

Living in the time of the coronavirus

Existential Motifs in Learn to Love Solitude



Existential Motifs in Loneliness and Solitude



what is existentialism?

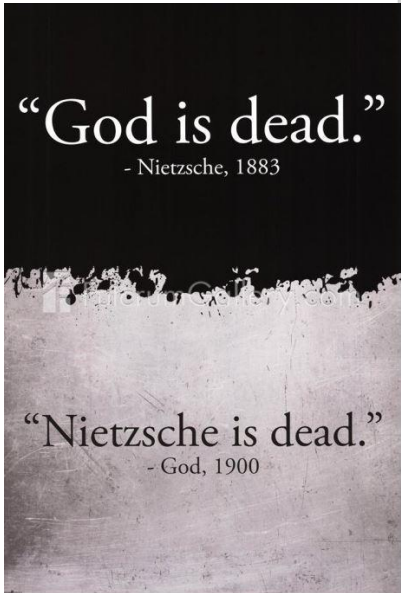
A philosophical school of thought that has included both **Christian and atheist attitudes**.

Existentialism is an outlook which begins with a disoriented individual facing a confused world that he/she cannot accept.

It's more positive aspect is captured in such key phrases as **'freedom', 'authenticity', 'responsibility' and the 'leap of faith' (absurd)**. Its more negative side emphasises life's **meaninglessness** and man's **alienation**. – **nothingness, sickness, loneliness, dread, nausea**.



God is Dead Friedrich Nietzsche



IS MAN ONE OF GOD'S
BLUNDERS? OR IS GOD
ONE OF MAN'S
BLUNDERS?

Nietzsche says because god doesn't exist we, as humans,
are thrown back upon ourselves.

We have art in order to not die from the truth....

existential cinema

Amelie (2001)
Jean-Pierre Jeunet



The Birth of Tragedy

Friedrich Nietzsche

Nietzsche says because god doesn't exist we, as humans, are thrown back upon ourselves.

The nature of who we are is based on two impulses; order and chaos. We can't have one without the other.

Order and chaos are the basis of human suffering.

Nietzsche associates **order and chaos** with the gods

Apollo - order and Dionysus - chaos. Therefore human existence is tragic.



Yin

The good

Chaos

Feminine

Night

Unknown

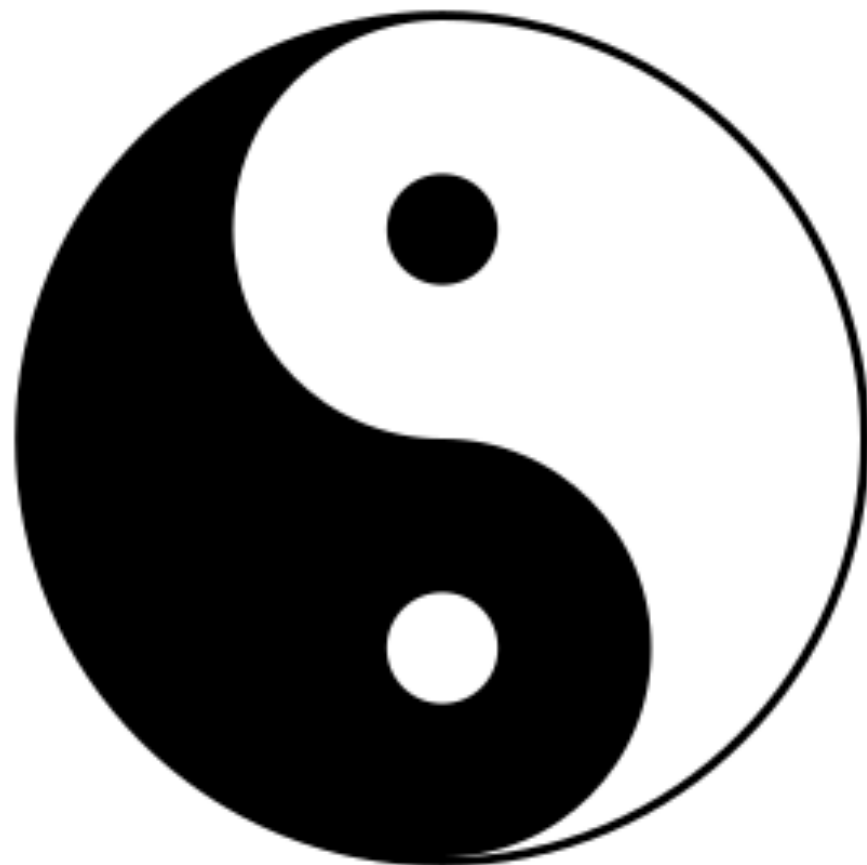
Right brain

The bad

Scared to death

Decadence

Nihilism



Yang

The good

Order

Masculine

Day

Known

Left brain

The bad

Bored to death

Authoritarianism

Fascism

atheistic existentialism

basic concept

A human being has a natural desire for
a god/infinity that does not exist.

