# Existentialism AC

### FWK

**Existence precedes essence – we are thrown into the world without inherent meaning, as value is only inherent to the concept of action itself, rather than any particular one. Sartre 46,** Jean-Paul. *Existentialism Is a Humanism*. 1946, [www.mrsmoser.com/uploads/8/5/0/1/8501319/english\_11\_ib\_-\_no\_exit\_-\_existentialism\_is\_a\_humanism\_-\_sartre.pdf](http://www.mrsmoser.com/uploads/8/5/0/1/8501319/english_11_ib_-_no_exit_-_existentialism_is_a_humanism_-_sartre.pdf). Thus, **there is no human nature**, because there is no God to have a conception of it. Man simply is. Not that he is simply what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills, and as he conceives himself after already existing – as he wills to be after that leap towards existence. **Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself**. That is the first principle of existentialism. And this is what people call its “subjectivity,” using the word as a reproach against us. But what do we mean to say by this, but that man is of a greater dignity than a stone or a table? For we mean to say that man primarily exists – that **man is, before all else, something which propels itself towards a future and is aware that it is doing so**. Man is, indeed, a project which possesses a subjective life, instead of being a kind of moss, or a fungus or a cauliflower. **Before that projection of the self nothing exists**; not even in the heaven of intelligence: man will only attain existence when he is what he purposes to be. Not, however, what he may wish to be. For what we usually understand by wishing or willing is a conscious decision taken – much more often than not – after we have made ourselves what we are. I may wish to join a party, to write a book or to marry – but in such a case what is usually called my will is probably a manifestation of a prior and more spontaneous decision. If, however, it is true that existence is prior to essence, man is responsible for what he is. Thus, the first effect of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders. And, **when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men. If, moreover, existence precedes essence and we will to exist at the same time as we fashion our image, that image is valid for all and for the entire epoch in which we find ourselves**. Our responsibility is thus much greater than we had supposed, for it concerns mankind as a whole. If I am a worker, for instance, I may choose to join a Christian rather than a Communist trade union. And if, by that membership, I choose to signify that resignation is, after all, the attitude that best becomes a man, that man’s kingdom is not upon this earth, I do not commit myself alone to that view. Resignation is my will for everyone, and my action is, in consequence, a commitment on behalf of all mankind. **Or if, to take a more personal case, I decide to marry and to have children, even though this decision proceeds simply from my situation, from my passion or my desire, I am thereby committing not only myself, but humanity as a whole, to the practice of monogamy**. I am thus responsible for myself and for all men, and I am creating a certain image of man as I would have him to be. **In fashioning myself I fashion man. Who, then, can prove that I am the proper person to impose, by my own choice, my conception of man upon mankind?** I shall never find any proof whatever; there will be no sign to convince me of it. If a voice speaks to me, it is still I myself who must decide whether the voice is or is not that of an angel. **If I regard a certain course of action as good, it is only I who choose to say that it is good and not bad. When, for instance, a military leader takes upon himself the responsibility for an attack and sends a number of men to their death, he chooses to do it and at bottom he alone chooses**. No doubt under a higher command, but its orders, which are more general, require interpretation by him and upon that interpretation depends the life of ten, fourteen or twenty men. **In making the decision, he cannot but feel a certain anguish. All leaders know that anguish. It does not prevent their acting, on the contrary it is the very condition of their action, for the action presupposes that there is a plurality of possibilities, and in choosing one of these, they realize that it has value only because it is chosen**. Now it is anguish of that kind which existentialism describes, and moreover, as we shall see, makes explicit through direct responsibility towards other men who are concerned. **Far from being a screen which could separate us from action, it is a condition of action itself.**

#### Only actions have intrinsic value and demonstrate motivations – appealing to external standards of evaluation is circular, as only the choice itself can concretely illustrate moral worth. Sartre 2, Jean-Paul. *Existentialism Is a Humanism*. 1946, [www.mrsmoser.com/uploads/8/5/0/1/8501319/english\_11\_ib\_-\_no\_exit\_-\_existentialism\_is\_a\_humanism\_-\_sartre.pdf](http://www.mrsmoser.com/uploads/8/5/0/1/8501319/english_11_ib_-_no_exit_-_existentialism_is_a_humanism_-_sartre.pdf).As an example by which you may the better understand this state of abandonment, I will refer to the case of a pupil of mine, who sought me out in the following circumstances. His father was quarreling with his mother and was also inclined to be a “collaborator”; his elder brother had been killed in the German offensive of 1940 and this young man, with a sentiment somewhat primitive but generous, burned to avenge him. His mother was living alone with him, deeply afflicted by the semi-treason of his father and by the death of her eldest son, and her one consolation was in this young man. But he, at this moment, had the choice between going to England to join the Free French Forces or of staying near his mother and helping her to live. He fully realized that this woman lived only for him and that his disappearance – or perhaps his death – would plunge her into despair. He also realized that, concretely and in fact, every action he performed on his mother’s behalf would be sure of effect in the sense of aiding her to live, whereas anything he did in order to go and fight would be an ambiguous action which might vanish like water into sand and serve no purpose. Consequently, he found himself confronted by two very different modes of action; the one concrete, immediate, but directed towards only one individual; and the other an action addressed to an end infinitely greater, a national collectivity, but for that very reason ambiguous – and it might be frustrated on the way. At the same time, he was hesitating between two kinds of morality; on the one side the morality of sympathy, of personal devotion and, on the other side, a morality of wider scope but of more debatable validity. He had to choose between those two. What could help him to choose? Could the Christian doctrine? No. Christian doctrine says: Act with charity, love your neighbor, deny yourself for others, choose the way which is hardest, and so forth. But which is the harder road? To whom does one owe the more brotherly love, the patriot or the mother? Which is the more useful aim, the general one of fighting in and for the whole community, or the precise aim of helping one particular person to live? Who can give an answer to that a priori? No one. Nor is it given in any ethical scripture. If values are uncertain, if they are still too abstract to determine the particular, concrete case under consideration, nothing remains but to trust in our instincts. That is what this young man tried to do; and when I saw him he said, “In the end, it is feeling that counts; the direction in which it is really pushing me is the one I ought to choose. If I feel that I love my mother enough to sacrifice everything else for her – my will to be avenged, all my longings for action and adventure then I stay with her. If, on the contrary, I feel that my love for her is not enough, I go.” But how does one estimate the strength of a feeling? The value of his feeling for his mother was determined precisely by the fact that he was standing by her. I may say that I love a certain friend enough to sacrifice such or such a sum of money for him, but I cannot prove that unless I have done it. I may say, “I love my mother enough to remain with her,” if actually I have remained with her. I can only estimate the strength of this affection if I have performed an action by which it is defined and ratified. But if I then appeal to this affection to justify my action, I find myself drawn into a vicious circle.

