

# Albert Camus And Kierkegaard on Existential Isolation to Indonesia Citizen

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**Abstract**

*Existential isolation has become a problem that makes anxiety. Existential isolation is an academic term for ramification in three fields of science namely phenomenology, humanistic psychology, and existentialism. All three fields are in the realm of philosophy. Existential isolation in phenomenology focuses on the individual's direct experience and personal understanding of reality as the main subject that is worthy of attention. This research employed the existential-phenomenological method by investigating the mode of human existence in the pandemic situation. A study of existential isolation is illustrated by two characters, Rieux and Paneloux, in Albert Camus' novel, La Peste. The results of this study are (1) the meaning of existential isolation was anxiety and fear of death; (2) the existential isolation of Camus was in Rieux and Paneloux while witnessing death and then experiencing solitude. Kierkegaard's existential isolation exists in childhood experiences as his father gives examples of unscrupulous life and the cancellation of an engagement with Regine Olsen; (3) the juxtaposition between Camus and Kierkegaard's thoughts for citizens of Indonesia can be found in the idea of subjectivity, the vitality of life, and communication. The recommendations of this research are anchored in the ethics of care in the pandemic era.*

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**Kata kunci:**

isolasi  
eksistensial;  
etika kepedulian;  
kecemasan.

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**Abstrak**

Isolasi eksistensial telah menjadi masalah yang menimbulkan kecemasan. Isolasi eksistensial adalah istilah akademis untuk percabangan dalam tiga bidang ilmu yaitu fenomenologi, psikologi humanistik, dan eksistensialisme. Ketiga bidang tersebut berada dalam ranah filsafat. Isolasi eksistensial dalam fenomenologi berfokus pada pengalaman langsung individu dan pemahaman pribadi tentang realitas sebagai subjek utama yang patut diperhatikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode eksistensial-fenomenologis dengan menyelidiki modus eksistensi manusia dalam situasi pandemi. Studi tentang isolasi eksistensial diilustrasikan oleh dua tokoh, Rieux dan Paneloux, dalam novel Albert Camus, La Peste. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah (1) makna isolasi eksistensial adalah kecemasan dan ketakutan akan kematian; (2) isolasi eksistensial Camus terdapat pada Rieux dan Paneloux saat menyaksikan kematian dan kemudian mengalami kesendirian. Isolasi eksistensial Kierkegaard terdapat pada pengalaman masa kecil saat ayahnya memberikan contoh kehidupan yang tidak bermoral dan pembatalan pertunangan dengan Regine Olsen; (3) penjajaran pemikiran Camus dan Kierkegaard untuk warga negara Indonesia terdapat pada gagasan subjektivitas, vitalitas kehidupan, dan komunikasi. Rekomendasi dari penelitian ini berlabuh pada etika kepedulian di era pandemi.

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## **Introduction**

The mode of self-existence is in dualism. On the one hand, the self is required to be authentic through knowing himself. On the other hand, self-existence is asked to remain in collectivity as citizens under the state's direction. Van Deurzen elaborates that self-existence seems to be an "in-between situation." This position is not neutral but can fluctuate in space and time. Subjects who choose the position of individualism may be accused of being selfish and isolating themselves from the others. Uniquely, individuals in existentialism find themselves in solitude (Rosedale, 2007; Sønderby & Wagoner, 2013). Humans proceed to find their identity in solitude that is accompanied by anxiety and distance from others. This event could existentially authenticate oneself (Daigle, 2017; Decarvalho, 2000).

Identity in collective unity becomes a chaotic situation. According to Jenkins (2008), chaotic situation because collectivity presupposes a plurality of identities. The self is mixed in with the crowd and can be polluted by some form of naivety, that is, just by joining the crowd. The mass becomes essential because it is in the collectivity, which then becomes the soul for the existence of the country. In a country, togetherness is nothing but one important condition. Individuals in the country are bound from the dimension of togetherness. It means that identity is a mixture of the existence and behavior of individuals where the country is the center. Consequently, the existence of the self seems to experience division, because on one side, the self is an autonomous individual. In contrast, the individual is part of the community's collectivity. As citizens, individuals must abide by the country's policies.

The normal pro-bono policies in the country certainly prioritize citizens' interests. However, in emergencies, such as a pandemic, the policies become complicated and causing the country's attention to its citizens to be ignored. Procedures such as physical distancing, lockdown, work from home, large-scale social restrictions, and travel restrictions have implications for social life by requiring citizens to withdraw into the private sphere of their residences (Chinazzi et al., 2020). As a result, individuals become isolated. This emergency situation is currently happening with the spread of the coronavirus pandemic or COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic began in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, and until now, the casualties continue to increase. A pandemic is a form of a global epidemic that spreads to several other countries and affects large numbers of people throughout the world (Morens et al., 2009).