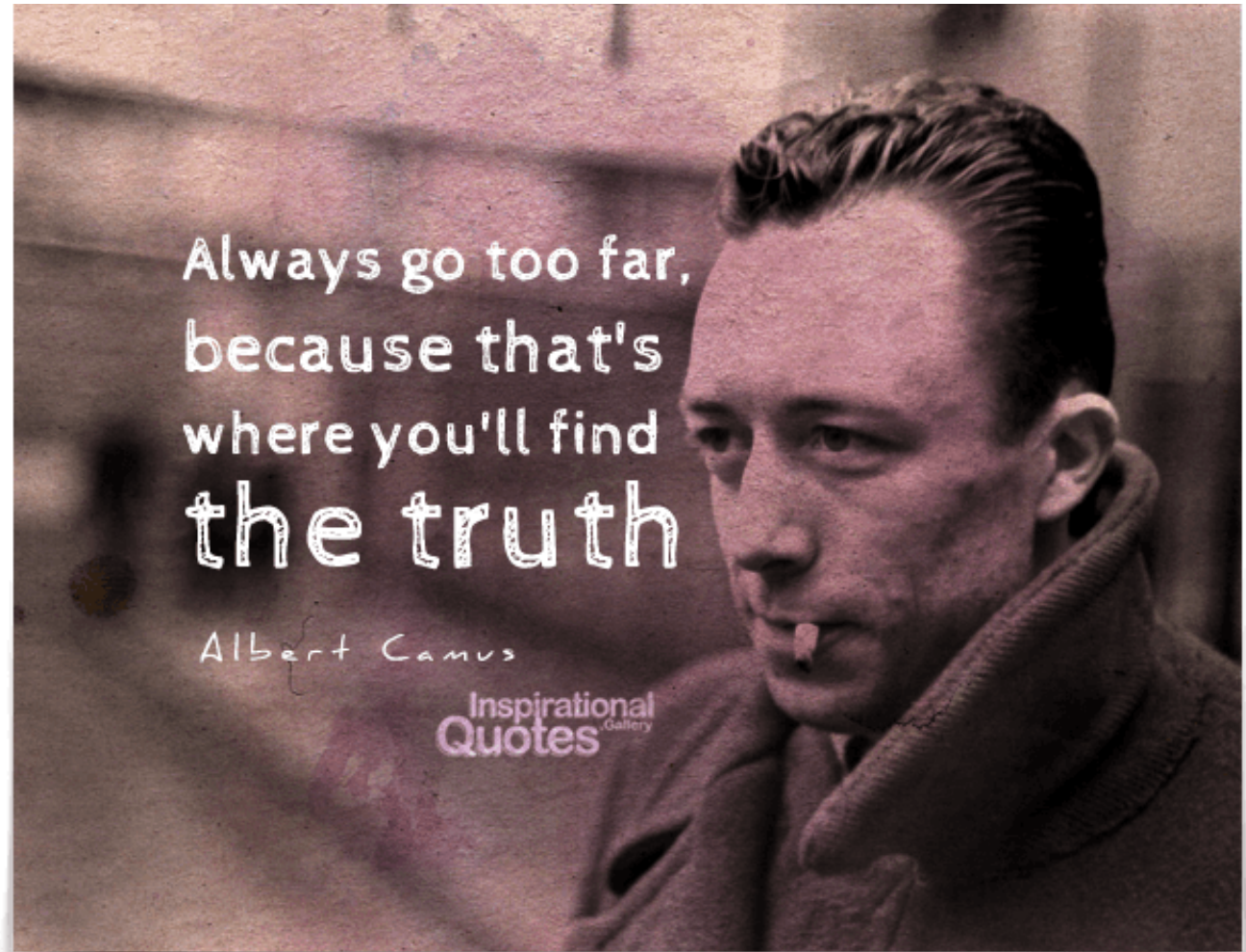
As a result the human suffers because
that desire can never be satisfied.

WE ARE OUR
CHOICES

J.P. SARTRE

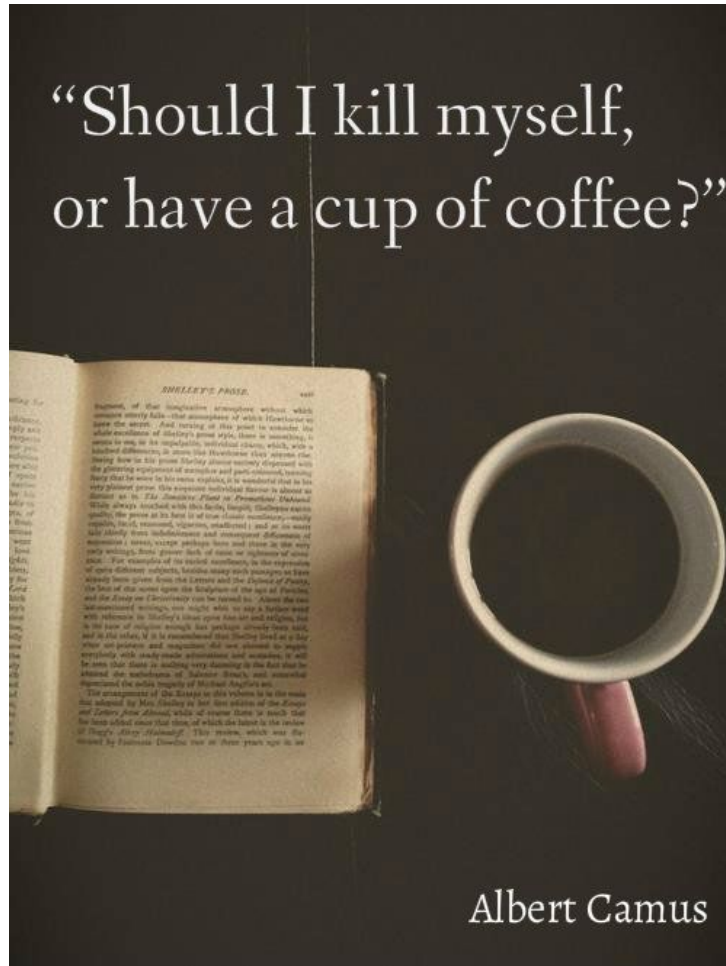
Albert Camus

*In the depth of winter, I finally
learned that within me there lay an
invincible summer.*



is suicide an option?