**Thus, the standard is consistency with existentialism. Prefer additionally –**

1. Oppression – only existentialism provides a framework that allows individuals to overcome domination, as social norms only carry the normative force that we assign to them. **Newman 06,** (Saul, Senior Lecturer in Politics @ U of London, “Anarchism and the Politics of Ressentiment,” Theory & Event - Volume 4, Issue 3, Muse, 2006)

Rather than having an external enemy -- like the State -- in opposition to which one's political identity is formed, we must work on ourselves. As political subjects we must overcome ressentiment by transforming our relationship with power. One can only do this, according to Nietzsche, through eternal return. To affirm eternal return is to acknowledge and indeed positively affirm the continual 'return' of same life with its harsh realities. Because it is an active willing of nihilism, it is at the same time a transcendence of nihilism. Perhaps in the same way, eternal return refers to power. We must acknowledge and affirm the 'return' of power, the fact that it will always be with us. To overcome ressentiment we must, in other words, will power. We must affirm a will to power **-- in the form of creative, life-affirming values, according to Nietzsche**.[[56]](http://muse.jhu.edu.ts.isil.westga.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v004/4.3newman.html#fn56) This is **to accept the notion of 'self-overcoming'.** To 'overcome' oneself in this sense, would mean an overcoming of the essentialist identities and categories that limit us. As Foucault has shown, we are constructed as essential political subjects in ways that dominate us -- this is what he calls subjectification. We hide behind essentialist identities that deny power, and produce through this denial, **a Manichean politics of absolute opposition that only reflects and reaffirms the very domination it claims to oppose**.

**2. Education has been consumed by normative imposition which prevents true identity creation – only a paradigm of existentialism within the space can reverse it. Higgs 02,** Philip. “Deconstruction and Re-Thinking Education.” South African Journal of Education, Education Association of South Africa, 2002, [www.ajol.info/index.php/saje/article/view/24866](http://www.ajol.info/index.php/saje/article/view/24866). Much of **present day educational discourse is vulnerable to an ideologically driven educational practice which emphasises that persons be educated for the maintenance** and development **of** environ- mentally and **sociologically determined functions**, as well as for the promotion of the economy (Higgs:1998). In such a context, **education becomes the handmaiden of the state**, and, at the same time, serves the state’s programmes of political intent. **Educational discourse which poses fundamental questions, has**, as Aronowitz (2001:ii) notes, **vir- tually disappeared** from the mainstream literature. **Present day educa- tional discourse, no longer sees the need to interrogate the givens of education, or the social and political contexts in which education functions.** As a result, nearly all educational discourse is reduced to what Aronowitz (2001:xvi-xvii) describes as the application of “ ... technologies of managing consent, where teaching is increasingly a function of training for test taking.” All this can be regarded as an aberration of education, as **the mystification of education in the service of dominant ideologies that see education as a process of information transfer** (mainly of a scientific, technical and legislative kind), and **which**, in turn, **aim to ensure conformity to** political and economically **acceptable norms.** ¶ In the light of this, it can be concluded that, **what is needed** today, **is an awakening** of the educational or a return to education. In short, **present day educational discourse must re-think itself.**

3. **The root cause of antiblack violence is a desire to quell black participation – afropessimism condemns black life to silence and writes itself into a paradox. Gordon 17,** Lewis. “Thoughts on Afropessimism” in Contemporary Political Theory (2017 Macmillan Publishers Ltd.1470-8914) <http://brotherwisedispatch.blogspot.com/2018/06/critical-reflections-on-afropessimism.html//SS> **Returning to Afropessimistic challenges,** the question becomes this: If the problem of antiblack racism is conceded as political, where antiblack institutions of power have, as their project, the impeding of Black power, which in effect requires barring Black access to political institutions, then **antiblack societies are ultimately threats** also **to politics defined as the human negotiation of the expansion of human** capabilities or more to the point: **freedom. Anti-politics is one of the reasons why societies in which antiblack racism is hegemonic are also those in which racial moralizing dominates**: moralizing stops at individuals at the expense of addressing institutions the transformation of which would make immoral individuals irrelevant. **As a political problem, it demands a political solution. It is not accidental that Blacks continue to be the continued exemplars of unrealized freedom**. As so many from Ida B. Wells-Barnett to Angela Davis (2003) and Michelle Alexander (2010) have shown, the **expansion of privatization and incarceration is squarely placed in a structure of** states and **civil societies premised on the limitations of freedom** (Blacks) – ironically, as seen in countries such as South Africa and the United States, in the name of freedom. That power is a facilitating or enabling phenomenon, a functional element of the human world, **a viable response must be the establishing of relations that reach beyond the singularity of the body**. I bring this up because proponents of Afropessimism might object to this analysis because of its appeal to a human world. If that world is abrogated, the site of struggle becomes that which is patently not human. **It is not accidental that popular race discourse refers today to ‘‘black bodies,’’ for instance, instead of ‘‘black people.’’** As the human world is discursive, social, and relational, **this abandonment amounts to an appeal to the non-relational, the incommunicability of singularity**, and appeals to the body and its reach. At that point, it’s perhaps the psychologist, psychiatrist, or psychoanalyst who would be helpful, as turning radically inward offers the promise of despair, narcissistic delusions of godliness, and, as Fanon also observed, madness. Even if that slippery slope were rejected, **the performative contradiction of attempting to communicate such singularity or absence thereof requires**, at least for consistency, the appropriate course of action: **silence. The remaining question for Afropessimism**, especially those who are primarily academics, **becomes** this: **Why write?** It’s a question for which, in both existential and political terms, **I don’t see how an answer could be given from an Afropessimistic perspective without the unfortunate revelation of cynicism**. The marketability of Afropessimism is no doubt in the immediate and paradoxical satisfaction in dissatisfaction it offers. We are at this point on familiar terrain. As with ancient logical paradoxes denying the viability of time and motion, the best option, after a moment of immobilized reflection, is, eventually, to move on, even where the pause is itself significant as an encomium of thought.

