17th Meeting of the Psychology for the Other Conference
Seattle University

Vulnerability, Humility and Social Action: The Paradox of Power in the Clinic and the Streets

March 19 – 20, 2021
Online Conference
Program Guide

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Conference origins

In 2003, the first Psychology for the Other conference began as a small seminar gathering of scholars, therapists, students and researchers to explore topics raised by Levinas in the application of a Psychology For the Other. The emphasis on this word For has been essential to the training of Masters level clinicians in the Seattle University Masters of Arts in Psychology (MAP) program for close to 40 years. Our beloved friend and mentor, Dr. George Kunz, helped us to deepen into a conversation that helped us to look for each other beyond the totalizing roots of our rhetoric, language, or even thought itself. This question of “Who is this For?” has become central to the training of therapists and our ongoing work as human beings to become radically and endlessly decentered by the unforeseen and unfathomable mystery of the Other.

In 2016, this conversation centered on the exploration of how love makes us vulnerable. In 2017, we continued to apply this theme to how this vulnerability inspires the interruptive movement of apology, the movement away from self. And in 2018, we gathered into all of these conversations around how justice moves through us from the Other. The movements and meanings of all three of these themes are saturated in our modern dilemmas in our world today.

This year

As we face the ravages of a pandemic and the clear calls to conscience in the wake of political, economic and racial violence, we ask “how can the paradox of power and weakness manifest in our work as healers and citizens?” From Levinas’ central theme of the power of ethical resistance, George Kunz insisted that the paradoxical power of weakness resides in our capacity to be moved by the Other through simplicity, humility, and patience. For Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., the paradoxical power of vulnerability reveals itself through the active passivity of satiyagraha, or soul force that is born of love and truth.

It has long been understood by our civil and human rights leaders that the movement of love is inseperable from the movement of justice. Non-violent resistance has become the unsurpassed language and method of the oppressed through the animating force of vulnerability, mercy, and humility. Given the insistant and ongoing calls for justice anguishingly expressed in the murders of our black and indigenous brothers and sisters, we ask: how do we face our collective history today? How do we face the continuous repair work of living into the ruptures of our efforts of reconstruction? How can we, as therapists, healers and fellow human beings, continue to stand and march shoulder to shoulder in the streets in order to embrace the constant command of interruption of the self to live our responsibility to and for each other?

Words of thanks

Dr. LeBeau wishes to express her deepest gratitude for the support and guidance of the Conference Organizing Committee without whom this conference would never have been possible. She tried to bribe everyone with promises of chili and cornbread but they agreed to help even without knowing if it would be any good. Thank you all for your faith in so many ways.
# Events on Friday, March 19

Panel discussions led by first-year and second-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students  
(All times are PDT)

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| 3:10 – 3:30 | **Session 1:** Societal Impacts from Covid-19 Through the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas  
First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Mohamed Abdelaziz, Laura Flynn and Kristopher Wannquist |                                                                         |
| 3:30 – 3:50 | **Session 2:** Gender as the Ethical Relation  
First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Alexis Jimenez, Samuel Noble and Kayne Reevey |                                                                         |
| 3:50 – 4:10 | **Session 3:** Becoming a Vessel for the Other: An Exploration of Power Dynamics in Levinasian Ethics  
First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students David Parks, Kayla Ritchie and Axel Stanovsky |                                                                         |
| 4:10 – 4:30 | **Session 4:** Totality and Infinity as it Relates to Group Membership and Identity  
First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Brett Baldwin, Madeline Elledge and Tara Shelby |                                                                         |
| 4:40 – 5:00 | **Session 5:** Together as Separate Beings: Integrating Cross-Cultural Configurations of Self and Other through Shared Unity  
First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Kit Collins, Jailene Iglesias and Marius Lina |                                                                         |
| 5:00 – 5:20 | **Session 6:** Becoming More of Oneself for the Other: The Paradox of Hospitality  
First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Elizabeth Hadley, Andrew Shaw and Sophia Wang |                                                                         |
| 5:20 – 5:40 | **Session 7:** Homeless, Houseless: Being a Home for the Other, A Therapeutic Relationship  
First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Hallie Desautel, |                                                                         |
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<td>6:00 – 6:50</td>
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<td>second-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Daisy Deely, Kyle Gregg and Claire Chambers. Discussion host: Julia Robins</td>
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<td>7:00 – 7:50</td>
<td>Session 9: Getting a Felt Sense of Levinasian Responsibility: Reshaping Implicit Biases with the Oppressed-Other</td>
<td>second-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Niki Koumoutsos, Sean Ambrose and Kaleb Sinclair. Discussion host: Julia Robins</td>
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<td>7:50 – 8:00</td>
<td>Closing Remarks and Gratitude</td>
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**Events on Saturday, March 20**

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<td>Welcome</td>
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<td>9:00 – 10:10</td>
<td>Session 1: Keynote: The Truth of Testimony: Testimony as Act and Narrative Address by Dr. Scott Davidson, West Virginia University</td>
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<td>10:20 – 11:10</td>
<td>Session 2: The Fire Fable: A Vision of Our Shared Vulnerability and Humanity</td>
<td>Seattle University panelists Kaleb Sinclair, Dr. Randall Horton and Dr. Claire LeBeau. Discussion host: Dr. Lane Gerber</td>
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<td>11:20 – 12:10</td>
<td>Session 3: The Vignette: A Conversation on Attending</td>
<td>Panelists Peter August, LMFT and Dr. Eric Severson, Seattle University</td>
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| 2:20 – 3:20 | Session 5: Levinas and Psychology: Bringing Levinasian Ethics to Bear on Four Cases of Interruption  
Panelists: Duquesne University doctoral students Benjamin Strosberg, Lucas Goodwin, Pavan Brar and Michelle Browne. Discussion host: Dr. Claire LeBeau | Break                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 3:30 – 4:20 | Session 6: Philosophical Foundations of Short-Term Dynamic Psychotherapy  
Panelists: Chatham University Counseling Center Practicum Group: Louis Lamanna, Sean Leadem and Ryan Mest. Discussion host: Eric Severson | Break                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 4:30 – 5:20 | Session 7: Reverence, Justice and Narrative  
Panelists: Dr. Joanne Halverson and Brecca Smith of Seattle University.  
Discussion host: Dr. Claire LeBeau | 5:20 – 5:30  
Closing Remarks and Gratitude  
Dr. Claire LeBeau, Seattle University. |
Scott Davidson, West Virginia University

Dr. Davidson's research focuses on leading figures in contemporary French philosophy, such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas, Michel Henry and Paul Ricoeur, to name a few. He is especially interested in exploring how recent developments in French theory can yield new insights into topics in the areas of ethics, political philosophy, the philosophy of law, and the philosophy of embodiment.