COVID-19 is an example of a global pandemic. In the context of the epidemic, the

scale is smaller, but it can also cause death from the virus. This pandemic spread fear to nearly 200 countries. The global data confirm that 190,860,860 people are infected with COVID-19, and 4,101,414 people died in 216 countries. In Indonesia, from 3 January 2020 to 21 July 2021, there have been 2,950,058 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 76,200 deaths (covid19.go.id). This pandemic changes the global system, life culture, and especially increases anxiety in humans because it can cause death. Thus, the policy to self-isolate is a way to break the chain of COVID-19. With the isolation policy, human existence is culturally changed. Not long ago, we could shake hands, stand closer, have face-to-face interactions, but this time the closeness must be postponed to avoid contracting the virus. Hospitality as the soul of eastern philosophy then receded along with the growing suspicion on other people. From this pandemic, individual behavior can be revealed, namely the existence of a dilemma: putting forward self-safety or social life togetherness.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an existential problem in humans. Self-isolation causes a gap between self-unity within an individual and individuals in togetherness. There is egoism on one side, and altruism on the other side. The problem of existential isolation will be imaginatively represented through Albert Camus's literary work, *La Peste*, with two characters experiencing existential isolation amid the plague, namely Rieux and Paneloux. Both characters experienced in existential isolation are called saturated in the plague shadow. A more rooted explanation of isolation in existentialism can be anchored in Søren Kierkegaard's thoughts on anxiety and the effort to be an authentic self. Kierkegaard himself is an individual who experienced existential isolation that led to subjective self-search. Thus, there is a comparative interpretation of the problem of existential isolation between Albert Camus and Søren Kierkegaard.

This research will answer three problems, first, what is the meaning of existential isolation? Second, how to deal with existential isolation in the views of Camus and Kierkegaard? Third, how is the effort to align the thoughts of Camus and Kierkegaard's existential isolation for citizens? These three problems will be elaborated and explained in the paradigm of philosophy of existence by the researcher in this article.

There are three previous studies related to the subject matter in this research. First, research conducted by Hema in 2022 entitled "Existential Experience of a Solitary Heart in Albert Camus' *The Stranger*" This research by Hema aims to highlight the elements of existentialism in Albert Camus' *The Stranger*. In this research, existentialist philosophy emphasizes individual existence, freedom and choice. It is the view that man defines the meaning of his own life and tries to make rational decisions despite being in an irrational

universe. The main motive is to assert freedom. Camus in this context follows the existentialist views of Sartre and Kierkegaard. However, the protagonist, Meursault is a stranger in society. He is an unattached figure and is also emotionally indifferent towards others, even towards his lover, Marie. He refuses to adopt the moral order of society. Finally, he also accepts the gentle indifference of the world. This acceptance makes him happy.

The second previous research was conducted by Fox-Muraton, in 2021. The research is entitled "Is there a Good Life where Others are in Chains? Camus and Kierkegaard". This research stems from doubts to answer several questions, "Is it possible to live a good life, if life itself is not good?" "Does the system and structure of our social life involve conditions of oppression, violence, and poverty?" This research elaborates on these questions within the paradigm of Albert Camus and Søren Kierkegaard's philosophy of existence. Both philosophers of existence uncompromisingly invite their readers to recognize the inherent suffering or absurdity of the human condition. They raise questions about the possibility of value and meaningfulness. If Kierkegaard focuses on inner or spiritual transformation, rejecting the mundane, Camus invites us to examine the external dimension of oppression and rebellion against injustice. This attempt to trace the relationship between Camus and Kierkegaard, and its relevance to the contemporary context, in this study despite the differences, the works of these thinkers can help develop an existential ethic of care or compassion based on the recognition of the fact that there is no good life in which others are shackled (Fox-Muraton, 2021).

The third previous research is from Golomb, in his book entitled "In search of authenticity: Existentialism from Kierkegaard to Camus." This book written in 2012 comprehensively examines the concept of authenticity explored by existentialist philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Sartre. Golomb's methodology involves an in-depth examination of the literature and writings of these philosophers. He analyzes their ethics and passionate commitment to the search for authenticity, particularly in the context of post-modern skepticism. The core concept of Authenticity: Kierkegaard: Kierkegaard's concept of the authentic life represents an ideal state in which the individual becomes fully and authentically himself. He believed that authentic existence is the rise of the individual to claim his position in his life as the creator of his own existence. Camus: Although this book does not provide a direct summary of Camus' concept of authenticity, it does mention that Camus' work is valuable for those interested in the search for authenticity. Further research shows that for Camus, authenticity

involves accepting the absurdity of life and rebelling against it by living life passionately and fully.