#### That outweighs—a) attempting to define education for students through “progressive education” fails because it predetermines what students can be and learn b) instead of attempting to change students, the NC method cultivates them who they are and c) it’s best for material change because students feel empowered in their own convictions and are more likely to stand up for what they believe in.

**4. Performativity – all theories require the ability to engage in them through the ability to act on your own purposes, which means merely reading or subscribing to an ethical system requires a commitment to radical freedom.**

**5.** Singular focus on combatting oppression reduces black life to a singularity that locks in depression. Glaude 07, Eddie S. (Eddie S. Glaude Jr. is the chair of the Center for African-American Studies and the William S. Tod Professor of Religion and African-American Studies at Princeton University.) In a Shade of Blue : Pragmatism and the Politics of Black America. University of Chicago Press, 2007. EBSCOhost. (78-79). In my view, three difficulties—descriptive, theoretical, and existential—attend such accounts. The descriptive problematic involves the plotline of the story. I am reminded here of James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison’s criti-cisms of Richard Wright. Both worried that Wright’s representations of black life betrayed the complexity of African American existence. The same can be said of stories of African American experience that are mainly about liberation and presuppose a subject in constant struggle. There is much more to our living than simply resisting white supremacy. More-over, the singular focus often results in a relatively coherent account in which the internal fissures of black communities are obscured. Suffering and resistance then subordinate all other considerations—even the dif-ferential experience of that suffering and the different aims of resistance. The theoretical problematic refers to the Christian dimension of the problem of being both black and Christian. Like Anderson, I worry that God talk among black theologians, at least in their worst moments, functions merely as a source of the strenuous mood, serving simply to justify and sanctify a particular political orientation—even though it is precisely in our relation to God and His relation to us that we resist oppression.24.Lastly, the existential problematic again entails a simplification of the complexity of African American lives. The existential involves how to live, how to hope, and how to love. But if our lives are reduced simply to struggle and our stories presume an understanding of black agency as always already political, then the various ways we have come to love and hope are cast into the shadows as we obsess about politics, narrowly un-derstood, and as History orients us retrospectively instead of prospec-tively. We end up, despite our best intentions, ignoring the sheer joy of black life and unwittingly reducing our capacity to reflect and act in light of the hardships of our actual lives. Perhaps, more importantly, “our abil-ity to make delicate distinctions” is lost as History settles beforehand the difficult existential questions “Who am I?” “How should I live?” and “What should I do?”

### Contention

#### Nuclear weapons keep a negative stigma surrounding humanity – nuclear peace forces Western modes of thought that deny individualized thought and free choice.

Lethbridge on Sartre [David Lethbridge, (David Lethbridge is a retired professor, anti-racist activist and former research director of the [Bethune](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_Bethune) Institute for Anti-Fascist Studies and director of the Salmon Arm Coalition Against Racism. Lethbridge taught psychology at a number of institutions across Quebec and Canada, most recently at [Okanagan College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Okanagan_College) in [Salmon Arm, British Columbia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salmon_Arm%2C_British_Columbia). His research interests include "the application of Psychoanalysis, Existentialism, and Marxist Theory to human personality. Psychobiography and psychohistory. Antifascist and antiracist theory and practice."[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Lethbridge#cite_note-1) As the Bethune Institute's research director, Lethbridge has published a number of articles and papers on neo-fascist organization, recruitment and activities. He has also been active since the early 1990s organizing protests against far-right meetings succeeding in several cases in having them shut down or relocated.) "Constructing Peace by Freedom: Jean-Paul Sartre, Four Short Speeches on the Peace Movement " *Sartre Studies International*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2012, pp. 1–18. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/42705194. DOA:2-2-2020 // WHSRS]

Entitled, in its published form, Weapon Against History, Sartre observed that **the existence, and threatened deployment, of atomic bombs had changed the nature of modern warfare**, and that "it is the atom bomb that characterizes what we call the cold war." Whereas previously wars of aggression required "millions of men to kill millions of men," **with the development of atomic and hydrogen bombs "war becomes detached from mankind.** It is no longer restrained by the masses ... today atomic **war is in the hands of a few wealthy men and their mercenaries**." Nuclear war "could be launched tomorrow by a few cabinet ministers against the will and interests of the nation."39 Sartre noted that, aside from nuclear war, the only other form of armed conflict to arise within the contemporary period was people's war. Just as armed partisan resistance coalesced against Nazi aggression in occupied Europe, people's armies had come to the fore in China and Indo-China. These were "popular armies which live among the people and not on the people. A people's war is conducted against an aggressor, an occupying power or a colonial power. **A people's war can only be a war of defense or of liberation; a people's army defends itself on its own soil, and it could not attack another nation nor cross its borders without losing its character." But the atomic bomb was the weapon of choice for the West since its threatened use was aimed precisely at the colonized nations struggling for independence**. "The people's army has found its exact counterpart in the nuclear weapon; **the people's army and the atom bomb are the two opposed characteristics of our time**." The atom bomb was a weapon to be launched by the ruling circles of the West, who no longer required a mass army, against a defensive people's army that had no greater strength than the support of its own people. "The atom bomb is the only weapon suitable for oppressive minorities. Without it their task would be impossible. Their task is the maintenance of abstract barriers between the nations and between people inside each country, and to govern against the necessities of history and political economy." But the West was in the process of losing its control over Vietnam and other colonized nations. There- fore, for the West, "there remains but one way out - the atom bomb. The atom bomb is a weapon against history. Despite the evident reality that nuclear war would mean an utter catastrophe that would "wipe out the whole of humanity," **its potential use was an attempt to blackmail the entire human race.** "In order to stop the world turning **they are threatening to suppress history by liquidating those who make history. It is all they can do**: wipe out man in case he changes. The bomb is in itself the basis and the sum total of a policy completely hostile to the true development of humanity . . . Because the atom bomb wishes to fly in the face of history, it risks falling out of history altogether."42 **While Sartre's analysis of the fundamental antithesis between anti-colonialist people's war and the nuclear option favored by ruling elites is certainly interesting, his solution to the threat of nuclear war no longer seems novel**; similar solutions have been proposed a hundred times in the decades that followed his Berlin speech. It is entirely obvious that "history must remove the warhead from the atom bomb, or else the atom bomb will blow up the world," and that the task incumbent on the majority of the world's peoples was to "unite against the bomb," "impose peace," and "fight against atomic terror." **Equally necessary, but again, no longer startling, was his suggestion that the peoples must carry forward their demand that the "Great Powers" should "prohibit the manufacture and use of nuclear weapons."** Sartre was convinced that **a popular mass movement could indeed accomplish this many-sided task once people began to unite together and listen to each other, rather than to war-mongering governments**. The task was essential, for, as Sartre put it: "In the past, history was often made by war. But today, since war would mean the end of the world, peace alone can make history."43 Sartre's final speech under the auspices of the World Peace Council, Cold War and Anti-Communism , took place at the World Assembly for Peace, held in Helsinki on 23-29 June 1955, before two thousand delegates from sixty-five countries.44 As one would expect, Sartre reiterated certain themes that he had highlighted in his previous speeches, notably **the actual living presence of a people's unity demonstrated by the peace congresses themselves**. Indeed, Sartre began his remarks by saying, "Vienna has borne its fruits: at the Helsinki Congress all sectors, all opinions, all parties are represented." And, a little later, "**all the groups who have sent delegates to Helsinki have stressed one essential aspect of the peace which we are trying to create: it is a peace desired by the peoples. Not in the first instance by elites, but foremost by the masses."**

