk
(Southern New Hampshire University)

2.20-3.00
On "l'état cadavérique de l'âme": Medical Discourse and the
Representation of Subjectivity in *Le Mur*
Louise Mai
(Sorbonne Université)

– Coffee –

3.30-4.10
Writing and Reading Existentially: Sartrean *Littérature*
***Engagée* as a Framework for Literary Theory and Criticism**
Danielle Cervantes Stephens
(Point Loma Nazarene University)

4.20-5.30
Keynote Address
The Other of the 'I': Deleuze and Sartre on
the Transcendental Field
Henry Somers-Hall
(Royal Holloway, University of London)

Pictures of Parenthood and Childhood in Sartrean Existentialism
Ciro Adinolfi

Sartre's ideas of parenthood evolve during his life. What does not change is the role assigned to parents: they forge, they impose, they constitute. There are many ways in which Sartre explained it. However, apart from the theoretical instruments used, which present the problem from different points of view, what remains is a sensation of impossibility. It is not possible to overcome this relationship, because we live in it. It is not possible to negate this relationship, because we derive from it. It is not possible to destroy this relationship, because we are its results. Freedom feels trapped, caged, limited. This could not be dialectically surpassed. The first moment of our work wants to describe this, in order to comprehend the ground in which a possibility is nevertheless possible.

In fact, parenthood is not an essence, but a relationship with childhood. Moreover, we think that they are two sides of a coin: filiation. We mean that a parent could exist only in the light of the birth of a child and, vice versa, a child receives his or her dimension of son or daughter only in the parent eyes. This fact could not be overcome, negated, destroyed. Nonetheless, in this point, freedom is no longer trapped, caged, limited, if we assume that this look does not want to constitute, but to open freedom to its possibilities. In this point there is a space of freedom, a chance. Evidently, our purpose is only a possibility rooted in the ethics of freedom and in the description of authentic love we found in Sartre's Notebooks. It could not happen and, in many cases, it happens exactly the contrary. But the only fact that it could exist pushes us to rethink the relationship between parents and children on this level. The second moment of our presentation tries to describe this situation, from which could derive a possible existentialist ethic of family.

Sartre indeed gives us few elements to think about the existence of some spaces of freedom in these relationships. Our aim is to explore those spaces, because we argue that, starting from Sartrean existentialist concept of parent-child relationship, it is possible to think about a positive ethics of family, grounded in the ethics of freedom. Simply put, with the look we mentioned above, what is exactly recognised? Not the body, not the individual, not the biological dimension of child, but him or her as born freedom. In a certain sense, parents make visible what is already existing: individual as conscience. But in a deeper sense, they recognise the existence of a temporalisation that exceed their recognition. A temporalisation that they could forge and constitute with their impositions, as mainly happens. Or, and this is the point of our last part, parents could recognise this temporalisation as something to protect, to promote and encourage, if their look is guided by authentic Sartrean love conception.

Sartre's and Beauvoir's Divergent Philosophies of Death

Kiki Berk

Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir developed much of their philosophies together and, as a result, hold many of the same views. When it comes to the topics of aging, death, immortality, and the meaning of life, however, their views diverge substantially. For example, whereas Sartre thinks that mortality impedes the ability to give our lives meaning, Beauvoir thinks that life is meaningful only because we die. In addition, Beauvoir thinks that an immortal life would be meaningless, whereas Sartre holds that an immortal life would remain meaningful (because finitude is grounded in freedom rather than in death). Sartre and Beauvoir also have very different evaluations of aging, which Beauvoir considers to be much worse than Sartre does; and their conceptions of absurdity differ, too. These sharply defined differences between Sartre's and Beauvoir's views of death and related topics have received virtually no attention in the literature. This omission is especially surprising given how much effort has been spent trying to find daylight between their views on a variety of subjects. This paper aims to remedy this omission by comparing and contrasting Sartre's and Beauvoir's views on each of these aspects of our finitude: aging, death, immortality, and meaning.

Reapproaching Sartre: New Developments in the Reception of Sartre's Thinking

Alfred Betschart

The most innovative idea in Sartre's theory of literature was that every literary opus is created twice, first by its author and a second time by its readers. This concept must also be applied to Sartre's philosophy.