Dr. Davidson has translated four books and numerous articles by Michel Henry into English, and he has recently published The Michel Henry Reader. In addition, he has edited five books on the work of Paul Ricoeur, including most recently a three part series on Ricoeur’s early philosophy of the will. Samples of his own writings are available on his page on Academia.edu: https://wvu.academia.edu/ScottDavidson

Dr. Davidson serves as editor of the Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy. The contents of the journal are open access and freely downloadable. They can be accessed at http://www.jffp.org.

Panel participants

Sean Ambrose

Sean Ambrose is a master’s degree candidate in psychology (existential phenomenology program) at Seattle University. Sean is completing clinical practicum and will graduate in June 2021. sambrose@seattleu.edu

Peter August

Peter August is a psychotherapist in private practice in Oakland, CA. He has worked with children, adolescents, and adults, including those who present as neurologically atypical, for the last thirty years. He has also worked for community mental-health organizations where he provided school based psychotherapy, early childhood mental health consultation, conducted post-doctoral seminars and facilitated case conferences. He holds degrees in psychology, dramatic arts and philosophy and is interested in the convergence of the therapeutic, philosophical, and literary. His presentations and publications include: Twisting, Stamping, Turning; The Patient Comes to Love the Therapist and the Therapist Goes onto Write; What Sort of Thing is Nonsense: Fragmentary Writing as Clinical Experience; What
Fascinates: Rereading Winnicott, Reading Blanchot; Love’s Polysemy; Writing the Vignette and The Reversing of the Subjective; Is There a Language of Legos?; The End of Metaphor and the Beginning of Time; and Finding Time in Hide-and-Seek.

Pavan Brar
Pavan S. Brar is a doctoral candidate in psychology at Duquesne University. His interests include: phenomenological psychopathology (particularly schizophrenia and suicidality), psychology and hermeneutics, and the psychology and philosophy of music. brarp@duq.edu

Michelle Browne
Michelle Browne, M.A. is a PhD candidate in Duquesne University’s clinical psychology program. She currently serves as the program’s clinical coordinator for military personnel and their families. Her research interests are focused at the intersection between complex trauma, phenomenology, and narrative. Brownem1@duq.edu

Claire Chambers
Claire is currently a psychotherapy intern at Discovery Behavioral Healthcare in Port Townsend, WA. With a background in teaching theatre, drama, and literature, she’s also working on becoming a registered drama therapist with the North American Drama Therapy Association. Claire believes in the liberating potential of imagination and creativity, and the deep politics of spirituality.

Daisy Deely
Daisy currently works in ABA creating efforts to activate the self-advocacy skills of clients for the benefit of the collective. Their BA in Human Services serves a foundation for deideologizing with the Other, creating space for counter-narratives towards liberation. How can we take better care of people?

Edward Durgan
Edward Durgan, Ph.D., holds an MA in Psychology from Seattle University and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of British Columbia. They are a member of the Psychotherapy Cooperative and also works as a therapist in private practice as an LMHCA. Ed is an interdisciplinary scholar and researcher who has focused on existential-phenomenological solutions to the crises of homelessness and mental illness through innovations in architecture, psychiatry, and social organization. Their background also includes direct action organizing for Palestinian human rights, indigenous sovereignty, anti-poverty movements, and cannabis decriminalization. Ed is also the Academic Director at Clemente Veteran’s Initiative at Antioch University in Seattle. edurgan@gmail.com

Lane Gerber
Dr. Lane Gerber received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and his Psychoanalyst diploma from the Northwest Center for Psychoanalysis. He is the founder of the mental health section of the Refugee Clinic at Harborview Hospital and the co-founder of the Psychotherapy Co-operative.
He has spent sabbatical time learning with Robert Jay Lifton, MD and working with trauma survivors and healers in Cambodia. He has served as Clinical Faculty at the University of Washington Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and is the former Director of the Existential Phenomenological Therapeutic program at SU where he is now a Professor Emeritus continuing to guide and mentor his adoring community of alumni friends and colleagues. He is a Diplomate of the American Board of Professional Psychology and currently works in a private psychotherapy and supervision/consultation practice. Most importantly, he has been married for over 50 years to Joanna and has two wonderful children and three adorable grandchildren. And he is still just 21! Babyfood@uw.edu

Lucas Goodwin

Lucas Goodwin, M.A. is a Ph.D. student studying clinical psychology at Duquesne University. Lucas has written about a range of issues occurring at the interface of psychology and the law, including the relationship between the law and violence, fear of the police as a just defense, and the lived experience of Black Americans in encounters with the police. goodwinl@duq.edu

Kyle Gregg

Kyle is currently a psychotherapy intern at Sound IDD in Capitol Hill, WA. He has worked in Foster Care, and Residential Treatment for both young people on the Autism spectrum and (separately) for Juvenile Sex Offenders. He has a special interest in Levinas, Kierkegaard, and the interpersonal moral psychology of conflict and repair.