Albert Camus



There is but one truly serious philosophical problem
and that is suicide

*“The literal meaning
of life is whatever
you' re doing that
prevents you from
killing yourself.” —
Albert Camus.*

the absurd

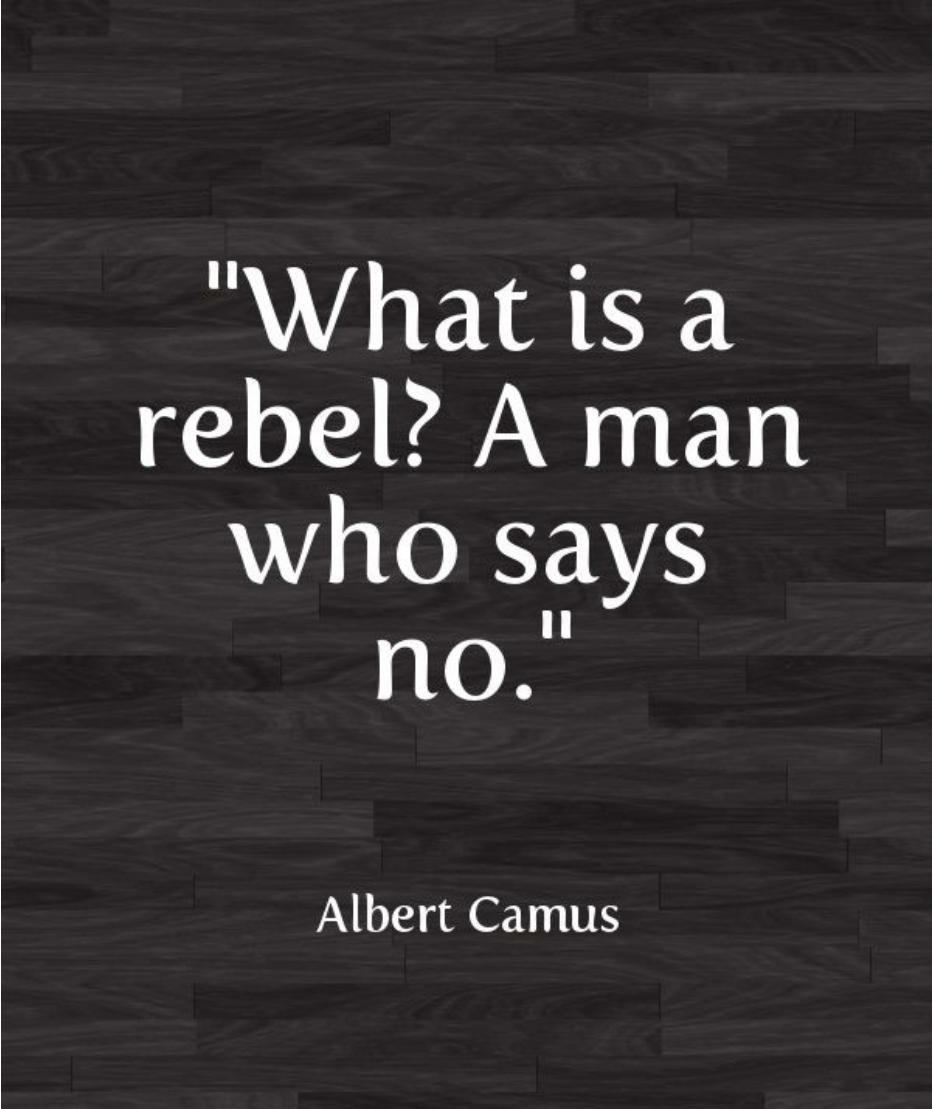
Albert Camus

Human existence is Absurd.

The absurdity lies in the fact that humans desire a God who does not exist. Their subsequent suffering is pointless.

What is the point of that suffering? It is absurd.

I draw from the absurd three consequences: my Revolt, my Liberty and my Rebellion



"What is a
rebel? A man
who says
no."

Albert Camus

Myth of Sisyphus

Albert Camus

the absurd hero



Myth of Sisyphus

Albert Camus

Quotes

- There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is **suicide**. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy.
- The subject of this essay is precisely this relationship between **the absurd and suicide**, the exact degree to which **suicide is a solution to the absurd**.
- The principle can be established that for a man who does not cheat, what he believes to be true must determine his action. Belief in the absurdity of existence must then dictate his conduct.
- For the existentialists **negation is their God**. To be precise, that God is maintained only through the negation of human reason.