The three studies above with an attempt to compare them with this research, lies in the fact that this research focuses on two existentialist philosophers, namely Kierkegaard and Camus. The research focuses on the subject matter: existential isolation in the Covid-19 situation, where citizens experience anxiety. The elaboration in this research lies in Camus' novel *Sambar* where the characters have various characters in dealing with anxiety when the plague attacks them. This is where the originality of this research lies, which has a different value or distinctiveness from the three previous studies written above.

## **Method**

This research uses a qualitative philosophical approach with the following research methods. First, *verstehen*, the researcher understands the text and formulates the problem of existential isolation as a material object understood from an existentialism. Furthermore, researchers read discourses related to the Covid-19 pandemic situation that is currently happening. Second, the researchers described the novel *La Peste* by Albert Camus, by focusing on two figures: Rieux and Paneloux who experienced existential isolation. Third, juxtaposition with comparing the two existential philosophers, Søren Kierkegaard and Albert Camus, in discussing existential isolation.

This comparison method was carried out by focusing on the event of the outbreak in the *La Peste* novel as primary data. In contrast, secondary data includes books and several research journals. Fourth, *hermeneutics*, the researchers interpreted existential isolation by finding solutions. There are three problems that the author will elaborate: first, an explanation of the meaning of existential isolation. Second, the elaboration of existential isolation in Camus and Kierkegaard's thinking. Third, the juxtaposition between Camus and Kierkegaard's thoughts for citizens of Indonesia.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Results**

#### **Existential Isolation and Pandemic Era**

The existential isolation is an academic term for ramification in three fields of science namely phenomenology, humanistic psychology, and existentialism. All three fields are in the realm of philosophy. Existential isolation in phenomenology focuses on

the individual's direct experience and personal understanding of reality as the main subject that is worthy of attention. Ludvig Binswanger, an existential analyst, pointed out, "there is not only one space and time, but as much space and time as there are subjects."

Examining existential isolation from the perspective of humanistic psychology entails tracking isolated, individual psychological traces. It might be what defines their human identity. In other words, even in isolated circumstances, people may alter and direct their lives in order to fulfill their inherent aspirations to live completely and reach their maximum potential. Existentialism's concept of isolation refers to the way in which thinkers like Sren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Albert Camus, Gabriel Marcel, and Jean Paul Sartre perceived the human predicament. According to Berry-Smith, these philosophers pay very close attention to what may be referred to as "the ultimate concern" of the issue of human existence, namely death, freedom, loneliness, and a lack of purpose. These four factors influence people's thoughts and behavior, causing them to deal with variety of anxieties and fears that also necessarily presuppose attention and involvement.

Existential isolation emerges as a major issue that calls for adjustments to how people are as individuals and in terms of their social interactions in the framework of citizenship. The term "existential isolation" is more subjective. Park and Pinel stress the distinction between sensations of loneliness brought on by a lack of interpersonal connections and the subjective sense of being alone in an experience. Thus, individualistic culture, which frequently ignores the role in togetherness geared to socio-cultural experience, is the source of existential isolation. The repercussions of a pandemic include people putting themselves apart and putting distance between them. Humans are put to the test in a dilemma, bringing forward the egoistic or altruistic dimension, at that distance, which is referred to as isolation (Dawkins, 1981). The ego or selfishness to save oneself, one's group, rather than togetherness in the form of citizens. The most alarming matter from existential isolation is anxiety (May, 1996).

Anxiety becomes a significant theme in philosophical discourse, especially existentialism. With anxiety, individuals are subjectively thrown into a situation of isolation. They became solitary, confined in subjective space. There is a distance between individuals and social relations. Subjects who experience isolation then question the matter of their existence in life. Solitude because of isolation can sometimes lead to disappointment, loss of self-esteem, despair, lack of hope, and loss of relationships with the social environment. This psychological situation can occur for a long time, and bring individuals into life without meaning. In the end, the choice to end their lives might

happen.

When people come face to face in a dire circumstance that also includes suffering and death, the search for the potential meaning of life can happen. Existential queries: What will I do if my loved ones pass away? When there is no hope, where am I going in the future? When life loses its ability to be exciting, is there still meaning? One feels frightened and afraid when they are asked. The disaster gives the subjects the impression that something has shaken and isolated their existence. Inevitably, self-isolation during a calamity forces people to consider their options in life.