Joanne Halverson

Dr. Halverson grew up in the Pacific Northwest and has lived in both the city and in a cabin in the woods. She has a doctorate in clinical psychology from Antioch University and her masters in existential phenomenology from Seattle University. For over 30 years, she has worked as a therapist, retreat facilitator, educator, supervisor, and researcher/writer. Revering multiple perspectives, she has worked with people of varied ethnicities, ages, and cultures. As both pupil and friend, she has been deeply involved with several traditional Coast Salish Indigenous spiritual leaders. She believes our lives, in current western culture, are too frequently lived within a torn web of connections which we need to restore in personal and social domains. Contact info: joannedhalverson@gmail.com Website: thrivecounselorseattle.com

Randall Horton

Dr. Randall Horton is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Seattle University and Director of the MAP program. His research includes studies of the cultural psychology of emotion, the psychology of ethno-political violence, and studies of the clinical impact of violence in the lives of immigrants and refugees. He has been involved in psychological assessment work in support of asylum seeking refugees in the Pacific Northwest. His work has received support the US Fulbright Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and the Social Science Research Council. hortonra@seattleu.edu
Niki Koumoutsos

Niki Koumoutsos is a master's degree candidate in psychology (existential phenomenology program) at Seattle University. Niki is completing clinical practicum and will graduate in June 2021. Contact: nkoumoutsos@seattleu.edu

Louis Lamanna

Louis is a graduate student from Duquesne University's doctoral, clinical psychology program in their second year of practicum training at Chatham University Counseling Center where they provide psychotherapy, supervision, and didactic seminar sessions based in scholarly projects related to their interests and the center's clinical mission. L.Lamanna@Chatham.edu

Sean Leadem

Sean is a graduate student from Duquesne University's doctoral, clinical psychology program in their second year of practicum training at Chatham University Counseling Center where they provide psychotherapy, supervision, and didactic seminar sessions based in scholarly projects related to their interests and the center's clinical mission. S.Leadem@Chatham.edu

Claire LeBeau

Dr. Claire LeBeau is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Seattle University. She teaches courses at both an undergraduate and graduate level in existential phenomenological psychology. After completing her Master's Degree from Seattle University in 1997, she worked in the Seattle area in a broad range of community mental health positions and in private practice. She completed her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA in 2013. Her research interests focus on the interpersonal origins of ethics, primarily through the philosophical work of Emmanuel Levinas, and the therapeutic application of phenomenology to the healing relationship. She is currently researching the application and use of Gendlin's Focusing Technique as a research method and therapeutic practice. Using this new methodology, she is conducting research on the experience of vulnerability for first-time parents couples. lebeauc@seattleu.edu

Ryan Mest

Ryan Mest is a staff psychologist at Chatham University Counseling Center providing psychotherapy, clinical and scholarly supervision, and a didactic seminar. R.Mest@Chatham.edu

Julia Robins

Julia Robins is a master's degree candidate in psychology (existential phenomenology program) at Seattle University. Julia is completing clinical practicum and will graduate in June 2021. Contact: jrobins@seattleu.edu
Eric Severson
Eric Severson is a philosopher specializing in the work of Emmanuel Levinas. He is the author of Before Ethics (Kendall-Hunt, 2021), Levinas's Philosophy of Time (Duquesne University Press, 2013) and Scandalous Obligation (Beacon Hill Press, 2011), and editor of eight other books on philosophy, psychology, ethics, theology and the philosophy of religion. He lives in Kenmore, Washington and teaches philosophy at Seattle University.

Kaleb Sinclair
Kaleb Sinclair is a Master of Psychology candidate at Seattle University. Kaleb is determined to further the movement of racial equality globally. His current project, “The Fire Fable”, delves into the complexities of proximity, empathy, and forgiveness. He aspires to reforge humanities deep reverence for individual yet collective liberation by reimagining the primordial bonds of love, devotion, and sacrifice. ksinclair@seattleu.edu

Brecca Smith
Brecca Smith is passionate about children, community, and the arts, believing that each of these calls us back to neglected aspects of our natures. Brecca is a masters candidate in Seattle University’s Psychology program, holds a BA in Psychology from the University of Washington, and a teaching credential from the American Montessori Society. She is also a poet and writer. Her lyric essay, “Seven Years,” will be published in a forthcoming issue of Hobart Magazine. Contact: brecca.smith@gmail.com; Website: breccasmith.com

Benjamin Strosberg
Benjamin B. Strosberg, M.A. is a Ph.D. student studying clinical psychology at Duquesne University. He works at the intersection of Lacanian psychoanalysis, critical phenomenology, and Adorno’s critical theory, focusing on the relevance of philosophical questions for clinical work with trauma. strosbergb@duq.edu
Session 1: Societal Impacts from Covid-19 Through the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas

Panelists: First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Mohamed Abdelaziz, Laura Flynn and Kristopher Wannquist.

Abstract: Covid-19 has brought forth a new paradox in modern society. Emmanuel Levinas provides spectacles through which this paradox can be examined through Totality and Infinity. The paradox of the individual’s preventative actions from spreading or contracting the virus carries the potential to love the other, but at the same time inhibits the individual from seeing the Other. Unlike war, Covid-19 holds no allegiance to any nation or religion. It latches itself to the human and adds another layer to see the identity of the Other.

The pandemic has uprooted our individualistic mentality by challenging us to think of our daily actions as having potentially cataclysmic consequences. The pandemic and lockdown have revealed our fundamental interconnectivity, relational dependency and ethical responsibility. Every day I face an immense burden of responsibility towards the Other. This way of being penetrates the psyche and creates residual traumas. The primacy of the Other is revealed in my responsibility to give my freedom for their health and safety.

Covid-19 has caused additional demands on caregivers. With many daycares and schools closed, parents working outside the home were forced to absorb the additional role of full-time stay-at-home parent while maintaining their full-time career. This has resulted in women leaving the paid workforce in unprecedented numbers due to the increased demand for unpaid caregiving. Caring for the other has become mandatory and overwhelming, which is in opposition to the Levinasian notion of first caring for oneself before meeting the call of the Other.