At least three different stages can be distinguished in the reception of Sartre's philosophy. In a first period between 1945 and 1970, Sartrean existentialism was received as a philosophy of absolute freedom and engagement. After its rapid decline in the second half of the 1960s, the concept of Marxist existentialism began to dominate our view of existentialism. With the fall of communism around 1990 and the descent of Marxism into irrelevance and with the rise in importance of Notebooks for an Ethics, Antisemite and Jew and Black Orpheus, Sartrean existentialism was now received more as a kind of humanist ethics.

In the last twenty years, a new approach to Sartre's thought has developed in French-speaking countries, supported in part by authors from German-speaking countries. This approach focuses on the early Sartre before 1933/1940. This new approach has unfortunately received little attention in the English-speaking world, although it offers a great opportunity for scholarly research on Sartre (one of the few English-speaking researchers going in this direction is Kirkpatrick). The most important researchers in Belgium and France are Coorebyter, Cormann and Flajoliet. On the one hand, they have published texts by Sartre that were previously inaccessible to most researchers, e.g. important texts from Sartre's time at the ENS such as his master thesis and Empédocle, which, together with the largely neglected Écrits de jeunesse already published in 1990 and Shuzo Kuki's notebook, cast a new picture of Sartre's early philosophical development.

On the other hand, Coorebyter and his fellow researchers have written several texts in which they examine the early influences of Bergson, Mauss, Jaspers, but also of Sartre's teachers Delacroix, Alain and Brunschvicg. They also analysed Sartre's philosophical life in the 1930s, when he moved in an environment strongly influenced by Wahl, Koyré and other philosophers interested in German (and to some extent American) philosophy. Sartre is said to have been part of an Alsatian community at the ENS. These theses are confirmed by the results of conferences in Germany on Sartre and Jaspers, Nietzsche and William James respectively.

In a letter to Beauvoir in 1940, Sartre wrote that his new philosophy – to be published later as L'être et le néant -- bore no resemblance to Husserl and Heidegger, but rather to his thinking before 1933. The new texts published by Coorebyter and his colleagues open a path to a new reception of Sartre's thought in the spirit of this letter and an interview Sartre gave in 1975 for Schilpp's Library of Living Philosophers series, which constitutes a kind of philosophical testament to Sartre. Together with François Noudelmann's recent book Un tout autre Sartre, these publications by Coorebyter and his colleagues will lead to many of our old convictions ending up in the dustbin.

Reading Simone de Beauvoir's Old Age in the 21st Century: Is this critical essay still relevant?

Marlene Bichet

In France, the topic of ageing, and in particular women ageing, is omnipresent, with the recent publications of Laure Adler's La voyageuse de nuit (2020) and Josiane Asmane's Les fleurs de l'âge (2021), but also with the incriminating report Les fossoyeurs by Victor Castanet (2022). It seems indeed that the elderly are more visible than when Beauvoir published her groundbreaking essay.

However, has the general attitude towards old people (and especially older women) changed for the better? Would Beauvoir's revolt against the treatment of the elderly still ring true nowadays? More than fifty years after the publication of La vieillesse (1970), what legacy remains from this multidisciplinary work of historical, social and philosophical research?

This paper aims to show that Old Age (1972) is as relevant now as it was five decades ago. The global health crisis triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic even makes Beauvoir's study painfully acute and emphasizes the urgency to (re)read it.

Countless reforms of the pension system, ageism and a refusal to accept death are the price society pays for failing to "change life", as Beauvoir urged us to do. A comparison of her analysis with the current situation of elderly people will further show the relevance of reading Old Age in the 21st century.

Moreover, Beauvoir's assessment of the experience of ageing is timeless. Her existentialist and phenomenological interpretation is a welcome reminder of how ageing affects us in many ways. Beauvoir's reflection on how ageing influences our sense of identity is fascinating and timely, as recent work by Chris Gilleard (2022) shows.

In addition, Old Age provided a trailblazing account of the importance of gender when tackling ageing. The author of The Second Sex (1953) explains how inequalities between men and women persist in old age and how society holds an even harsher judgment on older women. This issue has been recently pointed out by Mona Chollet in her acclaimed In Defense of Witches (2022), in which she associates witch-hunts with the pervading misogyny old women encounter.