### **Kierkegaard and Camus' Existentialism**

Existentialism, as Søren Kierkegaard is frequently referred to in philosophical discourse. Existentialism emerged in the 19th century as an opposing viewpoint to Hegel's absolute idealism and the essentialist rationalism of the Aufklärung. The theory that "thinking equals existing" or the metaphysical tradition that holds that "reason is the actual reality" are fundamentally at odds with existentialism in Western philosophical heritage. By focusing his existentialism on people, their decisions, and their self-commitments and refusing to remove himself from different experiences, Kierkegaard resisted (Copleston, 1948).

Existentialism is a philosophical school trying to understand the actual state of man in space and time. This circumstance can be represented by experience, disappointment, fear and trembling, the dilemma over several choices, courage to make decisions, responsibility, and having confidence in the transcendent. The opposition of existence is essence. Essence, according to Sartre, is an individual core discovery project that is more prone to mechanistic objectivity.

This research briefly elaborates the two philosophers of existentialism, Kierkegaard and Albert Camus, in the context of existential isolation faced by humans. Both are chosen because their existential experiences are powerful in seeing and thinking of humans in making decisions in difficult times. Certainly, the writings have a thick existential nuance, and the involvement in concrete experiences is the "soul" for these two existentialist thinkers.

Kierkegaard, whose real name is Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, on May 5, 1813. He was the youngest son of seven siblings and was relatively close to his father, Michael Pedersen. His father worked as a wholesaler who sold clothes and food. He married Ane Sorendatter Lund, a maid who had never

received any education. His second marriage took place after his first wife passed away (Hannay, 2000). Kierkegaard was relatively close to his father, especially in matters of religion. Strict and traditional religious education was also from the teachings of his father. "As a child," wrote (Søren Kierkegaard, 1939) in *The Point of View for My Works as an Author*, "I was rigorously educated and disciplined in Christianity." This confession explains that his closeness was linked to the moral and religious teachings of his father. This closeness to his father would later turn into a "distant" and unfulfilling relationship for him when he found out that his father had made a scandal with a maid in his house.

Kierkegaard experienced existential loneliness as a result of his life's less-than-ideal circumstances. There was a less enjoyable time in Kierkegaard's life. The first incident involved his father, who could never escape the guilt of defaming God and engaging in immoral behavior with a maid who would eventually become his second wife. The siblings of Kierkegaard also passed away when they were still very little. Before he was nine, his older brother and sister both passed away. The three other members of his family died before he became twenty-one.

His eldest brother, Peter, eventually chose to live as a priest. Kierkegaard himself has never married all his life. He canceled his engagement with Regina Olsen. This series of experiences made Kierkegaard undergo existential isolation. He was solitude, distanced from the others, and that moment could hone himself to be more authentic. Kierkegaard's existential isolation refers to the conditions of concrete individuals. The individual word in the understanding of Kierkegaard has no individualistic nuance. The word emphasizes personal meanings. If he talked about "existing," then what he meant was a concrete individual that embodies the underlying presupposition that humans exist in a certain sense as individuals. By isolating himself, Kierkegaard believed that an individual is struggling, trying to achieve what is meaningful. In self-isolation, there is a self-healing process.

Another existentialist thinker is Albert Camus. Some of Camus' writings are influenced by Kierkegaard's thoughts, especially about *L'Étranger* and *La Peste* (Berthold, 2013). Albert Camus was born on November 7, 1913, in Mondovi, a small village near the port city of Bonê (now Annaba) in the northeast region of French Algeria. He was the second child of Lucien Auguste Camus, a military veteran and wine delivery employee, and Catherine Helene (Sintes) Camus, a housemaid, and part-time factory worker. Camus never described himself as a philosopher, but he chose to be referred to as a philosophical writer like Melville, Stendhal, Dostoyevsky, and Kafka (Curtis, 1975). Camus, in the novel



Myth of Sisyphus, believed that a great novelist is a philosophical novelist. The reason was Camus wanted to avoid systematic explanation and made their discourses with "pictures not arguments."

Existentialism, as practiced by Camus, aims to perceive and comprehend the singular and original reality and attempts to communicate this viewpoint largely through pictures, literary moments, and dramatic fiction presentations (Golomb, 1995). He articulated ideas weighed down by the issue of existential isolation in his book *La Peste*. When the plague struck the city of Oran, the two protagonists, a doctor by the name of Rieux and a Jesuit priest by the name of Paneloux, felt an existential solitude. For Camus, these two personalities adequately represented existentialism. He viewed existential isolation as a depiction of a world replete with varied lifestyles that people had encountered, lived, and modified to make them more sympathetic toward plague victims. The absurdity of Camus has become an imaginative force that invites people to continue to love life with full resilience to get out of suffering, sickness and still have an ethic of care. Thus, Camus' existentialism could be eros (Srigley, 2011).