#### Nuclear weapons eliminate life-affirming value as they serve as a constant reminder that that value could one day end instantaneously---deterrence merely ensures infinite moral violations

Mason [Kelvin Mason, (Independent Researcher) "Ghosts of the Future "Acme Journals. https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/1426/1243. 2017, 16(1): pp. 149-155 DOA:2-2-2020 // NSUSF Recut WHSRS]

This film (https://vimeo.com/182695880) explores the UK’s decision to replace its Trident nuclear weapons system. Due to the ‘alternative format’i , the script and a response to reviewers is printed below. The film’s narration draws upon an existentialist ethics to critique a politics and culture of nuclear weapons, Mutually Assured Destruction and deterrence. The film was made at an academic seminar intervention at the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Burghfield in Berkshire in June 2016. Thematically linking ‘war’ and (global) ‘warming’, the seminar explored nuclear weapons and energy as, literally, signature technologies of the Anthropocene. A particular phenomenological approach employs close observation and social participation in place as an ‘incandescence’ to illuminate wider geographies and diverse temporalities. Physically inhabiting the AWE space made visible these ‘ghosts’ and highlighted the inextricability of emotion and reason. The film argues that deterrence is antithetic to the key existentialist tenet of transcendence. Deterrence is immoral not (only) because it is defined by abominable revenge rather than justice, but because it shapes an oppressive politics and culture that preclude the attainment of freedom and the acceptance of a concomitant personal responsibility. Owning one’s radical freedom and responsibility is Sartre’s definition of ‘authenticity’, living the truth about ourselves. Keywords Trident; deterrence; existentialism; ethics; place Ghosts of the Future 150 Narrator’s Script Robert Macfarlane observes that, ‘We mostly respond to mass extinction with ‘stuplimity’: the aesthetic experience in which astonishment is united with boredom, such that we overload on anxiety to the point of outrage-outrage’. He asks: ‘How might a novel or poem possibly account for our authorship of global scale environmental changes across millennia – let alone shape the nature of that change?’ What is the perfect text for the Anthropocene? I prepare for participation in an academic intervention (here) at the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Burghfield near Reading in Berkshire by reading about existentialist ethics and phenomenological research methods. The intervention follows the ‘no war, no warming’ theme of a month of direct action at AWE and we issued a call for participation to people interested in issues around nuclear weapons and climate change. AWE is responsible for the assembly and maintenance of nuclear warheads for the Trident missile system: four nuclear powered Vanguard submarines, Trident D-5 ballistic missiles, and the nuclear warheads. The Anthropocene is the geological age in which human influence on planet Earth is the most significant impact and ‘will leave a long-term signature in the strata record’. The Anthropocene and the nuclear age start simultaneously, and part of this signature will be the global dispersal of artificial radionuclides from the testing and, perhaps, use of nuclear weapons. We are without excuse. In an existentialist view, at least, our identities are partly constituted by how we live the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’ in our everyday life. Heidegger dubs this our ‘ekstatic temporality’. Facticity and transcendence stand as, respectively, our ecstatic past and future. While we live in the present, we are animated by both the past and, most significantly for who we can come to know ourselves to be, the possibility of the future; this is Heidegger’s ‘ek-sistence’. Encountering, a grizzly bear feasting on a caribou carcass, Barry Lopez suggests that, rather than concentrate on the bear, his indigenous travelling companions ‘would focus on that part of the world of which, at this moment, the bear was only a fragment. The bear here might be compared with a bonfire, a kind of incandescence that throws light on everything around it’. Experiencing the event in this way ‘extended the moment of encounter with the bear backwards and forwards in time’. Simone de Beauvoir outlined an existentialist morality: ‘Every time transcendence lapses into immanence, there is a degradation of existence into ‘initself’, of freedom into facticity; this fall is a moral fault if the subject consents to it; if this fall is inflicted on the subject, it takes the form of frustration and ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies, 2017, 16(1): 149-155 151 oppression; in both cases it is an absolute evil.’ We can – we should - transform the way we live every moment, seek freedom from oppression. Angie Zelter, who organised the month of direct action at Burghfield with the network Trident ploughshares, refuses to be confined by facticity. Her every action at AWE is an attempted step into a different future right now. The more the police try to impose the order of the moment on her, immanence, the social order determined by nuclear deterrence and the coercive security which adherence to that doctrine dictates, the more she steps out of line: she tries to push through the police cordon into AWE; she sits down in the road to block it, constantly shuffling into a more obstructive position; she never stops talking to the police explaining the moral fault of Trident, the future it defines, the alternatives it constrains… Jean Paul Sartre defined ‘authenticity’ as owning one’s radical freedom and responsibility: it is a matter of living the truth about ourselves. We are without excuse. I am filming a wild rose, trying not to mind whether or not a bee lands on it to feed. I am focussed on holding my own attention, resisting the temptation to flit, to film something else; something ‘happening’. I am acutely aware of my own breathing; aware how impossible it is to hold the camcorder steady, trying to ‘go with’ that. Looking intently through the viewfinder at this one speck of the landscape, I am more aware than I otherwise would be of the soundscape. The rush of cars passing on the road behind me is inescapable; from white noise to cacophonous intrusion. There is birdsong too. Behind me a policeman. I am again contravening bye-laws, filming Ministry of Defence property. I must stop. A bee is feeding on the rose. Each Vanguard submarine is armed with up to 16 missiles each of which can carry at least three warheads. And each warhead has an explosive power eight times that of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. That bomb, ‘Little Boy’, devastated an area of five square miles and killed at least 135,000 people. Many others suffered long-term sickness and disability. The U.S. dropped a second nuclear bomb, ‘Fat Man’, on the city of Nagasaki, killing at least another 50,000 people. We are without excuse. One morning, in the impromptu peace camp set up across from the construction gate at AWE, my friend and colleague Kye tells me she awoke in her tent to the sound of birdsong, which filled her with a life-affirming joy. Then, she realised that she was lying so very close to a place that could obliterate all birdsong forever. I am still taking that in. Ghosts of the Future 152 For a moment, when I am filming, I mistake the distant beep-beep warning of a lorry reversing inside AWE for birdsong. Perhaps some birds imitate lorries in their calls? Perhaps, on some level, the