That feminist stance has also been studied under the prism of Existentialism, as Beauvoir shows that women, just like old people, are seen as the Other, thus doubly punishing old women. Tove Pettersen states indeed that 'ageism comes in addition to sexism' (Pettersen 2020).

The paper will develop those points to demonstrate the significance of Beauvoir's Old Age in our current time.

Writing and Reading Existentially:

Sartrean Littérature Engagée as a Framework for Literary Theory and Criticism

Danielle Cervantes Stephens

Sartrean existentialism has been cast as philosophy, ontology, ethics, epistemology, aesthetics, metaphysics, and even psychotherapy, but rarely as a literary theory or criticism. Furthermore, despite the millennia-long relationship between literature and existential themes, existentialism has hardly captured the same scholarly attention as other twentieth century+ approaches like postmodernism, deconstructionism, feminism, poststructuralism, and postcolonialism. Even more overlooked by the discipline is Sartrean littérature engagée, which this paper attempts to mitigate by centering committed literature on the eve of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the publication of Qu'est-ce-que la littérature? (QQLL 1947-48).

Parallel to QQLL and several chapters from Being and Nothingness, this study mines a broad intertextual reading of Sartre's corpus, including the essential essay Anti-Semite and Jew, the literary theory of "Orphée Noir," the lecture "La Responsabilité de l'Écrivain," multiple plays and novels about writers or writing, his autobiography Les Mots, and his biographies of literary figures like Genet and Flaubert.

This analysis yields a hexagonal cadre of six characteristics for Sartrean littérature engagée: [1] a tightly defined scope of appropriate genres and literary styles that best communicate existential themes; [2] an authorial intention of releasing the work for public consumption; [3] a tangible danger or risk to either the writer, readers, or characters; [4] a critique of a contemporary oppressive situation; [5] an ontological reckoning by narrators or characters with subjectivity, being-for-others, or being-in-the-world; and [6] an exploration by narrators or characters of existential themes such as freedom, choice, embodiment, responsibility, bad faith, and authenticity.

Sartre's corpus braids philosophy, literature, and engagement into a single onto-existential ligne rouge. In his hands, those threads offer not only a specific theory and practice for littérature engagée but a more universal method and framework for Sartrean literary theory and criticism in general: writing and reading existentially—a mode of bloodless violence, a concrete praxis of authenticity, and a potent antidote for mauvaise foi.

Ambiguity, Freedom, and Virtue: Reading Simone de Beauvoir as a Virtue Ethicist
David Collins

Beauvoir's ethical thought—especially as developed in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, but also in earlier works such as *Pyrrhus and Cinéas*—has remained almost entirely outside the purview of moral philosophers. This, I contend, has been a missed opportunity, both for moral theorizing and for understanding Beauvoir as a significant philosopher in her own right. This paper aims to bring Beauvoir's ethics into the contemporary moral philosophy conversation, as it were, by showing that her thought shares a number of concerns and contains several points of compatibility with the neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical tradition pioneered by Elizabeth Anscombe and others. A second aim is to show how a dialogue between Beauvoir's ethical thought and neo- Aristotelian virtue ethics can be mutually informative and illuminating for both views.

Recent scholarship on Beauvoir or on existentialism has hinted that Beauvoir's ethics can be seen as a kind of virtue ethics (Christine Daigle), suggested that it has a eudaimonistic focus (Jonathan Webber), or drawn parallels between the role of exemplars in both Beauvoir's and virtue ethical thought (Kate Kirkpatrick). This paper expands on these suggestions by fleshing out the parallels and showing a number of the ways in which her ethics is, or is compatible with, a virtue- based approach along the lines of Aristotle's. Specifically, the compatibilities I will discuss include Beauvoir's agent-centred (as opposed to action-centred) focus, her critiques of other ethical theories such as consequentialism and deontology, and her insistence of the non-codifiability of ethics into rules or principles for action, all of which she shares with Anscombe. I will also argue for a connection between the role Aristotle gives to *prohairesis* (choice) in virtue and what Beauvoir calls willing moral freedom, and between Beauvoir's insistence that to authentically will one's own freedom one must will the freedom of others and the relational dependence of virtue— i.e., the need for (at least some) others to be virtuous in order to develop and maintain virtue oneself. Ultimately, I hope to sketch the outlines of an existentialist virtue ethics that is similar on many points with, but is also importantly distinct from, neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics.