Discussion question: Do you think people feel more committed to the Other but also paradoxically feel disconnected through Covid-19?

Session 2: Gender as the Ethical Relation

Panelists: First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Alexis Jimenez, Samuel Noble and Kayne Reevey.

Abstract: For those whose gender identity presents itself as a question, the "answering" may involve an on-going process of re-discovering an ever-emerging Other-within-the-same. A person's gender seems to take the form of the Levinasian Other, an infinite entity that resists being grasped at, forever revealing itself in finite increments to the desiring same. Is a person ever "complete" in their discovery of their gender (or, more particularly, of what their relationship with any gender may be)? Or is each person, rather, constantly discovering and discarding gendered signifiers over a lifetime, through a process of transcendence? For many, the desire for gendered understanding deepens with each approach. Yet, the notion that something that is essentially an
aspect of the same--which is finite--may turn out to be infinite carries with it an inherent contradiction. The resolution lies in the way that each of us learns what gender-signifiers there are against which to compare ourselves. The same's conception of gender comes from the Other, and becomes an aspect of the ethical relation. As I attempt to grasp at my gender, objectify it, label and categorize it, I can not help but do the same to the Other against whose apparent gender I situate myself. Gender is a means by which I can experience the violence I inflict on the Other in totalizing them, as I do it to myself simultaneously.

**Discussion questions:** How has your gender been revealed to you? Are you we as therapists ever able to confidently view the other and their gender without allowing their gender to totalize them? How are we able to step outside of our gender (if we identify with one) and the gendered labels surrounding the relationship to communicate proficiently with the other and see them for their infinitude, rather their potentially totalizing gender?

**Session 3: Becoming a Vessel for the Other: An Exploration of Power Dynamics in Levinasian Ethics**

**Panelists:** First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students David Parks, Kayla Ritchie and Axel Stanovsky.

**Abstract:** Power imbalance inevitably results from the intersection of many different axes of identity, privilege, and expression. Some relationships, such as those practicing BDSM, consensually contrive and maintain power imbalances while others fail to negotiate imbalances, or consider consent. In this presentation we examine the criteria for differentiating consensual violence from abuse in relationships. Using Levinas' notion of the paradox of power and weakness, we illustrate the ways in which power obliterates itself through the use of non-consensual violence, and can be maintained only when invested by the other. We then expand on the notion of consent as it pertains to a Levinasian understanding of freedom, and illustrate ways in which therapists can open themselves to clients who practice BDSM without conflating it with abuse. Finally, we consider the ways in which we can become unreflectively coercive, by considering ourselves experts in the helping professions. We compare rigid conviction by therapists to the kind of coercion that arises in abuse-prone relationships and consider the ameliorative insights of BDSM practices. We conclude by reflecting on Levinas’ notion of decentering the self, and its implications for power imbalances in the therapeutic relationship.

**Session 4: Totality and Infinity as it Relates to Group Membership and Identity**

**Panelists:** First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Brett Baldwin, Madeline Elledge and Tara Shelby.

**Abstract:** As Levinas is found in the dyad, we are looking to see how his concepts of totality and infinity may apply to group membership and identity. This presentation will focus on the experience of totalization within a group and how totalization may allow transcendence of said group. Group membership or a fitting “label” may function as Levinas’ concept of the Dwelling - a place of origin from which one can reach or return to. As the self longs to be an individual, in searching for oneself in isolation, one suffers for oneself, feeling the futility of their existence. Group membership allows a suffering-for-others, while the label of that group provides the
individual a sense of identity. As this group membership can serve as a basis from which identity can stem, the individual’s life is saved from isolation and absurdity and can take on meaning. With a feeling of safety and security within the group, the individual finds a dwelling to expand outward from, in essence transcending the very group from which they reside. Simultaneously, as the individual is totalized in means of the group, and membership affects one’s individuality, the need for individualism can allow self-exploration of that group label. When one finds that this group may constrain one’s individuality, totalization of one’s group may allow for transcendence of that group.

**Discussion Question:** Bringing this into psychotherapy, we ask the question of how our client’s identity might be tied to their group membership and how they might totalize themselves within their group.

**Session 5: Together as Separate Beings: Integrating Cross-Cultural Configurations of Self and Other through Shared Unity**

**Panelists:** First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Kit Collins, Jaiene Iglesias and Marius Lina.

**Abstract:** Our panel will discuss an anthropological approach to Levinas’ philosophy. Examining how the boundaries of self and the Other may differ cross-culturally, we will consider how we may synthesize individual and collective configurations of “self,” Other, and togetherness. In discussing Levinas’ philosophy and his idea of ethical response-ability, our conversation will explore Filipino and Maori cultures and the tension between separation and togetherness as “being together as separate beings.” Contrasting Levinas’ idea of separation with non-Western ethical perspectives of togetherness, we consider the flickering presence and absence of self in the face of shared unity. Through our discussions, we felt we revealed and articulated a shared truth, a “shared unity,” that carried a meaningful description of Levinas’ notions of the ethical encounter. The interruption of the Other unsettles us, but initial resistance may transform into new perspectives, revolutionizing us in both unique and similar ways. Additionally, we will explore how Levinas’ notion of separation emerges at the point of the maternal relation compares to the more animistic tradition, tracking our separation back to the primary relation from the earth. We may seem to be “lost” and separated, yet we can always return to our original, natural state of togetherness. What we are looking for and separated from may not be so far away, in the form of the mother, infant, orphan—and Earth.

**Discussion questions:** In comparing Levinas’s concepts of the self, Other, and the separation to Eastern philosophies that emphasize togetherness, shared unity, and a deconstruction of self, how might we hold space for considering these conflicting perspectives and maintaining the tension between them? Could there be a paradox of surrounding the existence and non-existence of a self in forming togetherness?