design engineer based the lorry’s alarming sound on the call of birds? Each warhead on a Trident missile could kill more than a million people. And the ‘payload’ of one Vanguard submarine has the potential to kill some fiftythree million people: the entire population of South Africa. The UK always has one armed Vanguard submarine at sea. (Lotte Reimer sings) All that we have created with our hands And our minds, for the glory of the world we live in, Now it can be smashed, in a moment destroyed, Deadly the harvest of two atom bombs. Then, people of the world, we must watch and take care That the third atom bomb never comes. Exponents of the Trident system claim it is a deterrent. The military theory of deterrence runs that the threat of using powerful weapons against an enemy deters that enemy from attacking you with similar weapons. Applied to nuclear weapons, deterrence translates into a security policy of Mutually Assured Destruction. Exponents of the policy seem to have no problem living with the darkest of ironies, that the acronym for this system is MAD. Professor Rebecca Kay sees MAD as the ultimate ‘othering’, and questions the moral logic of deterrence. She asks how, if ‘we’ were subject to a nuclear attack, ‘it would better to die knowing that ‘our’ bombs were killing those people too’? How? The moral philosopher Mary Midgely pinpoints the indiscriminate nature of nuclear weapons, likening them to landmines on a vastly greater scale. ‘This feature cannot be sanitised by claiming that their owners are never going to use them. To say nothing of the fact that they have actually once already been used in combat, the mere act of threatening others with an abomination is itself already abominable.’ Ratified by one hundred and sixty two states, the Ottawa Treaty prohibits the production, transfer or use of landmines, committing signatories to their destruction. The UK signed the Ottawa Treaty in 1997. We are without excuse. People are striking the peace camp that has been my home for the past two nights. There is a fire with an ash-clagged and smoke-blackened kettle upon it, tarpaulins strung overhead between trees, a few pop-up tents… I resist the urge to go and help my comrades, as I feel I should. I keep filming. I keep my back to the construction gate of AWE: a wide, heavy-duty, heavy-metal structure with black ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies, 2017, 16(1): 149-155 153 painted bars and close steel mesh. Behind the gate, MoD police with guns and a German Shepherd dog on a leash keep a close watch. In ‘The Castle’ Kafka wrote: ‘All [the authorities] did was to guard the distant and invisible interests of distant and invisible masters.’ We are without excuse. Twenty yards down the road, civilian police are parked, also observing. A police car drives by, perhaps just to make sure all their other colleagues aren’t missing anything sinister. I do not turn the camera on any of them. Across the road, a handful of people, thrown together in their opposition to nuclear weapons or their academic interest in nuclear weapons or in climate or protest or place, continue packing away food, taking down tents, tipping rain water carefully off tarpaulins not to drench the packed-away kit, themselves or each other. Nothing happens. So much is happening. On 14th March 2016, the House of Commons voted by 409 to 161 to retain a strategic nuclear deterrent beyond the life of the current system. A vote on renewing the Trident weapons programme specifically is scheduled for 18th July 2016. If that vote carries, as seems certain, Vanguard submarines will be replaced and the life of Trident missiles extended. AWE is poised to play a major role when the warheads themselves need to be refurbished or replaced. According to the government’s estimate, Vanguard replacement will cost £31 billion. This figure does not include an extra £10bn that the MoD has put aside as contingency for an anticipated overspend. Trident’s opponents estimate the cost very significantly higher. Updating a 2014 estimate by the independent Trident Commission, in 2015 international news agency Reuters put the cost at £167bn. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) calculates the cost as high as £205bn. This sum could, CND claim, ‘improve the NHS by building 120 state of the art hospitals and employing 150,000 new nurses, build 3 million affordable homes, install solar panels in every home in the UK or pay the tuition fees for 8 million students.’ The UK is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament. On 19th July, the House of Commons parliament in Westminster voted to replace Britain’s Trident nuclear weapons system by 472 votes to 117. In the debate, George Kerevan, Scottish National Party Member of Parliament for East Lothian, asked Theresa May, the Prime Minister, ‘Is she personally prepared to authorise a nuclear strike that could kill one hundred thousand men, women and children?’ Previous Prime Ministers have avoided answering this question. With no hesitation, though, Theresa May answered, ‘Yes.’ She then added, ‘The whole point of a deterrent is that our enemies need to know that we would be prepared to use it.’ Ghosts of the Future 154 We are without excuse. In the peace camp a woman from Scotland, Cat, paints a series of watercolour landscapes of AWE. I ask, and she kindly gives me one of the paintings. It shows the heavy, dark metal construction gate, the No Trident signs that protesters have installed. And a bird. To our academic seminar, held in front of the construction gate to AWE, Kye brings red paper-chain people. They are an audience to represent absence: the ghosts of the future that the use of Trident might create, particularly our academic colleagues from the past and especially those from the future who are not here, or who may not be able to be here; and our colleagues in the present who are also absent, also ghosts. We weave the paper-chain people between the mesh of the construction gate. With their dog and their guns, the two MoD police officers come to warn us that this action infringes a by-law and that we must take the figures down immediately or face arrest. They are paper figures four inches tall. We argue. And - after a stand-off - one of the police officer concedes that the figures can stay in the fence for five minutes. The quality of that short time is immense. Seminar participants are suffused by emotion. The police decision seems at once rational and compassionate. We note that these are not separate mechanisms. Existentialism acknowledges time as binding: it cannot be escaped. However, it further holds, that time is lived and should be measured qualitatively. So, if we can’t change time, we can transform the way we live every moment. Because Kye’s paper-chain people are prohibited from staying on the real construction gate, I rescue some of them and add them into Cat’s picture of the gate. The ghosts have a home. But they are not at peace. …. you and your children matter. I hope your love will teach the nations that emit the most carbon and violence that they should, instead, remit the most compassion. I hope, soon Presenting in the seminar, Phil stresses how nuclear deterrence is compelled to go hand in glove with secrecy and security; how it is incommensurable with transparency and freedom; how it is undemocratic. Inherent in deterrence is a pessimistic view of human nature that restricts us from developing a future of nobler virtue: of trust and empathy not suspicion; of justice rather revenge; of nonviolence, of openness in place of threat; welcome and inclusion instead of othering, of care and compassion beyond fear.