### **Rieux and Paneloux in Isolation**

Existential isolation in Albert Camus' reflection is depicted from the novel *La Peste*. Camus narrated two characters which are doctor Rieux and Paneloux, a Jesuit priest who experienced existential isolation. The two characters had a shifting view when witnessing the plague. They had different attitudes during the plague. Doctor Rieux provided help so patients could recover without the concept of eschatological safety. Meanwhile, Paneloux changed from highly eschatological into profane because of witnessing the victims' deaths.

Humans who experienced existential isolation in Camus' literary reflection centralized a great ordeal that humans must face the plague. The early sign of plague was the spread out of dead mice and it continued with deaths of humans. In the situation of plague, there was a life paradigm that unveiled the true nature of humans. In the middle of epidemic threats, altruist figures turned up such as Bernard Rieux, Jean Tarrou, Castel, Joseph Grand, and Paneloux. The character of Paneloux was experiencing the ultimate existential isolation.

The selfish characters in *La Peste* were Cottard, Raymond Rambert. They were seeking personal advantage and did not have a sense of care toward the patients exposed by plague. There was an antagonism protruding from a human's inner self which then

became a sign of self-existence. Humans' self-identity may be visible when struggling to save themselves from the danger of an epidemic, which is death. The plot of *La Peste* depicts human situations that are prone to change anytime during the plague. Here is the synopsis.

The story of *La Peste* started when Michel, an apartment officer, found a dead mouse on the floor. When meeting doctor Rieux, he believed that the dead mouse was a cheap joke from pranksters who dumped dead mice in an apartment. Rieux did not take him seriously. A few days later, the radio announced that there were 6000 dead mice, and four days later, it became 8000. Suddenly, the number of mice killed dropped. However, it was the beginning of the plague outbreak. Then, Michel fell ill and died. Doctor Rieux visited Doctor Castel (a senior doctor who has ever fought plague).

Rieux denied the fate that tortured children. He fought the sufferers by doing his best, which was as a doctor who prioritizes human health. Rieux said, "The word human health is too pompous. My job is not that high. Human health is what attracts me – especially the health condition." (Camus, 1947).

The peak of Rieux's failure is depicted when he witnessed young children who lost against the plague. His helplessness seeing the pure young children was seen when he helped to treat the children, but again, he faced another failure. He was pissed and tired of facing the plague. In his tiredness, he kept trying to demolish the plague like an insurgence. He was portrayed as: "It's true, he said, "I'm sorry! But fatigue is madness. There were times when I only had one feeling, insurgence" (Camus, 1947). As a human, Rieux also had a sense of loneliness in facing and thinking of the unknown, which then generated a feeling of alienation. Population fear was increasingly felt. Once when the plague had attacked the population, it was clear that people were closing the window, there were tears, there were fears. Such an impression showed the existence of realized alienation.

It was announced that the plague epidemic occurred, and a lockdown policy took place. Victims fell until there was a mass grave pit, and riots ensued. A few months later, live mice reappeared as a sign that the disaster was starting to recede. Towards the morning of January, the doors of the city of Oran began to open. People were free, they could enjoy a new day but they did not forget the trials that confronted them from the absurdity of life and the fragility of the human situation. Therefore, they seemed to be between happiness and tears (Camus, 1947).

The plague took a heavy toll and caused humanity to experience fear, anxiety, and

panic (Lee et al., 2020). These three feelings could shrink human guts so that when the lockdown policy was raised, the self then chose to shut down inside the house. The process of distancing by closing the self in their home could be a self-isolation. Humans' existence became distanced between one another. Deaths after deaths were kept being announced through one of radio in France in 1946 (Camus, 1947).

Paneloux, a Jesuit priest, at first eagerly proclaimed that the plague was a curse from God. He asked the people of Oran to repent immediately. Paneloux's sermon followed the pattern of the Old Testament, which refers to the story of Job, who experienced many disasters given by God to test his loyalty. Paneloux's sermon quotes the text of the Exodus related to the plague in Egypt and says:

"The first time this plague appeared in history, it was to attack the enemies of God. Pharaoh defied timeless design and the plague caused him to fall to his knees. Since the beginning of all history, the scourge of God has put proud and blind people at its feet. Meditate on this and fall to your knees" (Camus, 1947).

In Paneloux, there was an explicit self-image that was influenced by the concept of classical theology of salvation in the Old Testament Scriptures. He was lacking in detecting the epidemic outside of salvation theology. Paneloux was within eschatological power.

