

EDITORIAL

We publish Volume Two of the thirty-second edition of *Existential Analysis* in a period of extraordinary international crisis. When, in January, we welcomed readers to the first volume and noted that we were also ushering in a new decade, probably nobody could have foreseen the degree of destruction which coronavirus and COVID-19 would wreak on a world already in the grip of global warming. Nor could we have known how the disproportionate impact of the virus on, in particular, the Black population of the US, would give further urgency to protests for racial justice and shine a spotlight on human rights internationally. It might be truly said that the world is in existential crisis.

The absolutisms of everyday life are shown to be delusions, but paradoxically, delusions that we need in order to carry on. The impact of recent events are shocking reminders that our stability is nothing like as secure as we like to think and not only will, but should rebound for many years, and in every part of our society.

These three phenomena are different but have some overlaps. The timeline of the climate emergency is gradual, impacts on different parts of the world in different ways, and tends to be measured in years, and this enables it to be easily ignored. It is not yet personal for enough people. The issue of racial justice is certainly personal for many people, but evidently not personal enough for enough people to be given priority, which is why it periodically emerges in the way it does. As with the climate, it is entirely human made and therefore is capable of being tackled. On the other hand, COVID-19, whose origins are less well known, circled the globe in weeks and proved that although it affects different people in different ways and for reasons that are barely understood, there is no hiding place from it for anybody. We are all in the same boat; no-one is exempt. It is intensely personal, such that it is a reminder, if one was needed, that the functioning of the world depends on people being in close physical, social, personal and ethical contact with each other. When this is not possible, normal life grinds to a halt. Working online ameliorates the impact a little but only for a few privileged people. It is not a long-term solution. At such times, we are forced to ask ourselves what we really want out of life and what we really value. As Kierkegaard wrote, “The crucial thing is to find a truth which is truth for me, to find the idea for which I am willing to live and die”.

Whether we like it or not, this is a given; it permeates our every action.

The impact of recent events will redound for many years, and in every part of our society. The psychological impact of COVID-19 is already felt by psychological health practitioners, personally and professionally, and by our clients. It is having a profound effect on when, where and how we

work. Doubtless numerous papers will be written over the coming years, each contributing to our understanding of this experience, and suggesting ways in which we can use it as an opportunity to reassess and improve how we engage with clients. We are very early in this trauma, but already the relational challenge to us of moving to online working has begun to generate debate about the values we hold and what makes existential-phenomenological practice distinctive.

An Editorial does not provide adequate space to do more than signal our hope that this Journal will be able to provide an arena to host some of the debate to come. As harbingers of what will surely follow, we are pleased to be able to open this edition with two papers which address aspects of the pandemic: the first, by Marc Bush, entitled ‘Paradox, Polarity and the Pandemic: making sense of the existential impacts of COVID-19 on people’s lives’, and the second, by Claire Francica, offers a ‘phenomenological memoir of this very difficult time in history’ via a discussion of online therapy with children.

Kierkegaard’s reminder resonates with all the other papers in this issue in different ways. We are delighted to be able to include Michael Montgomery’s ‘Out of Your Existential Mind: Madonna, Relevance and Nuance’, a paper presented at the on 2019 Society for Existential Analysis Annual Conference. Two further papers, by Letizia Orlando and Angelique Vagopoulou explore, respectively, some aspects of listening to music and listening as a treatment, and rhythm and music in the Eleusinian Myth. Staying with the arts, Jamie Giles examines the protagonist in T.S Eliot’s *The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock* in relation to the existential philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre and posits further areas for academic enquiry.

Dale Judd gives us an overview of the concept of psychological formulation, via a critique of Weeraskera’s (1996) ‘5 Ps model’ and through presenting a phenomenological alternative, which addresses the inherent limitations of Weeraskera’s approach. Donna Christina Savery employs case study material to demonstrate the efficacy of Alice Holzhey-Kunz’ Daseinsanalytic model in the understanding and treatment of echoism. Elv Moody explores what she refers to as ‘This mute and permanent question: What is inherent in existential sexuality?’ Ken Bradford sets out to clarify the ontological nature of psyche by considering its core etymological meaning. Finally, Enrico Gnautati provides an insightful contribution to existential couples therapy with his exposition of the use of humour, while Martin Adams presents an existential perspective on human development, proffering seven invariant themes that manifest in different ways throughout life.

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Martin Adams