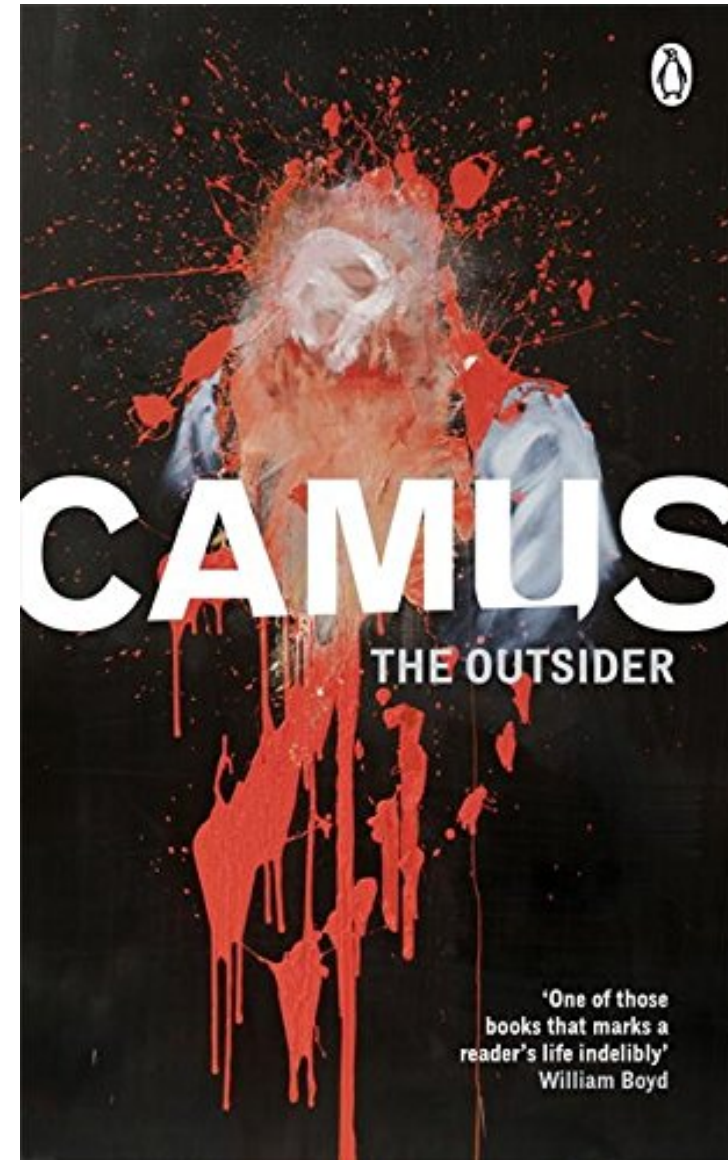
the outsider

Albert Camus

In Camus's novels he depicts characters who have a strong awareness of **the reality of absurd existence**.

His novel *the outsider*—(otherwise called *the stranger* or *l'étranger*) is typical of his work. Because of their awareness of the absurd his characters come to recognise that **social engagement is a game** and **they choose to opt out and fulfill their lives as individuals not according to social structures**.

alienation, isolation, loneliness



Soren Kierkegaard

take a 'leap of faith'

What Camus rejected is Kierkegaard's form of existentialism: **Christian existentialism**.

Kierkegaard believed that due to the order and chaos of human existence and **the sense of dread about the reality of death** there is only one option. **God**.