### Underview

**1. AFF theory is no RVI, Drop the debater, competing interps, under an interp that aff theory is legit regardless of voters a) infinite abuse since otherwise it would be impossible to check NC abuse b) it would justify the aff never getting to read theory which is a reciprocity issue c) Time crunched 1ar means it becomes impossible to justify paradigm issues and win the shell. And, all neg interps are counter interps since the aff takes an implicit stance on every issue which means any neg theory interp requires an RVI to become offensive.**

**2. No new 2n arguments and paradigm issues. a) overloads the 2AR with a massive clarification burden b) it becomes impossible to check NC abuse if you can dump on reasons the shell doesn't matter in the 2n. And, neg has access to bidirectional shells which makes neg shells impossible to meet and impact turns your reading of the shells since I’ll always lose on an interpretation. Evaluate the theory debate after the 1AR since a) the 6 min 2n can dump on theory making the 3 min 2AR impossible b) we both get 1 speech on theory. And, aff gets an automatic RVI on take-outs to theory since it proves they shouldn’t have read it and should be punished for trying to purposefully make the round uneducational with a cheap violation. Fairness is a side constraint since a) your arguments presume they will be evaluated fairly so they concede it’s authority b) It’s a priori question to enaging in the substance debate since it is impossible to objectively evaluate. If they win a reason fairness or the flow doesn’t matter hack against them since they justify an arbitrary decision.**

**3. And, alternative advocacies don’t negate – a) Resistance strategies exist in relation to agents which means different solutions for different people solves all your offense and justifies the perm b) Doesn’t disprove our general thesis – just because other things are also good doesn’t mean our strategy is bad.**

#### 4. Vote against them if I win a response to their arguments – a) Using anti-blackness to justify tricks and theory obfuscate the discussion of actual anti-black violence and proves commodification of oppression that turns it into a tool for the ballot b)Turns to reps voters mean you lose since if inclusion is a voter it flows both ways – you causing more anti-blackness is a reason you also lose.

#### 5. The role of the ballot is to endorse the debater who proves the truth or falsity of the resolution –

**1. Text – five dictionaries define negate as to deny the truth of[[1]](#footnote-1). Text first – Text comes first – a) Controls the internal link to fairness since it’s the basis of things like predictability and prep b) Key to jurisdiction since the judge can only endorse what is within their burden c) Even if another role of the ballot is better for debate, that is not a reason it ought to be the role of the ballot, just a reason we ought to discuss it.**

**2. Inclusion- Any offense can function under truth testing whereas your specific role of the ballot excludes all strategies but yours. This is bad for inclusive debates because people without every technical skill or comprehensive debate knowledge are shut out of your scholarship which turns your ROB- truth testing solves because you can do what you’re good at and so can I. This is also better for education because me engaging in a debate I know nothing about doesn’t help anyone.**

**3. Critical pedagogy forces the judge into the role of coercer. Rickert,** (Thomas, “"Hands Up, You're Free": Composition in a Post-Oedipal World”, JacOnline Journal, wbem) **An example of the connection between violence and pedagogy is implicit in** the notion of being "schooled" as it has been conceptualized **by Giroux [is]** and Peter Mcl.aren. They explain, **"Fundamental to** the principles that inform **critical pedagogy is the conviction that schooling for self- and social empowerment** is ethically prior to questions of epistemology or to a mastery oftechnical or social skills that are primarily tied to the logic of the marketplace" (153-54). **A presumption here is that it is the teacher who knows (best)**, and **this** orientation gives the concept of schooling a particular bite: though it presents itself as oppositional to the state and the dominant forms of pedagogy that serve the state and its capitalist interests, it nevertheless **reinscribes an authoritarian model that is congruent with any number of oedipalizing pedagogies that "school" the student in proper behavior.** As Diane Davis notes, radical, feminist, and **liberatory pedagogies** "often **camouflage pedagogical violence in their move from one mode of 'normalization' to another" and "function within a disciplinary matrix of power**, a covert carceral system, **that aims to create useful subjects for particular political agendas" (212).** Such oedipalizing pedagogies are less effective in practice than what the claims for them assert; indeed, the attempt to "school" students in the manner called for by Giroux and McLaren is complicitous with the malaise of postmodern cynicism.Students will dutifully go through their liberatory motions, producing the proper assignments, but it remains an open question whether they carry an oppositional politics with them. The "critical distance" supposedly created with liberatory pedagogy also opens up a cynical distance toward the writing produced in class

#### 6. Impact Calc: Weighing practices is incoherent because it relies on an assessment of ends, which relies on a further assessment. A practice that negates is not contradictory to a practice that affirms, and thus proving my end affirms is sufficient. So, proving the converse of the resolution is not sufficient to disprove the resolution’s truth. And, this is also true of obligations since an obligation existing doesn’t mean that there can’t be a stronger obligation to do something else, as an obligation is a locus of moral duty and there can always be different obligations, particularly allowing for individual meaning creation is inherently good regardless of the content of index.