Sartre's Theology-Proof Ontology

Matthew C. Eshleman

In recent years we have witnessed a growing body of work on the relationship between religious philosophers and their influence upon (or relation to) Sartre's early work, for example, Augustine (Kirkpatrick, 2015, 2017), Aquinas (Wang, 2009), and Kierkegaard (Kirkpatrick, 2017, Khawaja, 2016). These writers all emphasize how religious language – nothingness, fallenness, sin, conversion, deliverance, salvation, etc. – play important roles in Sartre's vintage existentialism. Indeed, after reading these authors, one might wonder whether and to what extent Sartre was a 'secular theologian' (Kirkpatrick, 2017), ascribed to a 'Godless theology' (Liu, 2019), or wonder whether Sartre's own distinction between theistic and atheistic existentialism holds any water (Khawaja, 2016). Thomas King (1974) anticipated this contemporary trend and summarizes its spirit: 'the writings of Sartre are left with an overriding theological character that often seems to be unaffected by the atheism that he professes' (xi). This paper argues against this claim. It unfolds in two parts.

Part One develops two features of Sartre's ontology recalcitrant to traditional theology. First, Sartre's most compelling argument against God's existence inverts the cosmological argument and centers on ontological or brute contingency and its incompatibility with a necessary being (citation). Sartre also shows that the classic theistic assumption of a rational universe entails the counterintuitive consequence that all facts would be necessary, a view increasingly appreciated in contemporary philosophy of science. Second, it should be unsurprising that a rationally ordered, theistic universe would admit special properties (Parfit, 1992): being the best (Leibniz), ordered in the highest degree (Augustine), and normatively structured in a hierarchical way (Plato, Anslem, Augustine, Aquinas). Sartre rejects these special properties. Sartre's ontological egalitarianism entails that no being is intrinsically superior to any other. These two features (brute ineffability and metaphysical equality) comprise what I call Sartre's 'theology proof ontology'.

Part Two examines the relationship between Sartre's ontology and his moral psychology, with a focus on religious vocabulary. It shows that in almost every case Sartre either radically revalues traditional Christian values (in the spirit of Nietzsche) or aims to give non-metaphysical, non-naturalistic explanations of common "religious" experiences. As Jonathan Webber observes, Sartre's notion of bad faith plays a similar role to that of original sin, insofar as bad faith explains how epistemic distortion underlies inauthenticity (2009, p. 143-144). Indeed, bad faith finds its ontological roots in the fundamental desire to be God, where "Christian theology has traditionally maintained that Satan and Adam sinned in willing to be like God" (Hopkins, 115). Ironically, then, religious faith is grounded in self-deception and comprises our 'original sin.' Sartre's undeveloped ethic aims to deliver us from our fundamental god-project and convert us to an arduous atheism. For many this requires existential psychoanalysis. In short, to say that Sartre is an 'Augustinian atheist' (Kirkpatrick, 2015) is akin to saying that Nietzsche was an 'Aquinian.' Misleading at best.

Thinking Shyness Through Sartre

Darren Gillies

Shyness is often studied through second-person accounts or considered to strictly be a reserved attitude in response to something present. I will show that shyness is more accurately an anticipation of shame when it is understood through Sartre's (2003, 2018[1943]) account of being-with-Others. Shyness will be shown to be, more specifically, a retreat from the risk posed to the possibility of a consensual relation that we desire to be in with the Other, where that risk is the Other's rejection of the possibility of that relation.

The first stage of the discussion engages the first moment of Sartre's account of being-with-the-Other: standing in the Other's look we become object-for-the-Other, and our possibilities become probabilities while becoming a possibility for the Other. Therein I make sustained engagement with Sartre's peeping tom scenario, showing that the structure of shyness, and its temporal structure, are already implicit in the scenario. When the latter stage of the scenario, the hesitance to flee to the dark corner, is referred back to the former stage of the scenario, being caught peeping through the keyhole, these structures are made explicit. The motivation of shyness as an avoidance of a future shame is made clear: to avoid standing before the Other as being-the-one-who-was-rejected and being-the-one-who-was-not-fascinating-enough-for-you (the Other).