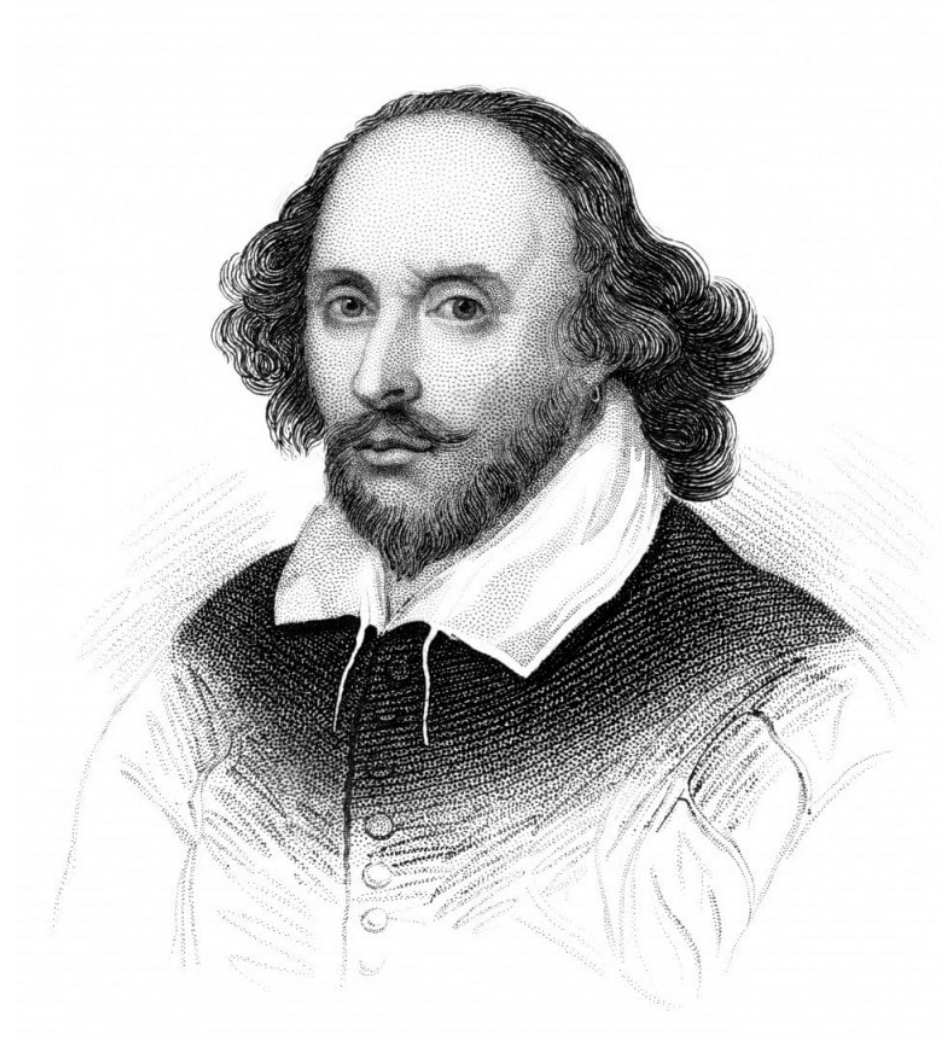
Hamlet

Shakespeare

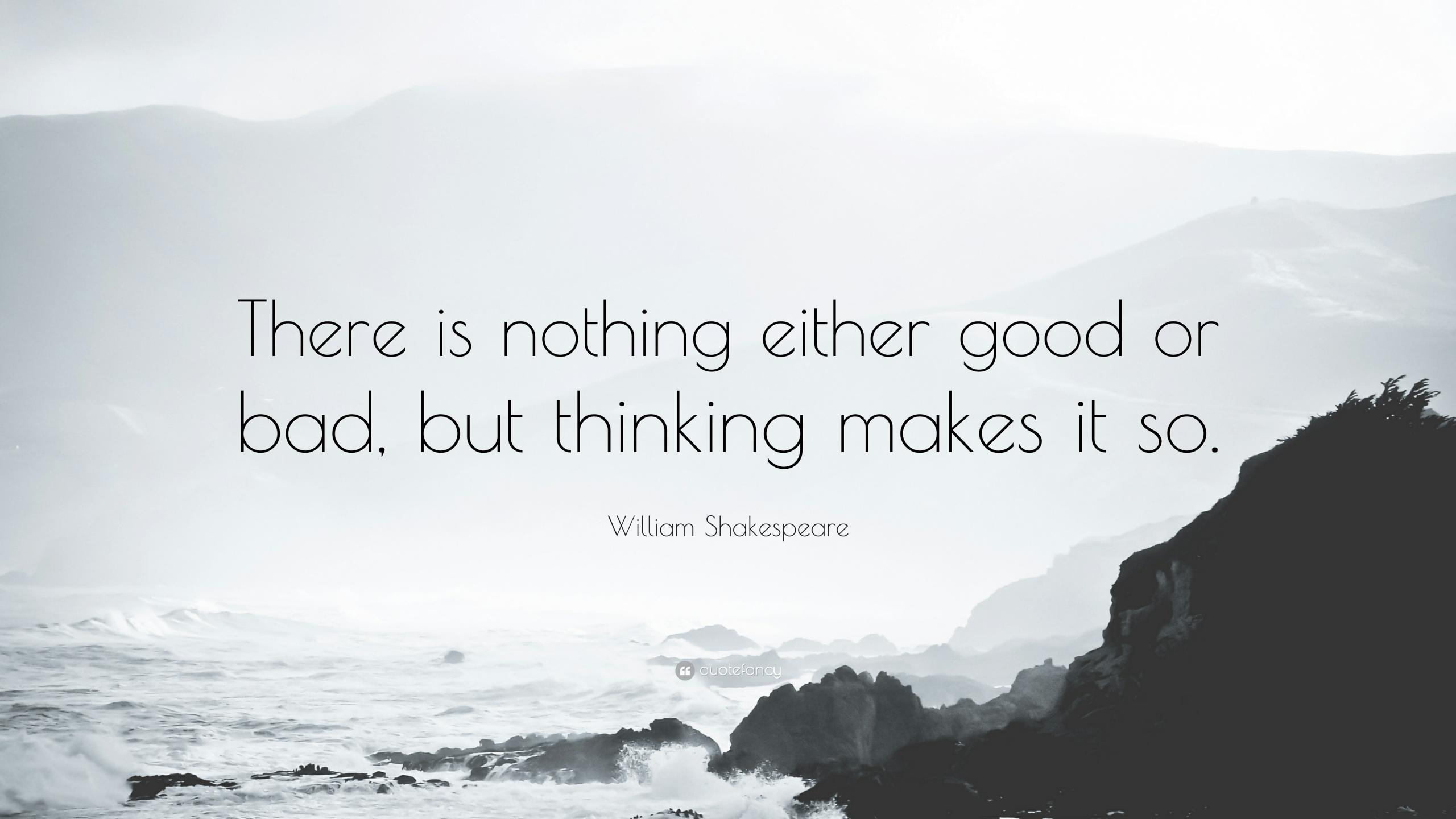
To be, or not to be?

To be, or not to be: that is the question:

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end



The most famous work of Scandinavian Noir
is **Hamlet** by **William Shakespeare**.



There is nothing either good or
bad, but thinking makes it so.