The death of Philippe, son of Othon who was a prosecutor, opened Paneloux's eyes. The phenomena changed his mind. There was another perspective that could explain the situation of suffering to get out of pain and curse. Here, Paneloux experienced existential isolation. He experienced solitude, loneliness, and misery. His sermons changed and agreed to follow Jean Tarrou to help the victims of plague. He then invited his people to be involved in assisting the plague victims. He volunteered and lived in the home of an old woman. What does it mean? It turned out that there were concern and empathy for suffering and firmness to answer "yes." Paneloux was side by side with pain, and it changed him. The death of Phillippe due to plague shook Rieux's consciousness and disturbed Paneloux's faith in certainty. How could an innocent child suffer like that? Paneloux's faith dissolved in a situation of existential isolation in that event. He died of plague and he was already out of the rectory. He died embracing the cross (Ice, 2015).

The literary story from the plague novel, if compared to Kierkegaard's existential isolation experience, would have different views and its specialty. Kierkegaard was different from Camus when experiencing the problem of existential isolation. There are

three differences, namely: (1) experience; (2) teleological aspects; (3) the solution of insulation. First, Kierkegaard directly experienced existential isolation, and he wrote his story with pseudonyms. Few of his aliases are Johannes Climacus, Anti Climacus, Vigilius Haufniensis, Johannes de Silentio, and Constantine Constantius. Kierkegaard sees self-isolation as the option for an individual fight upon plague. This is exactly the time, he experienced solitude due to loss of relatives, ridiculed because of his somewhat hunched body shape, and canceled engagement. He stayed inside the house and processed his loneliness and disappointment through reading, writing, and criticizing people as well as the church leaders of Denmark. The existentially isolated self for Kierkegaard works by seeing himself in the full potential of becoming an actus so that he becomes an authentic self (Soderquist, 2014).

Different from Kierkegaard, Camus sees self-isolation during an epidemic will present the elements of life (Margerrison, 2011). When an epidemic occurs, human nature will emerge and there will be a pull between the ego and altruism. Camus narrated a life portrayal and did not experience isolation like Kierkegaard. However, the experience intended to be shared by Camus is the divisions in human as an individual and social being, the choice to get out from the self and involve to other people becomes urgent.

Second, Kierkegaard, while in isolation thought that individuals must experience a process to continue to improve themselves until they arrive at the paradox of salvation, which is at the religious stage. In this stage, surrender to God's will is the culmination of Kierkegaard's reflection. Salvation for oneself and others is directed according to God's will and help. This view is denied by Camus because doctor Rieux was described as a non-believer in the concept of eschatological safety and only put the trust in medical science so that plague patients could recover. Thus, self-isolation in Camus teleological concept is highly anthropological that aims to the interests of many people.

According to Kierkegaard, the answer to the question of whether God exists can be found inside tension and struggles. The idea behind Kierkegaard's metaphysical theory came from his imagined version of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah. By removing the fatal dagger from Isaac, God, acting through angels, spared his life. Human subjectivity, in a paradox, offers Kierkegaard's self-isolation problem a solution; however, this also makes the choice to do God's will feasible. Humans are naturally confused when confronted with paradoxes, which is a realistic state. Camus said that although reality is irrational, what appears to be so is, particularly in the case of disease. Paneleux embodied Camus's query about how it was possible for an innocent child to suffer and how he felt

pain. Did the plague occur due to guilt and sin?

To Camus, amid tension and conflict, the way out does not always need to be found and that is the absurdity. Why? Because, in a conflict when it is accepted, it advances us, and when in tension, we always look for the best and we struggle to overcome them. This is the existentialism aspect from Camus, even though he disagreed with being called an existentialist. Therefore, according to Camus, subjects must get out and get involved in the safety of plague sufferers. This is where existential isolation needs to be bridged with ideas and actions in the ethics of caring.

### **Ethics of Care**

Kierkegaard and Camus' thinking can be an effort to trace a way out so that individuals can shift from existential isolation to ethics of care. The ethics of care is not in the formal form as it tends to be regarded as an agreement or contract with various commitments to reduce the vulnerability of other people (Assiter, 2016). The ethics of care can be closer to the agape in Christianity, as an attitude of good hope and helping others' growth. In short, ethics of care builds harmony by caring for others and standing in a sense of justice (Gilligan et al., 1990).