The second stage introduces Sartre's second moment of being-with-Others: our resuming our subjectivity by recognising the Other as object-for-me and forming new possibilities that surpass the Other's look. This, however, is antithetical to establishing a relation of consensus. For, establishing a consensual relation necessarily requires that it become a probability for us, and a possibility for the Other, so that the Other is recognised as subject and thus their freedom to accept or reject it respected. Seeking to establish a consensual relation is thus shown to necessarily involve the risk of its own demise, since it requires the Other's freedom but the Other's freedom poses an existential threat to it. As such, it is in realising this risk that shy or bold behaviour arises.

The final stage discusses our being compelled to choose how to respond to the risk, for its being an unavoidable imposition on our project: to retreat from the risk, in shyness, or confront it, in boldness. Our response is also our choosing a value of the desired relation in the face of the risk: to retreat is to sanctify the desired relation, while it is trivialised by our confronting the risk. Additionally, our acts are affective upon the ground of the desired relation, our current relations with the Other: to retreat is to attempt to preserve the ground, while it is endangered by our confronting the risk. I lastly discuss some particular responses, classifiable as shyness (meekness, making oneself absent and 'proceeding inconspicuously') or boldness (irony, 'masquerading in the guise of shyness' and honesty).

Complicity in One's Oppression as an Ethical Fault

Filipa Melo Lopes

One of the key insights of Simone de Beauvoir's 'The Second Sex' is the idea that gender-based subordination is not just something done to women but also something women do to themselves. As situated human beings, women come to be active participants in their own oppression, making themselves the Other in relation to men. Recent scholarship on Beauvoir's work has highlighted this feminine complicity as an active process. However, scholars have remained divided on the implications of this analysis for ethical responsibility. If women are actively implicated in their own oppression, are they at fault? In this paper, I argue that we should read Beauvoir as ethically criticizing many women for their complicity as a sign of "bad faith". To do so, I examine two recent accounts by Nancy Bauer and Manon Garcia, who both read Beauvoir as exonerating complicit women from significant ethical criticism. Given that women emerge as human freedoms within a social world where a "destiny" of inferiority is already prepared for them, their active self-subordination is not something for which we should criticize them. However, I argue that this reading generates a problematic tension with respect to social change. It requires women to stop making themselves subordinated, even as it tells them there is no other way they could live. I present an alternative reading of Beauvoir that aims to solve this tension by reintroducing a strong criticism of complicity. Drawing on work by Charlotte Knowles and Meryl Altman, I argue that a Beauvoirian feminism can and should criticize many complicit women, not for their complicity per se, but for the "bad faith" that drives it. Importantly, I show that this reading does not impute a voluntaristic conception of freedom to Beauvoir and that it takes on board the nuanced understanding of agency under oppression that scholars like Bauer and Garcia have emphasized. I conclude that this alternative interpretation of 'The Second Sex' brings together ethics and politics by casting authenticity as an individual attitude that is also fundamental to social change.

On "l'état cadavérique de l'âme": Medical Discourse and the Representation of Subjectivity in Le Mur

Louise Mai

The question of the influence of psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis on the representation of the subject in Sartre's literary work has been addressed only marginally, and the caricatured and reductive portrait of a Sartre "aveugle à la grande révolution initiée par Freud et ses disciples" (Philippe Cabestan, 2005) still remains. It is only recently that critics have taken a new interest in Sartre's relationship with psychology and psychiatry, as shown by the publication of several articles discussing the influence of these sciences on Sartre's early philosophical works (see for example Gregory Corman, Gautier Dassonneville and Arnaud Tomès).

My paper will build on this re-evaluation of the importance of medical discourse in Sartre's work, by analysing its place in the short stories of Le Mur. These stories are all closely linked with the sciences of the psyche, whether through direct quotations, intertextuality or allusions. By looking at the influence of scientific literature on Le Mur, I will show how, for example, "Intimité" echoes Freud and Breuer's Studies on hysteria, how "Erostrate" resonates with the neurotic described by Adler, or how "La Chambre" initiates a reflection on the relationship between madness and freedom which evokes the debate between Jacques Lacan and Henri Ey.