**Session 6: Becoming More of Oneself for the Other: The Paradox of Hospitality**

**Panelists:** First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Elizabeth Hadley, Andrew Shaw and Sophia Wang.
Abstract: In acts of hospitality, we become foreigners in our space as we welcome the Other to make a home for themselves. We'll explore this paradox of hospitality in three movements.

Movement One: What does it take to have relational capacity for welcoming the Other? Through stressful life events, we can develop rigidity. This can obstruct our ability to truly be hospitable. When we are restricted in relation to ourselves, it can be difficult to invite the Other into our dwelling and be in close proximity with them. This part will explore the phenomenology of relational capacity for the Other, what it takes to have it, and how it relates to a closeness to oneself. Movement Two: Just as psychology has been taught to us as an egology, so too has the concept of “self-care” been framed as an egology - something we practice to preserve our well-being and stamina. Using Levinas’ concept of an interiority which has a paradoxical open and closed door nature, we'll explore how this posture reframes self-care as self-care-for-the-Other, as a nurturing of self in order to respond to the call of the Other. Movement Three: For hospice volunteers, being called to sit bedside with a client during some of their most vulnerable and final moments, is one of the greatest gifts we can receive from the Other. It is also a terribly challenging experience. Uncertain of what we can offer a person facing death, we become uncomfortable realizing the limits of our understanding. What can one do with such discomfort? Drawing from Levinas’ apology and Ricoeur’s notion of linguistic hospitality, we’ll explore the creative potential discomfort has for the therapeutic relation.

Session 7: Homeless, Houseless: Being a Home for the Other, A Therapeutic Relationship

Panelists: First-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Hallie Desautel, Mariah Rojas and Marc Turkel.

Abstract: As we explore a Levinasian formation of ‘self’ being given by a home, chez-soi, its’ furnishings and security, good soup, the home as requisite for giving gifts and having an I to be called in to question by the other, we are reminded of a forgotten and unquenchable desire for the absolute other. How do we respond to the call of the Other experiencing a loss of the physical home and, for people experiencing a loss of selfhood, how do we as therapists constitute an environment that nurtures a recollection of enjoyment, home as self? Levinas writes of the “stranger, the widow, and the orphan” (1961/1969, p. 77) and our choice, our calling to offer the therapeutic relationship as our responsibility, our response. While serving “the homeless” we subject them to a genus, a sameness, further doing violence by totalizing them as “unfortunates” or “have-nots”. To hold the possibility of individual relationships, we first distinguish individuals without a chosen place to live, as houseless and those experiencing a violent loss of selfhood as homeless. It is our hope, by defining new semantics of house-lessness and home-lessness we extend horizons for the Other to engage with us in a therapeutic relationship, learning what gifts they need to construct their dwelling, a sense of selfhood. As the Other experiences being known, a process of recollecting selfhood begins. In being a home for the Other we are building bridges to selfhood via a distinct relationship in an ethical relation with the absolute Other.

Discussion question: How can we be a home for the homeless who is experiencing houselessness?
Session 8: The Collaborative Anarchy of Deideolization: Levinas and Social Action in the Clinic and the Streets

Panelists: Second-year Seattle University Master of Psychology students Daisy Deely, Kyle Gregg and Claire Chambers.

Abstract: As clinicians working in community mental health and public education, we are always in conversation with state and local agencies that ideally come together to provide support, protection, and service to clients. However, we are also therapists who recognize the colonizing and marginalizing impacts of the structures within which we often work, to which we are nevertheless legally bound to respond. In this panel presentation, we will each tell a story of our own difficult negotiation between the needs of our clients and the state agencies whose actions and demands have less than ideally served our clients and the others in their lives. We will each attempt to describe a moment in which our response to our election in service to the Other became entangled with the limitations of state systems. In other words, we will discuss the felt experience of working clinically between Levinasian ethics and justice.

Following the liberation psychology of Martín-Baró (1994) and others, we identify the need to deideologize psychology, therapy, and social service structures. Deideologization is the active demystification of such structures and practices, and the analysis of “dominant messages in light of the experiences of those living on the margins” (Tate, Torres Rivera, Brown, & Skaistis, 2013). We believe that such liberatory practice is possible in the anarchic, creative collaboration that is therapy, in the non-reciprocal response to the Other’s command. Because this is possible, justice is possible. For the sake of the other Others, the third party, we work to deideologize therapy, and in this panel we invite discussion of how this can be done.

Discussion questions: Does social justice always depend on a third-party narration? (Kyle Gregg). How do I invite un-narration when faced by the face of the oppressor? (Kyle Gregg). How can our interaction with "state, politics, technique" open out into proximity rather than implode blindly inward? (Claire Chambers). How can we notice when we are getting caught up in internecine battles that attempt to create politics without ethics of the Other? And what can we do when such structures are not something we can change in the moment? (Claire Chambers). How do you/we create space for counter narratives that challenge oppressive contexts? (Daisy Deely). What's one example of a structure of power in your life that you can begin deideologizing? (Daisy Deely).

Session 9: Getting a Felt Sense of Levinasian Responsibility: Reshaping Implicit Biases with the Oppressed-Other

Abstract: Responsibility is the determinative structure of subjectivity for Levinas. Yet Western dominator culture and psychology is situated in an individualism of ego-ology, creating a definition of self that is separate from this primordial call of responsibility and the inherent social bond. This ideology reinforces a disembodied colonizer epistemology that perpetuates oppressor institutions and practices that condition bodies and environments. This conditioning forms implicit biases within the body that can deny the ability to respond to the Other’s call. Levinas is inviting us into a practice of re-membering first relations, the first claim upon me. This is not only a cognitive practice, a re-presenting or re-cognizing, but an expressive exposure, an affective incarnate vulnerability to the Other. In an attempt to discern the call of this pre-originary Saying, we carry forward Levinas’ ethics by integrating embodiment philosophy and liberation psychology. By exploring a practice of vulnerability through mindful Focusing and Testimonios (sacred story-telling), the oppressor and oppressed meet in Acompañamiento (empathic proximity), to form the possibility of an integrative movement that begins to reveal the numerous embodied injustices faced within dominant US culture. Our hope, as emerging practitioners, is to expand our horizons (conscientization) and to take a stance of aggressive nonviolence. We believe this offers contextually relevant and critical experience that engenders the transformation to a decolonizing based practice.

