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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume 14/2, Fall 2019

Editor's Introduction Helmut Wautischer <i>Sonoma State University</i>	iii
Karl Jaspers on the Atomic Bomb and Responsibility Mats Andrén <i>University of Gothenburg, Sweden</i>	1
Homebound: Hikikomori and the Phenomenology of Radical Social Withdrawal Xi Chen <i>University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry</i>	10
Unsettling Jaspers: Historicizing Metaphysical Guilt Devin Zane Shaw <i>Douglas College, Canada</i>	17
The Kantian Idea of Constitutional Patriotism – Part 1: Constitutional Patriotism and Revolution Pierre Keller <i>University of California, Riverside</i>	22
Jaspers on Death Kiki Berk <i>Southern New Hampshire University</i>	32
Jaspers on the Question of Free Will Joshua Tepley <i>Saint Anselm College</i>	39
Open Sky – Open Society: Zhuangzi and Jaspers Jörn Kroll <i>San Francisco, California</i>	49
Philosophical Foundations of War and World Peace Fidel J. Gutiérrez Vivanco <i>World Philosophical Forum, Peru</i>	58
Daimonic Disclosure in Arendtian Action: A Response to Critics Trevor Tchir <i>Algoma University, Canada</i>	62
Political Freedom: Human not Divine Frederick M. Dolan, <i>University of California, Berkeley</i>	72
Aesthetics and Politics in Hannah Arendt Karin Fry, <i>Georgia Southern University</i>	76
The Daimon as Metaphor: Naming the Ground of the "Who" in Arendt's Theory of Political Action Jennifer Gaffney, <i>Loyola University Chicago</i>	80
The Kantian Idea of Constitutional Patriotism – Part 2: The Very Idea of a Constitutional Republic Pierre Keller <i>University of California, Riverside</i>	83

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Some two years ago when the theme for this *Existenz* issue, *International Relations and Philosophy in a Global Age*, had been decided upon, the dynamics of the unexpected political events that shaped public life in an unprecedented manner in 2020 could not have been anticipated. And yet, the essays presented here address this emerging social reality from the vantage point of philosophical reflection, leading to a broader understanding of the human condition.

The emotional impact caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic brings forth a deeper sense of understanding of the impact of involuntary social withdrawal that is in place to overcome the pandemic. Xi Chen (U. Rochester) describes the Japanese practice of hikikomori and concludes that this form of voluntary social withdrawal can no longer be seen as merely a culture-bound syndrome. To a philosophically inspired mind, death is always seen as an inspiration to reflect upon one's life; the current uncertainty whether exposure to the virus will cause one to die has brought an untimely sense of imminence to this topic. Kiki Berk (Southern New Hampshire) takes a closer look from an analytic perspective on Jaspers' treatment of death, and Joshua Tepley (Saint Anselm College) discusses the topic of free will.

The pandemic is only one of the 2020 challenges; this year's political realities in the United States bring a significant stress test of America's Constitution for a variety of reasons. Departing from Jaspers' postwar writings, Devin Zane Shaw (Douglas College) provides a historical perspective with regard to the rise of fascism in North America. Pierre Keller (UC Riverside) draws upon Kantian constitutional patriotism in order to show that Jaspers, Arendt, and Saner can be seen as involved in a discussion that is ongoing with Habermas, Foucault, Rawls, O'Neill, and Korsgaard. The awakening of the masses, the role of the university for responsible citizenship, the tensions between proletariat and aristocracy are only some of the themes that are of interest to constitutional scholars. Three critics of Trevor Tchir's (Algoma U.) book about Hannah Arendt thematize the topic of populism and of freedom and political action.

Three essays presented at the Eighth International Jaspers Conference (Beijing 2018) are included: Mats Andrén (U. Gothenburg) discusses Jaspers' treatment of the atomic bomb, Jörn W. Kroll (San Francisco) writes on Jaspers' reception of Zhuangzi, and Fidel Julian Gutiérrez Vivanco (World Philosophical Forum, Peru) introduces a method designed to balance two principles, destruction and conservation, in an attempt toward establishing world peace.

Videotaped versions of eight essays in this issue are posted at existenz.us/media.html.

Viewable on YouTube: Arendt

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