Reading each of these short stories as psychological case studies, I will distinguish three modalities of medical discourse in the collection: medical discourse as a discourse quoted and criticized for its institutional authority and bourgeois positivism; medical discourse as a reappropriated paradigm that invites the reader to adopt a symptomatological rather than mythological reading of the characters; medical discourse as an object of theorization, as Le Mur may be seen to anticipate aspects of pathology that the existential biographies will later develop. I will show that while Sartre espoused certain discourses of the "psychologie des profondeurs", embodied at the time by the works of Janet, Adler or Freud, his use of them differs from that of Proust or the Surrealists: far from leading to the exaltation of human interiority and its depths, the sciences of the psyche are for Sartre a critical weapon against any mythological and idealised conception of subjectivity. I will thus argue that psychology for Sartre constitutes, as he himself says about the vision of this science by the young Flaubert, "une mortisection qui nous découvre l'état cadavérique de l'âme"

More broadly, the study of medical discourse in Le Mur allows us to shed light on the beginnings of Sartre's dialogue with the sciences of the psyche, which will later lead him to the existential psychoanalysis of his biographies, and to his original positions in L'Idiot de la famille, in which illness appears paradoxically as the manifestation of the subject's freedom.

Exalting Black Thought: Jean-Paul Sartre's Commitment to Black Existence and Black Liberation
LaRose T. Parris

As Lewis Gordon notes in "Sartre and Black Existentialism," "black existential philosophy is not only existential philosophy produced by black philosophers. It is also thought that addresses the intersection of problems of existence in black contexts…some scholars are so committed to such issues that they become lived realities for them. In their social associations and political commitment, they become organically linked to the causes of communities in which they were not born. They receive…the wrath from bigoted forces for their clear allegiance" (157-158). Thus with his discursive productions and political activism, Gordon identifies Sartre as a philosopher of black existentialism.

Sartre's heightened political and philosophical understanding of oppression during the Nazi occupation has been widely noted in his own writings and in those by subsequent scholars. It was this experience of coloniality, some critics argue, that led to his philosophical analyses and condemnations of racism and colonialism in Critique of Dialectical Reason, among other writings – all of which led to his becoming an enemy of the French state and averting death threats. Sartre lived his philosophical and political convictions; one of which was his belief that all human beings are freedom incarnate. And just as Gordon notes, this led Sartre to view Black and colonized peoples as those whose collective experience of systemic oppression reflects unjust and inequitable relations in the human world.

By highlighting Sartre's commitment to championing Black existence and Black liberation in an anti-black world, this paper will reveal how Sartre's theoretical engagement with the thought of Simone de Beauvoir, Frantz Fanon and Richard Wright reflects his commitment to the Black freedom struggle. In addition to highlighting Sartre's allegiance to emancipatory Black thought, this paper will also emphasize two important points: 1) that the 19th- and early 20th-century Black existential and Black radical discourses of Frederick Douglass and W.E.B DuBois prefigure themes that emerge several decades later in mid-20th-century Sartrean thought; and 2) that liberationist themes in Sartre's works are consistent with the anti-slavery and counter-hegemonic discourses of Frederick Douglass, Angela Davis, Lewis Gordon, and other Black existentialist philosophers.

Lived Value and the Experiential Self: An Alternative Account of Pre-Reflective Self-Consciousness

Robin Pawlett-Howell

In Being and Nothingness, Sartre (2003, pp.1-23) introduces pre-reflectivity as a non-positional and non-objectifying mode of self-awareness, which stands as a precondition for higher-order reflective consciousness. On the contemporary interpretation, of which Zahavi is a leading proponent, pre-reflective consciousness is characterised through two main claims. First, as a primal form of awareness, pre-reflectivity accounts for the pre-thematic and non-representational givenness of experience. Second, that pre-reflectivity, as self-consciousness, delineates a basic form of selfhood. These claims take pre-reflectivity to consist in first-personal perspectivity, which constitutively involves a minimal self. I argue against this interpretation. In particular, I contend that the 'first-person givenness' account of pre-reflectivity is too thin and that, using Zahavi's own examples, it does not, (i), factor meaningfully into our phenomenology and, (ii), fulfil its role of differentiating one (self-)consciousness from another. As I will demonstrate, these issues arise because Zahavi takes pre-reflectivity to be a universal and homogeneous feature of consciousness. Whilst defenders may retort that first-personal perspectivity is not disconnected from the subject's essential world-embeddedness, I take this to highlight the account's insufficiencies and the need for a more mundane conception of pre-reflectivity.