Discussion question: How do we humbly listen to the oppressed-Other to integrate their experience into our embodied interactions to challenge oppressor culture? How do we reshape our own oppressive implicit biases and microaggressions in clinical practice?

"Sensibility is exposedness to the other... The sensible - alterity, vulnerability, apprehension - binds the node of incarnation into a plot larger than the apperception of self. In this plot I am bound to others before being tied to my body." (Levinas, Otherwise than Being)

"Nonviolence does not imply the absence of force or of aggression. It is, as it were, an ethical stylization of embodiment, replete with gestures and modes of non-action, ways of becoming an obstacle, of using the solidity of the body and its proprioceptive object field to block or derail a further exercise of violence.” (Judith Butler, The Force of Nonviolence)

"The oppressed must see examples of the vulnerability of the oppressor so that a contrary conviction (denying the magical belief of oppressor’s invulnerability) can begin to grow within them... This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection; only then will it be a praxis." (Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed)

Day 2: March 20, 2021

Session 1, keynote: The Truth of Testimony: Testimony as Act and Narrative

Dr. Scott Davidson, West Virginia University

What is the ethical significance of the turn to testimony in Levinas’s later writings? The answer to this question can be hard to decipher within Levinas’s own work and so it can be helpful to
compare his work on testimony with two other French thinkers who were also writing on this topic in the 1960s and 70s: Jean Nabert and Paul Ricoeur. Reflecting later on their shared interest in testimony, Ricoeur’s 1989 essay on “Emmanuel Levinas: A Thinker of Testimony” follows a progression of the treatment of testimony (or, attestation) that moves in sequence from Heidegger to Nabert to Levinas and finds increasing degrees of height and exteriority with this progression through their accounts of testimony. For his part, Ricoeur is interested in exploring the productive dialogue that he finds between Nabert and Levinas and seeks to bring them even closer together. What is most fascinating to me is the distinction that Ricoeur proposes between testimony as act and testimony as narrative. Testimony as act refers to the real actions in which individuals display their devotion to an absolute, whether intentionally or unintentionally. In addition, there is the testimony rendered to this testimony by other witnesses in what Nabert calls the “absolute testimony to the absolute.” This occurs when someone else interprets an act as a sign and, in Ricoeur’s words, tells a story about that action. With the help of some concrete examples, this presentation will explore the narrative dimension of testimony in more detail, offering some suggestions about its potential relevance to the current political climate and what it might add to a Levinasian ethics of testimony.

Some questions raised by this presentation:

- Is there a single meaning of testimony or does it have different meanings in different contexts?
- To the extent that there are both true and false testimonies, what is the basis for belief in testimonies? How, in other words, do we know that a testimony is true?
- What is the ethical significance of testimony?
- Is it possible to take up the problem of testimony again today, but this time through the lens of contemporary events that are taking place in the streets? How might the ethics of testimony apply to that context? And how might it lead us to think about those struggles differently?

Session 2: The Fire Fable: A Vision of Our Shared Vulnerability and Humanity

Panelists: Seattle University Master of Psychology student Kaleb Sinclair and Associate Psychology Professors Dr. Randall Horton and Dr. Claire LeBeau.

Abstract: As we confront the depths of brutality and injustice in our world, the knee upon the neck of our brothers and sisters, and grieve for the torn fabric of our human community, we may find ourselves haunted by a memory of uncertain provenance. The Talmud, the Bible, the Koran, Buddhist sutra and shastra, and countless wisdom traditions, commend to us a sacred responsibility: to re-learn our first understandings. We are called to perform an act of vision, to see beyond our narrow sight, to feel beyond our finite skin. We are called to perform an act of witnessing which—given our human condition of embodied isolation, our histories of mistrust and exploitation—seems no less astounding in its accomplishment than looking from one end of the earth to the other. We are called upon bear witness to one another; our neighbors, our sisters, and our children, in the fullness of their humanity, joy and suffering. The oldest and most sacred vessel for this summons is the story of a dream.
In the beginning, before we framed rigid walls of shelter, before caste, creed, and ownership, how did we survive the darkness and cold of the long night? We gathered around the fire, building it, tending to it, sharing its warmth and our stories with our faces illumined. This vision of what we once were, voices a call, not a command, a vision of compassion and hope in shared humanity, a vision for something that can come through us rather than from us. It invites us to a re-membering, a bodying again of an ancient but forgotten love. This vision has unfolded continuously throughout history; in the gospels of Martin Luther King Jr.’s Beloved Community, in the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism, in Gandhi’s Satyagraha the movement of truth insistence, and currently, in the re-awakening of our collective outrage, grief, and longing over bodies of our Black brothers and sisters slain in the streets of our communities. In Levinasian Ethics, we are confronted, once again, with an ancient memory, like the fable of the fire, with an insistent call to truth and justice through humility and compassion for the vulnerability of the Other. This “transcendent intention” calls us back and forward to our deepest nature, the peace of proximity, a memory of and awakening to empathy and agapeic love.

_The Talmud says that the child in the womb of his mother looks from one end of the earth to the other, and knows all the teachings; but in the instant it comes into contact with the air of the earth, an angel strikes its mouth and it forgets everything. I do not understand why this should be: first one knows everything, and then one forgets it!" “A trace is left behind in man," the rabbi answered," so that he can reacquire knowledge of the world and the teachings. “ (From the "Tales of Hasidim" - Martin Buber)_

_I am moved to tears and we cry together, laugh and rejoice, for you explain every night, a fire is lit means another day to live, to breathe, to exist. (Kaleb Sinclair)  

_The psyche of the soul is the Other in me (Levinas)_

Discussion questions: How does the trace of the Other awaken Desire to bear witness to the testimony of each other? In this particular moment of brutality and dehumanization in our nation, how do we allow these parables and visions to animate our action to serve rather than seek dominion?