#### 7. Since ought entails following a practice, the resolution presupposes that a practice exists Denying that there exists a practice proves the truth of the resolution because simple propositional logic mandates that if the antecedent of a conditional statement is false, then the statement as a whole is trivially held to be true. **SEP**[[2]](#footnote-2), A conditional asserts that if its antecedent is true, its consequent is also true; any conditional [statement] with a true [condition] antecedent and a false consequent must be false. For any other combination of true and false [conditions] antecedents and consequents, the conditional statement is true.

Implications: a) Skep and Pess affirms since denying the conditional that morality exists proves the resolution true b) **If aff is winning I get the ballot, even if the aff isn’t winning I get the ballot c) The aff is a logical syllogism, which means denying any conditional without denying each one and their consequent proves the aff is still true.**

#### 8. If the affirmative framework is “consistency with existentialism”, the negative must concede the affirmative framework. A] Strat Scew: New framing forces a 1ar restart, but the 2N can dump for 6 minutes, framing out all my substantive offense B] Resolvability: If the judge didn’t have radical freedom, they couldn’t chose to vote for either debate. That means you should auto vote aff since I spoke first. C] Reading theory on why the particular framework chosen is bad, checks against arguments that auto affirm E] Switch Side Debate solves back all of your offense since you can discuss what you want when you affirm

### Method

**Afropessimism is reductionist history and fails to account for the inherent value to actions themselves – embracing radical failure is key to constructing valuable black participation and meaning creation. Gordon 17,** Lewis. “Thoughts on Afropessimism” in Contemporary Political Theory (2017 Macmillan Publishers Ltd.1470-8914) <http://brotherwisedispatch.blogspot.com/2018/06/critical-reflections-on-afropessimism.html//SS> **An ironic dimension of pessimism is that it is the other side of optimism**. Oddly enough, **both are connected to nihilism, which is**, as Nietzsche (1968) showed, **a decline of values during periods of social decay**. It emerges when people no longer want to be responsible for their actions. Optimists expect intervention from beyond. Pessimists declare relief is not forthcoming. Neither takes responsibility for what is valued. The valuing, however, is what leads to the second, epistemic point. **The presumption that what is at stake is what can be known to determine what can be done is the problem**. If such knowledge were possible, the debate would be about who is reading the evidence correctly. **Such judgment would be a priori** – that is, prior to events actually unfolding. **The future, unlike transcendental conditions such as language, signs, and reality, is, however, ex post facto**: It is yet to come. **Facing the future, the question isn’t what will be or how do we know what will be but instead the realization that whatever is done will be that on which the future will depend**. Rejecting optimism and pessimism, **there is a supervening alternative: political commitment**. The appeal to **political commitment** is not only in stream with what French existentialists call l’intellectuel engage´ (committed intellectual) but also **reaches back through the history and existential situation of enslaved, racialized ancestors. Many were**, in truth, **an existential paradox: commitment to action without guarantees. The slave revolts**, micro and macro acts of resistance, escapes, and returns **help others do the same; the cultivated instability of plantations and other forms of enslavement**, and countless other actions, **were waged against a gauntlet of forces designed to eliminate any hope of success**. The claim of colonialists and enslavers was that the future belonged to them, not to the enslaved and the indigenous. **A result of more than 500 years of conquest and 300 years of enslavement was also a (white) rewriting of history in which African and First Nations’ agency was**, at least at the level of scholarship, nearly **erased. Yet there was resistance even in that realm, as Africana** and First Nation **intellectual history and scholarship attest**. Such actions set the course for different kinds of struggle today. Such reflections occasion meditations on the concept of failure. **Afropessimism**, the existential critique suggests, **suffers from a failure to understand failure. Consider** Fanon’s notion of **constructive failure, where what doesn’t initially work transforms conditions for something new to emerge**. To understand this argument, one must rethink the philosophical anthropology at the heart of a specific line of Euromodern thought on what it means to be human. Atomistic and individual substance- based, this model, articulated by Hobbes, Locke, and many others, is of a non-relational being that thinks, acts, and moves along a course in which continued movement depends on not colliding with others. Under that model, the human being is a thing that enters a system that facilitates or obstructs its movement. An alternative model, shared by many groups across southern Africa, is a **relational version of the human being as part of a larger system of meaning. Actions**, from that perspective, **are not about whether ‘‘I’’ succeed but instead about ‘‘our’’ story across time. As relational, it means that each human being is a constant negotiation of ongoing efforts to build relationships with others**, which means no one actually enters a situation without establishing new situations of action and meaning. **Instead of entering a game, their participation requires a different kind of project – especially where the ‘‘game’’ was premised on their exclusion. Thus, where the system** or game **repels initial participation, such repulsion is a shift in the grammar of how the system functions**, especially its dependence on obsequious subjects. Shifted energy affords emergence of alternatives. **Kinds cannot be known before the actions that birthed them**. Abstract as this sounds, **it has much historical support. Evelyn Simien** (2016), in her insightful political study Historic Firsts**, examines the new set of relations established by Shirley Chisholm’s and Jesse Jackson’s presidential campaigns. There could be no Barack Obama without such important predecessors affecting the demographics of** voter **participation**. Simien intentionally focused on the most mainstream example of political life to illustrate this point. **Although no exemplar of radicalism, Obama’s ‘‘success’’ emerged from Chisholm and Jackson’s (and many others’) so-called ‘‘failure.’’** Beyond presidential electoral politics, **there are numerous examples of how prior, radical so-called ‘‘failures’’ transformed relationships that facilitated other** kinds of **outcome. The trail goes back to the Haitian Revolution and back to every act of resistance from Nat Turner’s Rebellion in the USA, Sharpe’s in Jamaica, or Tula’s in Curac¸ao and so many other efforts for social transformation** to come. **In existential terms**, then, **many ancestors of the African diaspora embodied** what Søren Kierkegaard (1983) calls **an existential paradox. All the evidence around them suggested failure and the futility of hope. They first had to make a movement** of infinite resignation – that is, **resigning themselves to their situation. Yet they must simultaneously act against that situation**. Kierkegaard called this seemingly contradictory phenomenon ‘‘faith,’’ but that concept relates more to a relationship with a transcendent, absolute being, which could only be established by a ‘‘leap,’’ as there are no mediations or bridge. Ironically, **if Afropessimism** appeals to transcendent intervention, it would collapse into faith. If, however, the argument **rejects transcendent intervention and focuses on committed political action**, of taking responsibility for a future that offers no guarantees, then **the movement from infinite resignation becomes existential political action**.