For my positive thesis, I put forward the claim that pre-reflective consciousness and minimal selfhood is characterised by an experiential form of self-directed value, which I term lived value. Whilst I do not assert that Sartre held this understanding, I do maintain that it is the natural result of his position. For Sartre, being-for-itself is typified by its continuously renewed projection towards its future possibilities. In this undertaking, values arise correlative to free action; inevitably, they appear as mediators in our relations to others and to objects. Yet this begs the question: if my projects create values in the world, then why does value not persist in the project that I am? My argument is that it does. Committing to the idea that "value haunts freedom" means that there must be an unthematized sense of value that connects to the "original projection of myself which stands as my choice of myself in the world" (Sartre, 2003, p.63; 118).

As I define it, lived value is the pre-reflective disclosure of value that occurs in the process of self-conception. In other words, we live through value. As a result, descriptively, the attempted return to the self is both rejected and affirmed: it is rejected because it persists as something that ought-to-be (as value) and is thus pushed out into our relation to the world, and it is affirmed in that we undertake this value through our subjectivity. In doing so, we do not consider the self as an object of consciousness, nor do we commit to a perspectival account of pre-reflectivity. Instead, we recognise that we are caught in the unavoidable task of choosing ourselves. Ultimately, my paper seeks to develop this radical reassessment of pre-reflective consciousness in order to provide an alternative account of experiential selfhood, which takes value to be pivotal to the human project.

Dismantling Fused Groups: A Sartrean Account of Political Solidarity

Maria Russo and Francesco Tava

In recent times, the notion of solidarity is generating renewed interest among scholars working in a variety of fields – from political philosophy and theory to social sciences and economics (Brunkhorst 2005; Scholz 2008; Kolers 2016; Banting & Kymlicka 2017). Although Sartre has never developed a theory of solidarity, we argue in this paper that his various accounts of "fraternity" offer fertile ground for rethinking contemporary configurations of political solidarity understood as a human bond that entails a community of purpose and the willingness to share risks to pursue shared goals.

Sartre refers to "fraternity" especially in the Critique of Dialectical Reason and Hope Now where this notion acquires very different meanings. In the Critique, Sartre analyses the dimension of fraternity mainly in the contexts of the French Revolution and anti-colonial struggle. This kind of fraternity consists of a sacred bond whereby those who are involved are required to swear an oath whose betrayal implies a threat of death. In this circumstance, fraternity becomes the glue of what Sartre calls "fused group" (2004, 345) where members establish a common goal, around which collective freedom is concretely organised. Example of such fused groups are the Sanculottes, whose revolt led to the conquest of the Bastille, as well as the Algerian people in the act of countering French colonisers. A peculiar aspect of this bond is the recognition of a common enemy that is deemed responsible for the relations of domination and alienation.

Despite this characterisation, Sartre is well aware that, once the so-called apocalyptic phase of destruction of the previous order has been accomplished, this bond of fraternity triggers a series of counter-finalities which end up generating new forms of oppression and lack of individual freedom. In his last interview, Sartre seems to challenge his own earlier conception of fraternity by proposing a normative ideal that points towards a form of ethical universalism. In this text, authentic fraternity is what allows human beings to extend their acknowledgement of "being all children of the same mother" (Sartre 1986, 87) and to prevent the emergence of dynamics of violence and counter-violence that typically characterise situations of scarcity. What Sartre foresees is therefore a transition from an ethics of scarcity to an ethics in scarcity – from the demonic counter-man of the Critique to the recognition of the other as a freedom in difficulty (a notion that he had already anticipated in the Notebooks for an Ethics).

This paper contends that this conceptual transition can help critically rethink contemporary forms of political solidarity beyond traditional forms of group solidarity, which are built on the shared traits of their members and on their capacity to maintain an antagonistic polarity with whomever don't share such traits. Sartre's late notion of ethics in scarcity can therefore provide a useful tool to dismantle revived "fused groups" that are widespread in our social and political landscape, and propose a new and functional idea of moral and political solidarity.

Sartre's Simple Indeterminism

Joshua Tepley

Jean-Paul Sartre is undeniably a "libertarian" in the metaphysical sense of the word: he believes that human beings have free will, that free will is incompatible with determinism, and that, as a consequence, determinism is false. But what type of libertarian is he? There seem to be three (and only three) possibilities: event-causal libertarianism, agent-causal libertarianism, and simple indeterminism.