There are two bases of ethics of care in the Indonesian context: (1) rationally (metaphysical), the basic concept is sense precedes science; (2) empirical, namely encountering experiences and being gripped by the problem of existential isolation regarding theodicy. A rational explanation of sense precedes science as a metaphysics is a concept that seeks to overcome the authority of logic in the post Aufklärung era. As a contrastive knowledge a sense of looking for forms of explanation by trying to answer one question, how could feelings be a moral act? A question that had been asked by Immanuel Kant. The sense can be understood, that is, first, the sense becomes possible because there is a desire in the category of passion.

The second is a sense of being in space and time within ourselves. Space and time are not outside of humans' selves, but rather they are inherently present within humans' selves and experiences and must be processed further in the sense structure driven from desire. The desire is later called a primordial impulse. Thirdly, the phenomenon of staring at one's face. The moment when staring at a victim's face who suffers, falls in the realm of feelings. Levinas elaborates that an emergence of sense sensitivity when one sees the face of an oppressed person.

The loss of Philippe may have sparked the creation of a desire to share in the

family's sorrow, according to the study of sense, if it is connected to the experiences of Rieux and Paneleux. Rieux and Paneleux were affected by the loss of a child's grief. In such situation, their bodies were affected by their emotions, which the brain then processed to alter their opinions. After gazing at the faces of the plague victims for a while, the two protagonists made the decision to participate as a result of their feelings and subsequent considerations.

In the context of Indonesian citizens, the sense becomes cultural sediment which is then manifested in behavior, gestures, relations, communication (language/speech), and cultural policies. Sense is the basic structure that makes up the Indonesian citizens' sensory experience, especially in cultural symbols, for example, wayang for Javanese. In wayang, there is a morality that triggers a distinctive sense of sensitivity, which is not forcing good and bad values on the audiences. Wayang shows the audiences an overview that good and bad, right and wrong, are two things that always go hand in hand (Lahiri, 2016).

In the context of existential isolation, Indonesian citizen can apply a concept of sense precedes science from the assumption that direct involvement to collaborate becomes essential when facing a pandemic. Although, some parties seek their profit by hoarding COVID-19 self-protection tools such as masks and antiseptic liquids and sell them at a higher price that can be up to five or even eight times the regular price. Alternative actions were taken by the citizens by making masks out of cloth and donating them to other people (Suliswanto, 2020).

In the second point, in the current situation of a pandemic, humans continue to communicate with others but mediated by simulacrum media, which are shadows, not presentations (presence). Isolation thus becomes an existential problem because there is a gap between one individual and other individuals who are outside the locus. The existence of the individual in isolation empirically occurs loneliness, quietness, and silence. This moment in existential mode is the moment to find self-authenticity. Individuals can reflect to get to know themselves who have been filled with rush in the crowd, in a time loop that feels like spinning without meaning (Gultom, 2016). Hence, the moment of isolation is the return of the individuals in their existential home, knowing their body and soul. This moment of pandemic changes life habits by breaking the cycle of work activities and inviting individuals to be calm, quiet, and to find warmth in the family.

The third point, the event of existential isolation, Pinel's view is in a position

opposite to self-discovery. Pinel et al. somewhat have a pessimistic view on existential isolation because the human self is increasingly gripping and sort of alienated from the social environment. Pinel's inference is rather psychological in color, because humans do not have self-autonomy, and in unity with the social. It means individuals will never become a complete human being without the presence of others. This assumption may be true in one view of science. Pinel et al, seem to be ignorant that existentially, humans have autonomy by not being in a crowd.

The mass crowd can be "affect comandus", which governs the individual to obey the norm within the mass. It means that ethics stands within people and individuals must be in it. In this study, the researchers refute the thesis affected by Hegel. Kierkegaard stressed that authentic self-discovery begins with the struggle, anxiety, and fear that befell him and that is when the dilemma occurs. Subjectivity is involved and dare to decide becomes an important point for Kierkegaard to get out of the dilemma.

The fourth point, the most profound discovery process of unconcealment that guides an individual to recognize arrives at the event of death. The event is freedom. We cannot escape from that freedom. We also learn that individuals are inexorably alone. The existential isolation is different from interpersonal and intrapersonal isolation. This type of existential isolation is subjectively similar; that they can feel the resemblance and disguise themselves by using masks (Yalom, 1980).

## **Discussion**

### **Kierkegaard and Camus' Juxtaposition for Existential Isolation in Indonesia**

Existentialism is a western thought pioneered by Kierkegaard in order to criticize the objectivity of Hegel's philosophy in humans. In research on human life, aspects of vitality, possibility, anxiety, and agony contribute to shaping humans in the frame of subjectivity (Soren Kierkegaard, 2009). In summary, existentialism, in the lokus of this study, both from Kierkegaard and from Camus moves from subjectivity by processing itself first from all threats or cataclysm concerning him.