Session 3: The Vignette: A Conversation on Attending

Panelists: Peter August, LMFT and Dr. Eric Severson, Seattle University.

Abstract: He reads or merely turns the pages of his book as I watch and write this line, finding myself elsewhere. Writing is an approaching and at the same time always a departure. It is this movement towards elsewhere that I am following in ‘Vignettes.’ To engage, to seek mutual understanding, to be responsible to and for, to play, occurs not as a function of the forward direction of knowing but by way of the subtlest of backward tugs of ‘withdrawal.’

This is the “motionless movement” of play and writing. We encounter to abandon, finding ourselves no longer ourselves in the “immobile becoming” of our sentences. Writing is the withdrawal that is play.
Composed of three vignettes - neither clinical nor literary, illustrative or inspiring - in their fragmented-ness, their attracting and forfeiting associations, this presentation hopes to achieve the essential instability of the vignette, offering it as the genre best suited to play.

Rather than structure, I imagine the movement of the presentation as having up to three ‘adjustments:’ first allowing us to follow the idea named ‘Birds and the Phenomenology of Disappearance,’ then ‘How to Write a Vignette,’ and last is ‘Eurydice’s Testimony.’

Meanwhile, Professor Severson has expressed his intrigue regarding the relationships between these thoughts and Levinas’s concept of the ‘trace:’ “A trace, in Levinas’s work, is not some piece of a gestalt puzzle, or a bread crumb leading toward eventual resolution. The trace of the other is an invitation to a journey without destination. The withdrawal of the other, and remnant traces, are summons to attend to the fragments not as pieces of a whole waiting for reassembly, but to responsibility and care.”

We plan to stay in conversation until the seminar letting our respective presentations take shape with each other in mind. During our shared presentation we will listen and look for inspiring interruptions.

**Session 4: The Virtual Hypostate and Authoritarian Populism**

**Panelists:** Ryan Mest of Chatham University Counseling Center and Edward Durgan of the Psychotherapy Cooperative.

**Abstract:** Non-violent civil disobedience (NVCD) can be contrasted with recently ascendant tactics in social-justice activism. In recent years coercive and destructive direct actions have blended with mob violence in urban settings from coast to coast. Organized violence, mass destruction, liberated/autonomous occupied zones, and militant assaults on police have set the tone for the decentering of NVCD and enlargement of the ‘by any means necessary’ narrative on the left and that of the constitutionalist militia on the right. Meanwhile the online virtual public has taken moral authority in separate left and right polarities that have contracted onto themselves and become self-referential: authoritarian.

The rise of self-referential, self-confirming, authoritarian ideologies in virtual space appear to have much in common with the birth of the self-imprisoned subject in a hypostasis. After reviewing Levinas’ arguments regarding the hypostasis, we will then consider what comes into view if we apply these arguments to the birth of authoritarian subjects in virtual space.

This panel discussion is intended for Levinas scholars who are also community, mental health, and activist professionals. It is likely to include consideration of how a community of authoritarian subjects is a hypostate, parallels between this moment in activist and authoritarian history and Levinas’ work, hope and hospitality towards a future unforeseeable, some practical things that might help us help with the problems of our present, and dark truths.

"Non-violent resistance has become the unsurpassed language and method of the oppressed through the animating force of vulnerability, mercy, and humility." (From call for papers)
Session 5: Levinas and Psychology: Bringing Levinasian Ethics to Bear on Four Cases of Interruption

Panelists: Duquesne University doctoral students Benjamin Strosberg, Lucas Goodwin, Pavan Brar, and Michelle Browne.

Abstract (Benjamin Strosberg): Levinas and Psychoanalysis: An Anti-hermeneutic Approach. The ethical philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas has been employed to challenge reductionary varieties of clinical work and to think about radical forms of justice in the clinic. Unfortunately, in translating from philosophy to the clinic, therapists leave behind some of Levinas’s more radical commitments to make it more practicable. The Levinasian ethical imperative is to resist positioning oneself in relation to the Other in any way that collapses alterity. This Other of radical alterity cannot be thought of as another egoic human being like myself without betraying the alterity of the Other. A commitment to Levinasian ethics is difficult to situate within a clinical paradigm premised on alliance and hermeneutic processes of meaning and understanding. I contend that clinical work following Levinas would have to (counterintuitively) prioritize an ethics of alterity above the image of clinical change itself. To make this case, I summarize the hermeneutic approach to Levinasian “therapeutics” exemplified by the intersubjective psychoanalysis of Donna Orange, and offer a critique of that approach as incongruent with the radical commitments of Levinasian ethics. I explore critical passages from Levinas which point to an ethics beyond the limits of hermeneutics and offer an alternative (anti) approach to reading Levinas clinically: anti-hermeneutic psychoanalysis.

Discussion questions (Benjamin Strosberg): What if the radical justice emphasized in the paper conflicts with social utility? For instance, isn’t there great value in social utility (e.g. affordable treatments)? How does a clinician grapple with these contradictions?

Abstract (Lucas Goodwin): Wrestling with Justice: In Pursuit of the Face. For Levinas, the face reveals the radical alterity of the Other to which the “I” can do no violence; it is that aspect of the Other which refuses thematization and in so doing provides access to the ethical relation. In its defenselessness, its utter nudity, the face lays hold of the “I”, obliging the “I” to respond to the Other in responsibility for the Other. But what if there are multiple Others whose pleas equally ensnare the “I”? How is the “I” to address the various Others, whose ends may indeed lie counter to one another? In other words, how is the “I” to issue a response to the face of the Other, when that face seems to stand in violent opposition to the face of another Other to whom the “I” must also respond? Although Levinas’s introduction of the third man – justice - to the ethical relation seems to offer a preliminary means of grappling with these questions, many matters remain unresolved. Using Levinas’s notion of the face and the third man, and in dialogue with Laubscher and Mbuqe’s “A Case study of ‘Necklacing’: When the case has a face”, I attempt to articulate an ethical, and just, response, as researcher, to both the perpetrator and the victim in an instance of gang violence. In this effort, various implications for an ethics of justice are raised.