According to event-causal libertarianism, actions are free if they are indeterministically (probabilistically) caused. The best-known proponent of this view is Robert Kane. It is unlikely that Sartre holds this view. First, the idea of probabilistic causation has its roots in quantum mechanics, which was developed in the 1920s. There is no evidence that Sartre knew about this scientific theory, let alone tried incorporating it into his philosophy, in the 30s and 40s. Second, according event-causal libertarianism, free actions are (indeterministically) caused by our reasons. According to Sartre, however, actions are not caused by our reasons; rather, reasons "co-emerge" with our actions.

According to agent-casual libertarianism, actions are free if they are caused by agents. Proponents of this view include Aristotle, Thomas Reid, Roderick Chisholm, and Timothy O'Connor. There are two reasons to think that Sartre is not an agent-causal libertarian. First, agent-causation requires a subject of consciousness, but Sartre arguably denies the existence of such a subject. (He certainly denies this in The Transcendence of the Ego, and there is reason to think that he does so in Being and Nothingness, too.) Second, agent-causation requires that free agents be substances with causal powers, but being-for-itself is not a substance, let alone a substance with causal powers.

The only remaining possibility is simple indeterminism, according to which actions are free if they are uncaused. Perhaps the best-known proponent of this view is Carl Ginet. I believe that this is Sartre's view. First, since Sartre is neither an event-causal libertarian nor an agent-causal libertarian, this is the only remaining possibility. Second, there are many passages in Being and Nothingness that fit well with this view -- in particular, Sartre's characterizations of freedom as identical to consciousness, and his descriptions of freedom as a "spontaneity," an "upsurge" and a "detachment" from being-in-itself, from the past, and from the causal series. For these reasons, Sartre's philosophy of freedom is best understood as a version of simple indeterminism.

Identifying with the Reflected Object: Theoretical Relevance of the Mirror Theme in Huis clos

Simone Villani

What might a phenomenological analysis of the experience of looking at ourselves in the mirror add to the theme of self-representation in Sartre's philosophy? It is not such an extravagant proposal if we reflect on the relevance of the mirror-object as a narrative device in Sartre's literary work, especially "Huis Clos". Here, the characters seek this object to escape anguish through identification with their reflected image, a process inextricably tied to both an imaginative act and the possibility of appearing as object to Others. However, the search for a perceptual certainty in the mirror-reflection involves precisely the negation of these two conditions of possibility, resulting in an attitude of bad faith.

It is from this attitude that I begin my article, considering it to be the determining feature of these characters. Bad faith is understood as a "metastable" lie held against oneself, that consist not simply in taking oneself to be of a determinate character, but more essentially in taking oneself to be a thing. Being consciousness' being constantly transcending itself it is impossible to grasp itself as an object, and to produce this possibility by itself; I therefore turn to the look of the Other as the transcendental condition of this possibility. Shame is the key experience individuated by Sartre in "Being and Nothingness" to reveal this fact, as well as Garcin's most feared form of judgment in "Huis Clos".

Understanding the look this way not only explains where my objective being comes from; it also points to the fact that we can never do without the Other whenever we engage in an objective relation. This is exactly what happens at the mirror: contrary to what Estelle expects, when we look at the mirror we don't came in contact with the most reliable form of our appearance, the one undistorted by the look of the Other. Instead, it is the Other itself that allows as a possibility our appearance as object at the mirror, thus already and inevitably "marking" this objective being. Thanks to "The Imaginary" and "The Family Idiot" we clarify that this identification is made possible by an imaginative act, which poses the identity between the perceptual representative (my image) and its imaginative object (me).

As complicated as this analysis may already appear, "Huis Clos" complicates the matter by having Ines play the mime of the mirror with Estelle, repeating each movement she does to please her. Picking up on the previous results, I deepen themes from "Being and Nothingness" to explain how peculiar is Ines' transforming sado-masochism: by acting as a mirror of Estelle, she cancel herself not only as a subject, but as the other pole of the relationship, thus cancelling the relationship itself and making it just a closed circle around Estelle's subjectivity, who now addresses no more an Other but only herself. It will be only through violence that Ines will break this mimicry by reminding Estelle again that she cannot really ever annul the shadow of the Other.