The wave of existentialist thought moved and arrived in Indonesia around the 1960s which began with the emergence of the production of discourse from Hasan. There are two reasons the wave of existentialism became discussed in Indonesia, first, existentialism in the way of life, because the situation of Indonesians experienced instability in both politics, economy, and culture after World War II, and the Cold War. The second reason, existentialism in the strict sense, as an academic study. The citizen

paradigm shifts into individuals who reflect subjectively on the negative effects of resource shortages and seek their own way out.

The position of existentialism for Indonesia occurs because of the "shared context" experienced by a person related to anxiety when facing fear, challenges, and uncertain future. Anxiety, thus, has a dimension of universality and at the same time singularity. Universality, because of major problems such as war, natural damage, terrorism, and the COVID-19 pandemic is a shared context and a concern of everyone in the world. In this article, the author takes the theme of the COVID-19 pandemic as a reflection material, to identify that there are similarities or inter-relationships between Western thinking and Eastern thinking by anchoring it to that "shared context." Anxiety as a singularity, according to Zizek, therefore, in the event of a pandemic that causes many victims to die, then subjectively, humans take distance and try to protect themselves by staying at home. Although there is an emergency policy from the government, subjects will inherently try to protect themselves from contracting the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.

Juxtaposition in an attempt to find the difference from the wave of existentialism thought from Kierkegaard and Camus. Kierkegaard's existentialism for the situation of Indonesians can be relevant if subjects experiencing existential isolation can (a) find potential in him in isolation with work from home policy; (b) that potential can then be vitality to give hope that in anxiety, the subject can remain calm by believing in himself; (c) in existential isolation, subjects still need "deep communication" and "virtual communication" in order for isolation to be bridged while remaining friendly with others (Singh et al., 2020).

If Camus' existentialism is placed in Indonesian context, the following points can be taken into account and expressed as actions: (a) Indonesians who are experiencing existential isolation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic also experience Camus' existentialism, which is in the pattern of absurdity. Staying at home and experiencing existential loneliness is ludicrous. Why? As a result, the self psychologically experiences anxiety in about three months while the subject is at home and keeping his distance, and he starts to feel ludicrous in pandemic settings. Absurdity happens when the ego starts to lose faith in itself since it is unsure of when the pandemic will cease.

The psychological existence of Indonesians is similar to that of the citizens of Oran city as narrated by Camus, anxiety arises and many people desperate or act rashly when hope in healing and safety begins to disappear. Self-rescue efforts are not a solution; (b) when the subject thinks of himself as not a solution, then the choice to help each other



deal with pandemics becomes a wise choice. The act of wanting to get out of yourself willing to help others, even if it ends in death becomes a form of altruism that is precisely the obvious hope. The altruism by Rieux's doctor and Paneloux pastor is proof that in the face of a deadly pandemic, subjects are asked to get out of themselves and deal with it by acting to help victims (Jankofsky & Stuecher, 1984).

Altruism becomes a paradox, when subjects are asked to stay at home for a long time, but Camus offers altruism instead of asking the subject out of the house to volunteer. To get out of this paradox, action becomes a solution. In Indonesia, some individuals move by volunteering to help minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Volunteers work with (a) socializing practical instructions on avoiding the COVID-19 pandemic in children and parents to keep themselves at home; (b) help bury victims of the COVID-19 pandemic with health protocols; (c) volunteer for COVID-19 drug tests; (d) remind residents who are outdoors by still providing masks, antiseptic cleansers. Subjectivity, thus becoming a form of self-ability in the motion of altruism. Altruism is thus an ethic of care.

## **Conclusion**

This research explains the issue of human existential isolation. People who are in the midst of a pandemic must isolate themselves. Existential solitude means that people would have anxiety and a fear of passing away. Humans arrive at the issue of their existence from this position. Self-isolation can make a person feel cut off from a sense of community, but if the phenomenon is thought through and interpreted existentially, the person may find themselves grappling with the uneasiness they are experiencing.

The existential isolation in Camus's thinking is found in the two figures in *La Peste*: Rieux and Paneloux. In the plague situation, the existential isolation that Rieux experienced occurred as he watched the young people who lost against the plague many people died from the plague. Paneloux's existential isolation was when he felt confused at the plague situation that at the beginning of his sermon was considered a curse from God for the wicked. He realized and then became anxious because the victim was not just a bad person, but a good man. He experienced existential loneliness and while living in isolation, to then act as a volunteer and then die. The juxtaposition between Camus and Kierkegaard's thoughts for citizens of Indonesia can be found in the idea of subjectivity, the vitality of life, and communication, as well as the absence of altruism as a form of the ethic of care.

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