Discussion questions (Lucas Goodwin): What does a justice founded in Levinasian ethics look like? What are some of the shortcomings of this justice? Is the realization of this justice even possible?
Abstract (Pavan Brar): So this is Permanence; Or: What can a phenomenological approach to the emergence of suicidality look like? What is there to be said of a ‘Levinasian understanding’ of suicide and the suicidal person? In working out this question, this presentation will bring a Levinasian perspective in conversation with the tradition of phenomenological psychopathology. Working from the latter tradition, it will be argued that there is reason to believe that the phenomenology of the suicidal person is heterogeneous in character; the motivation for suicide reflects the distinct qualitative character of the psychopathological context to which that motivation is endemic. With this in mind, when we workout the phenomenology of suffering and interpretation of suicide we find in Levinas, in what ways might the two perspectives at hand be mutually illuminating? What ways do they disrupt and challenge each other? Where might this leave us in trying to understand suicide?

Abstract (Michelle Browne): Rupture and Repair in Psychotherapy. In training as a clinical psychologist, the pursuit of knowledge in the form of clinical theory, formulation, and technique can be considered in light of Levinas’ conceptualization of enjoyment—indeed, the struggle and striving of an academic pursuit is a kind of “good soup” that one can live from. However, in considering how this informs the therapeutic encounter, we confront the ever-present threat of totalizing the Other by reducing them to what is knowable. This treason—the assumption that we fully understand the patient, or their experience—can and often does lead to what is commonly thought of as therapeutic rupture. This paper attempts to address this idea of rupture within a Levinasian framework of understanding, considering the place of totalization, apology, and repair. Apology will be considered in terms of suspension of the desire to subsume or consume, a surrender to the recognition of the ultimate un-totalizable infinity of the Other. The paper will address this alongside a revisioning of the so-called “corrective emotional experience.” The moment of apology can be thought of as expiation, as it not only contains the kernel of our fault and blame, but also speaks to substitution in that it can be a taking on of responsibility for all the fault and blame of those who have wounded the patient in the past, all those who have failed to apologize. The paper will also explore how while this ultimate obligation is a burden, it is also what makes subjectivity possible.

Discussion questions (Michelle Browne): Who decides what “rupture” is? The patient? The therapist? What about “repair”? What are the implications for each?

Session 6: Philosophical Foundations of Short-Term Dynamic Psychotherapy

Panelists: Chatham University Counseling Center Practicum Group, Louis Lamanna, Sean Leadem and Ryan Mest.

Abstract: This panel discussion will bring the clinical practice of short term dynamic psychotherapy into dialogue with the philosophical articulation of time in the works of Emmanuel Levinas. Short term dynamic psychotherapy, for instance Time-Limited Dynamic Psychotherapy (TLDP) and Accelerated Experiential Dynamic Psychotherapy (AEDP), involve identifying cyclical maladaptive patterns repeating in a person’s relationship with self and others and opening the patient to a new experience of self and others through a new, previously unthinkable relationship with the therapist over a 1 month to 2 year period. From his earliest work to his latest, Levinas grapples with the question of how time is possible and concludes through careful argumentation
that diachronic time and a future that is not a repetition of the present is not possibly achievable by the subject alone and that time is a social relationship for the Other. This panel discussion will explore how symptomatic repetitions addressed in short term dynamic psychotherapy might be understood as being stuck in time and how the relational work of therapy might be understood as diachronic time. Fundamental features of short term dynamic therapy and Levinas’ arguments regarding diachronic time will be reviewed to frame the discussion. A consideration of intrusive, traumatic thoughts as oppressive presents and dynamic treatment as a diachronic, temporal relation may also be a touchpoint in the discussion.

**Discussion Questions:** How might synchronic time help us describe symptomatic repetition (stuckness) in psychodynamic conceptualization? How might diachronic time help us describe psychodynamic treatment (getting unstuck)? Adherence in psychotherapy generally refers to compliance with a specific treatment protocol. In Levinas’ early work, adherence refers to the subject's commitment and condemnation to being. Are there parallels to the latter adherence in psychodynamic psychotherapy?

**Session 7: Lived Reverence and Nested Narratives**

**Panelists:** Dr. Joanne Halverson and Brecca Smith of Seattle University.

**Abstract:** We live within nested narratives. Our understanding of our world is drawn from direct experience and from the implicit and explicit stories of what is real, valued, and true. The narratives informing our lives are derived from our families, communities, and our culture. They are often taken for granted and assumed to be grounded in “the real.” The stories of who and what is worthy, and what is a good life are vivid in our current social dialogues. Although we have a story of equal opportunity in the United States of America the shadows of inequity and degradation of the natural world are ever more coming to light. The legacy of supremacies many affects lingers. These shadows emerge from a lack of acknowledgment, interconnection, and reverence. Worldview stories garnered from indigenous and other more collectivist cultures may serve not only to offer fresh perspectives on a lived ethics but also to bring us back to lived experience, thus to re-member the ground of interdependence and interconnection of our being. Levinas’s radical ethics discloses a lived experience aligned more with the indigenous worldview of a lived reverence. The narratives of hierarchy and separation are common in Western societies. The central question is - how might the prevailing taken for granted Western cultural stories in various contexts a lived ethics in our society and lives but also how might other stories provide us guidance and inspiration on justice and care?

**Discussion question:** A central question is not only how might the prevailing taken for granted Western cultural stories in various contexts influence justice and ethics in our society and in our individual lives but also how might other stories provide us guidance and inspiration on justice and care?