William Shakespeare

Waiting for Godot

Samuel Beckett

Theatre of the Absurd

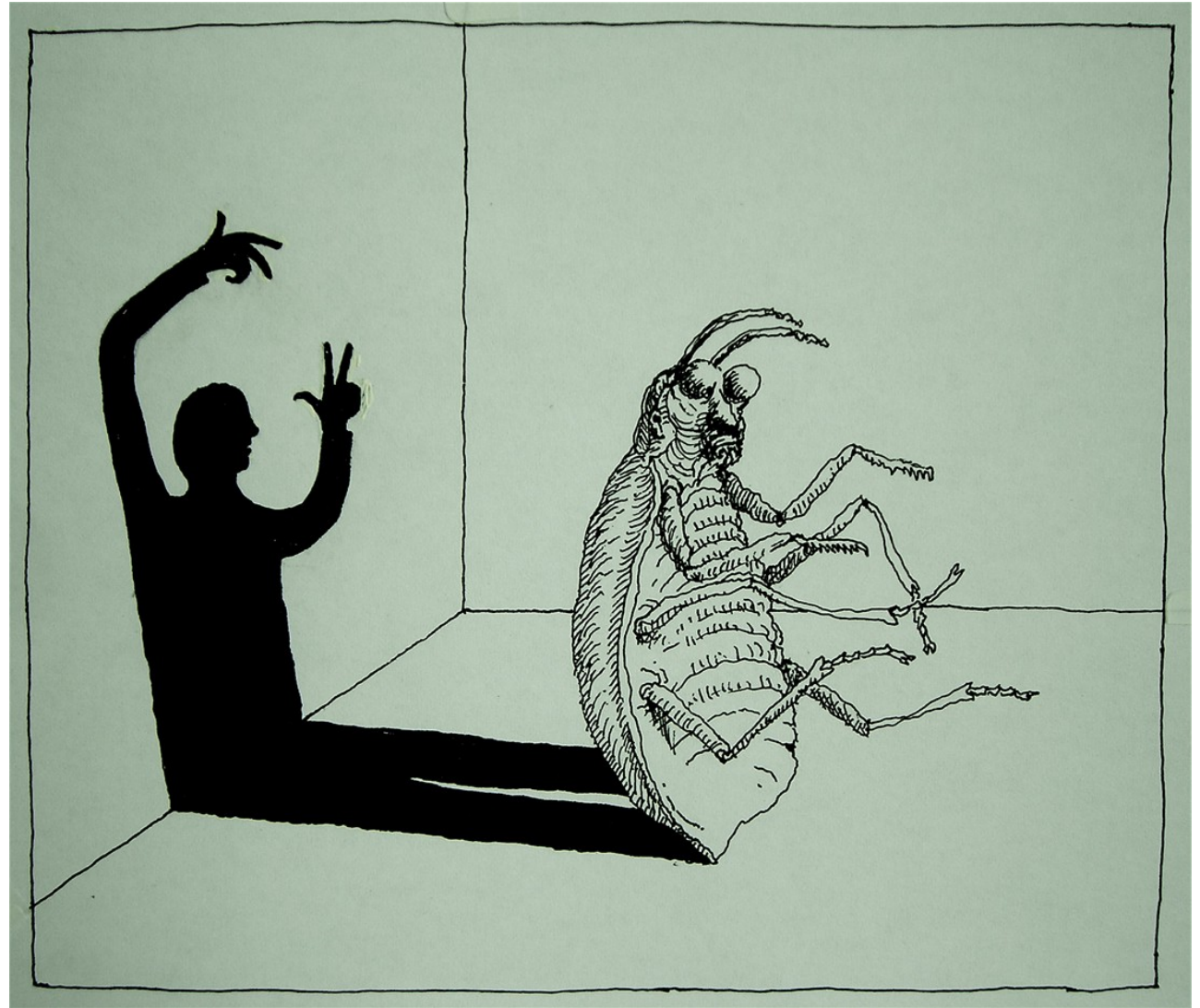


Metamorphosis

Franz Kafka

existential dread

alienation, loneliness



The Scream

Edvard Munch

a universal symbol of anxiety

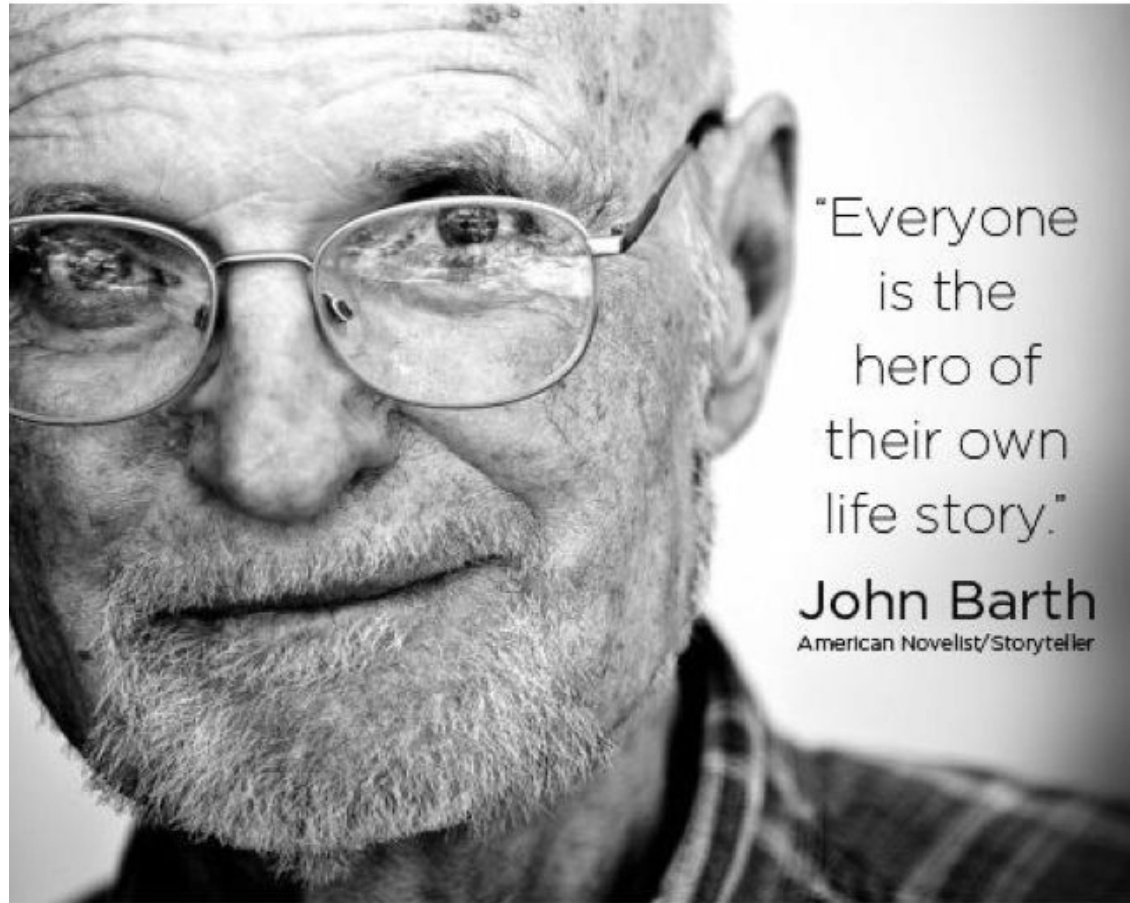


Existential Motifs in Loneliness and Solitude



the non-heroic hero

The word 'hero' often
problematic and
never seems to quite
fit the moral
framework necessary
to produce a
traditional hero



alienation and loneliness

The concept of alienation is crucial to most existentialists from **Kierkegaard to Sartre**.

For them, man stands alone, alienated from any social or intellectual order, and is therefore totally self-dependent.

Classic film noir – private detective keeping emotional involvement to a minimum, detective gains power over others but pays the prize in terms of loneliness...



existential choice

being and nothingness

freedom

authentic or inauthentic