**Endorsement of afropessimism is merely a symptom of the white civil society you critique – only an affirmation of agency disrupts the *structure* of anti-blackness rather than engaging in the same white racialization that suppressed black life. Your arguments can’t escape performative contradiction, as your performance proves the world is not inherently anti-black. Gordon 17,** Lewis. “Thoughts on Afropessimism” in Contemporary Political Theory (2017 Macmillan Publishers Ltd.1470-8914) <http://brotherwisedispatch.blogspot.com/2018/06/critical-reflections-on-afropessimism.html>//SS The first is that **‘‘an antiblack world’’ is not identical with ‘‘the world is antiblack.’’** My argument is that such a world is an antiblack racist project. **It is not the historical achievement. Its limitations emerge from a basic fact: Black people** and other opponents of such a project fought, **and continue to fight, as we see today in the #BlackLivesMatter movement and many others, against it**. The **same** argument **applies to** the argument about **social death. Such an achievement would have rendered** even **these reflections stillborn. The basic premises of the Afropessimistic argument are**, then, **locked in performative contradictions**. Yet, they have rhetorical force. This is evident through the continued growth of its proponents and forums (such as this one) devoted to it. In Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism, I argued that there are forms of antiblack racism offered under the guise of love, though I was writing about whites who exoticize blacks while offering themselves as white sources of black value. Analyzed in terms of bad faith, where one lies to oneself in an attempt to flee displeasing truths for pleasing falsehoods, exoticists romanticize blacks while affirming white normativity, and thus themselves, as principals of reality. These ironic, performative contradictions are features of all forms of racism, where one group is elevated to godlike status and another is pushed below that of human despite both claiming to be human. **Antiblack racism offers whites self-other relations** (necessary for ethics) **with each other but not** so for **groups forced in a ‘‘zone of nonbeing’’** below them. There is asymmetry where whites stand as others who look downward to those who are not their others or their analogues. **Antiblack racism is thus** not a problem of blacks being ‘‘others.’’ It’s **a problem of their not-being-analogical-selves-and-not-even being-others**. Fanon, in Black Skin, White Masks (1952), reminds us that **Blacks among each other live in a world of selves and others. It is in attempted relations with whites that these problems occur**. Reason in such contexts has a bad habit of walking out when Blacks enter. What are Blacks to do? As reason cannot be forced, because that would be ‘‘violence,’’ they must ironically reason reasonably with forms of unreasonable reason. Contradictions loom. Racism is, given these arguments, a project of imposing non-relations as the model of dealing with people designated ‘‘black.’’ In Les Damne´ de la terre (‘‘Damned of the Earth’’), Fanon goes further and argues that colonialism is an attempt to impose a Manichean structure of contraries instead of a dialectical one of ongoing, human negotiation of contradictions. The former segregates the groups; the latter emerges from interaction. The police, he observes, are the mediator in such a situation, as their role is force/violence instead of the human, discursive one of politics and civility (Fanon, 1991). **Such societies draw legitimacy from Black non-existence or invisibility. Black appearance**, in other words, **would be a violation of those systems**. Think of the continued blight of police, extra-judicial killings of Blacks in those countries. An immediate observation of many postcolonies is that antiblack attitudes, practices, and institutions aren’t exclusively white. Black antiblack dispositions make this clear. Black antiblackness entails Black exoticism. Where this exists, Blacks simultaneously receive Black love alongside Black rejection of agency. Many problems follow. **The absence of agency bars maturation, which would reinforce the racial logic of Blacks as in effect wards of whites. Without agency, ethics, liberation, maturation, politics, and responsibility could not be possible**.**Afropessimism faces the problem of a hidden premise of white agency versus Black incapacity**. Proponents of Afropessimism would no doubt respond that the theory itself is a form of agency reminiscent of Fanon’s famous remark that though whites created le Ne`gre it was les Ne`gres who created Ne´gritude. **Whites clearly did not create Afropessimism, which Black liberationists should celebrate. We should avoid the fallacy**, however, **of confusing source with outcome. History is not short of bad ideas from good people. If intrinsically good**, however**, each person of African descent would become ethically and epistemologically a switching of the Manichean contraries, which means only changing players instead of the game**. We come, then, to the crux of the matter. **If the goal** of Afropessimism **is Afropessimism, its achievement would be attitudinal and, in the language of old**, stoic – in short, **a symptom of antiblack society**. At this point, there are several observations that follow. The first is a diagnosis of the implications of Afropessimism as symptom. The second examines the epistemological implications of Afropessimism. The third is whether a disposition counts as a political act and, if so, is it sufficient for its avowed aims. There are more, but for the sake of brevity, I’ll simply focus on these.

1. [http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/negate, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/negate, http://www.thefreedictionary.com/negate, http://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/negate, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/negate] [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. STANFORD PHILOSOPHY <http://www.stanford.edu/~bobonicha/dictionary/dictionary.html> Abbreviated Dictionary of Philosophical Terminology An introduction to philosophy Stanford University [↑](#footnote-ref-2)