..fearlessly facing death



The **inauthentic life** is the unquestioned one which derives its rationale from a facile acceptance of those values external to the self...

To live **authentically**, one must reject these assurances and therein discover the ability to create one's own values...in so doing each individual assumes responsibility for their life..

a fear of being alone

...the threat of imminent
death, forces the
individual to re-examine
their life



I think that a fear of being alone can take three forms: a fear of being lonely, a fear of not being able to cope on our own and a fear of what might come to the surface in the silence.

**meaninglessness,
purposelessness,
the absurd**

benign indifference

blind chance



Panic and Pandemics: The Return of the Absurd

sanctuary, ritual, order

Am I okay when it's just me?



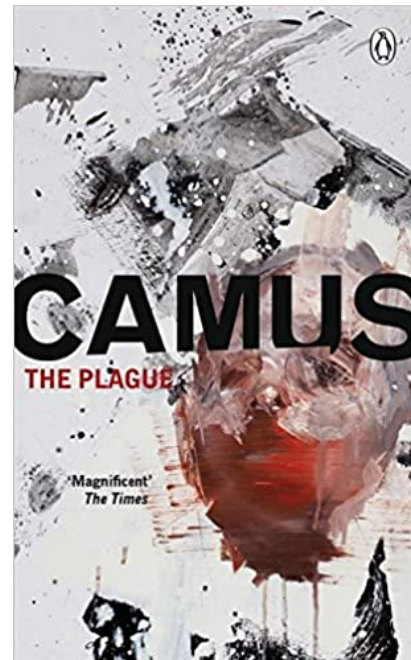
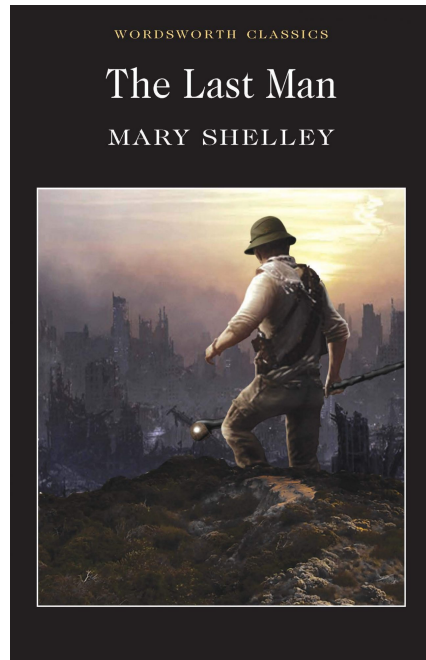
Solitude: Sanctuary or Scary?

workshop

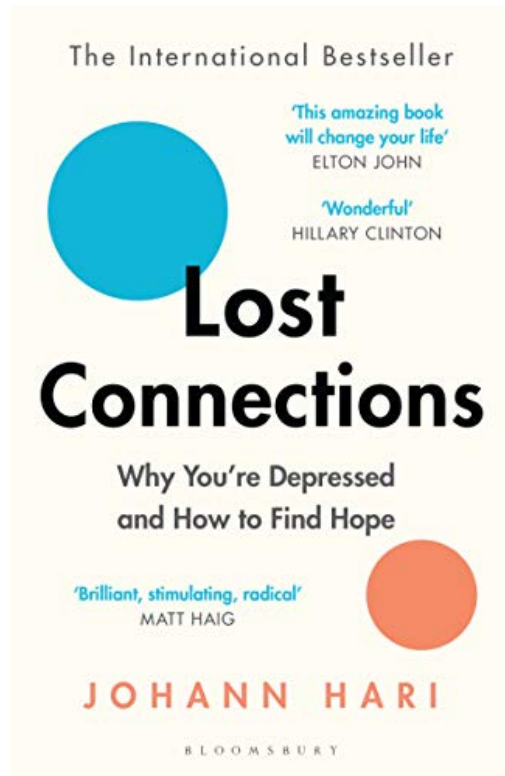
discussion questions

1. In small groups spend 30 minutes exploring **existential aphorisms** (i.e. quotes) as a research exercise that could help think about the human condition and possible story lines (documentary) springboards for creativity etc. **Use keyword searches** – Nietzsche, Camus, Kafka, Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, Sartre, existential angst, absurd, alienation....
2. **Discuss** how existential suffering as defined by Nietzsche and Camus finds expression in 20th century cinema of loneliness and solitude (also more broadly art and literature.)
3. Can you think how **existentialist ideas might work in the context of** the ‘**time of the coronavirus**’ and the ideas around loneliness/solitude you are currently developing?
4. Can you **link some the ideas of existentialism to** character strengths, disorders and how this impacts potential states of mind.

the global pandemic and plague narratives



the loneliness epidemic

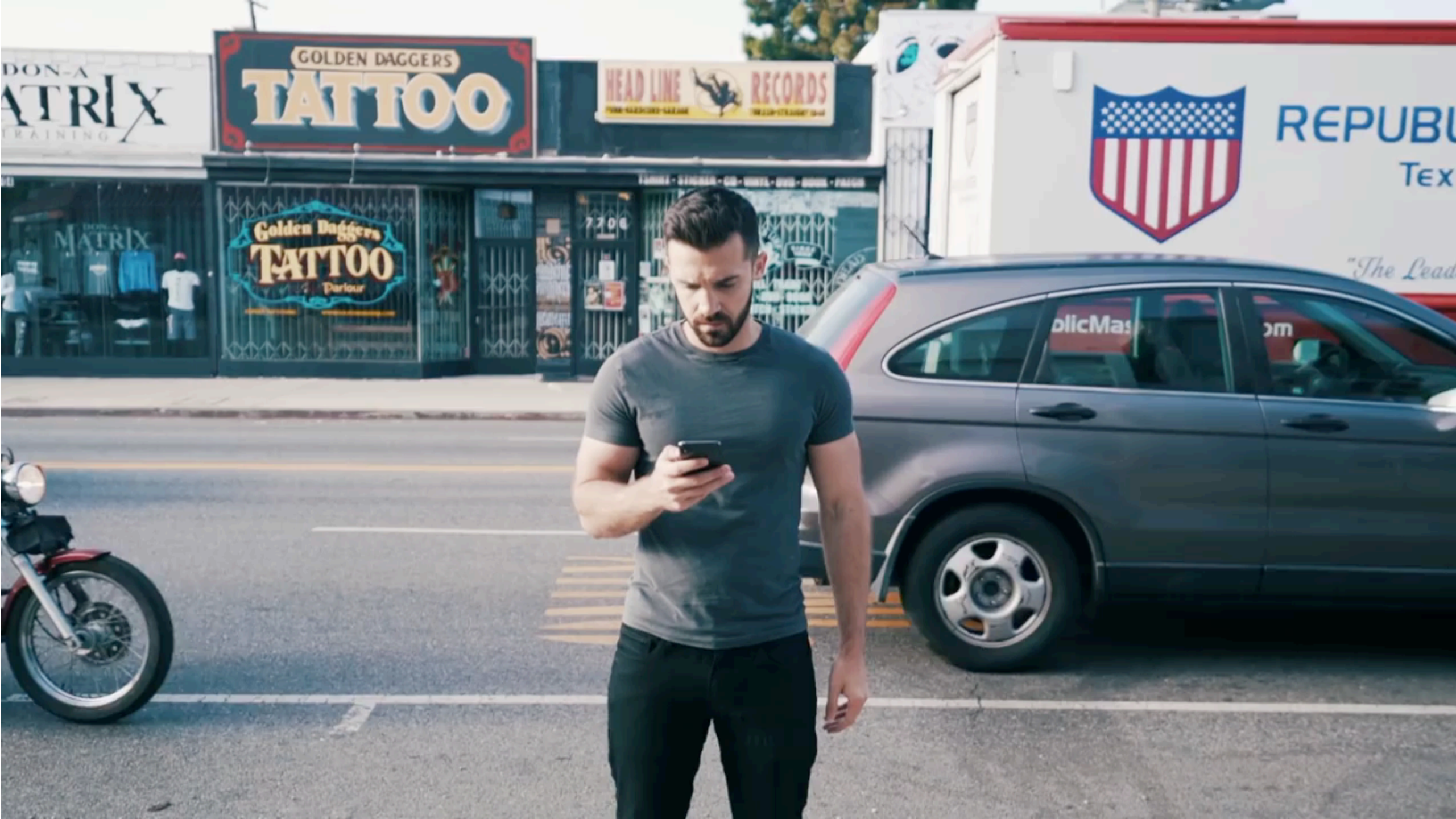


“Real loneliness is not necessarily limited to when you are alone.” — Charles Bukowski

the age of loneliness – Sue Bourne



Is there a loneliness epidemic?



workshop

discussion questions

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Is there a Loneliness Epidemic ?

break-out group

discussion questions

1. Loneliness Epidemic is there a cause for concern?
2. Why?
3. Who?
4. Where?
5. Causes and Solutions...

Portfolio building – Research ideas - document using mixed media approach.