

## Call for papers

The 28<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Simone de Beauvoir Society

# Beauvoir and Post-Truth

**Dates:** 16–19 August 2023

**Venue:** [City Centre Campus](#) of the University of Helsinki (Finland)

**Organisers:** [The International Simone de Beauvoir Society](#), [HARMAA work group](#) and [Discipline of Practical Philosophy](#) (University of Helsinki)

**Deadline for abstracts:** 6 April 2023

Can existentialism act as an antidote to the ongoing political and epistemic crisis, often discussed in terms of “a post-truth era”? The 28<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Simone de Beauvoir Society invites you to rediscover the legacy of existentialism, and, in particular, that of Simone de Beauvoir, from the angle of truth, untruth and post-truth. Post-truth, often defined in terms of an overreliance on intuitive thinking, the rise of populist politics, information wars, the adoption of “alternative facts” and the formation of “alternative realities”, intersects the existentialist themes of authenticity, bad faith and situation in an interesting manner. Could such concepts help to clarify the problems specific to our time – social media bubbles, discrediting of scientific knowledge, troll factories, hate speech and dissemination of conspiracy theories?

Many of Beauvoir’s texts (e.g., *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, “Existentialism and Popular Wisdom” and “The Woman Destroyed”) discuss the question of bad faith and the different modes in which individuals attempt to flee their freedom. But what do present-day issues such as information wars and novel AI-related possibilities of creating falsifications either by design or by accident (Deepfake, Chat GPT, Historical Figures) look like from a Beauvoirian perspective? How do we know when we are in bad faith or duped? What is the role of situation in the construction of knowledge? How do we ultimately understand “truth”, “untruth” and “post-truth” in philosophy, literature, history, political science and other fields? How exactly do existentialist concepts lend themselves to understanding our predicament? Should we think through and *beyond* these concepts, to create better ones to make sense of our time?

We invite abstracts that bring Beauvoir’s thinking to bear on the question of “post-truth”, or vice versa. Papers that bring Beauvoir into conversation with other philosophers (both within and outside the traditional canon), authors or other cultural figures are most welcome, as are author presentations on recent Beauvoir-related books. Some possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- Beauvoir’s analyses of myth, mystification, bad faith or situation
- Epistemology and genre from the perspective of Beauvoir studies: concepts of truth and untruth in fiction, autobiography and autofiction, historical and documentary novels, *romans à clef*, etc. – and with respect to the archive (letters, diaries) and to posthumous publication
- Artificial intelligence and the problem of truth from a Beauvoirian perspective
- Presentations of sexuality and gender on social media

- Global warming and bad faith
- Beauvoir as a resource for studying information wars, popular imagination, conspiracy theories or incel culture
- Beauvoirian analyses of political crises or political concepts (“patriotism”, “Finlandisation”, “freedom of speech”, “fake news”, etc.)
- Evolution in Beauvoir’s own thinking about authenticity as an ideal
- The role of religion and faith in existentialism / Beauvoirian readings of religion

### **Abstract guidelines:**

- Speakers will have 20 minutes for the presentation and 10 minutes for discussion.
- Please send your **abstract** of no more than 350 words and a **short cv** that includes your contact details and institutional affiliation, if any, to [info@harmaa.org](mailto:info@harmaa.org) by 6 April 2023.
- Save your abstract and cv as Word files, naming them as follows: beauvoir2023yourfamilyname and beauvoir2023CVyourfamilyname.
- In the subject line of your email, write: beauvoir2023submission.
- The abstracts will be reviewed by the Steering Committee.
- The Society aims to communicate the decisions by the end of April.

**Confirmed keynotes:** Sara Heinämaa (Finland) and Tove Pettersen (Norway).

**Conference fee:** To participate in the conference, you must be a member of the Society (\$80 U.S. for regular members and \$45 U.S. for student, retired, unemployed and underemployed members). If you have not yet paid your membership dues for 2023, you may do so at <https://beauvoir.weebly.com/membership-and-donations.html>. There will also be a conference fee to cover catering during the conference; conference dinner and possible sightseeing tours will be optional. Attendees are responsible for arranging their own accommodation (see information below).

**Travel fund:** [Liliane Lazar Travel Fund](#) provides support for financially challenged members whose papers have been accepted for presentation at the conference.

**Book exhibition:** The conference invites new books by the Society members to be presented in a book exhibition. The books need not deal with Beauvoir; rather the idea is to make the members’ work overall more visible for the others and stimulate discussion between authors and prospective readers. You can propose your book for the book exhibition when registering for the conference. Participants are expected to bring their own copies of the exhibited books.

**Venue:** The exact venue will be confirmed later. Possible venues include Metsätalo in Kaisaniemi and the Main Building of the University of Helsinki. Both are located on Fabianinkatu at the City Centre Campus.

**Accommodation:** There are plenty of hotels near the campus area. The prices of the hotels listed below range from €99 to €150 per night (subject to change), whereas hostel dormitory prices can be as low as €34 per night. The hotels listed below are located in the immediate vicinity of the university, whereas the hostels are at a walking distance of about 30 minutes.

[Scandic Kaisaniemi](#)  
[Hotel Arthur](#)  
[Glo Hotel Kluuvi](#)  
[Solo Sokos Hotel Helsinki](#)  
[Hostel Diana Park](#) (1.1 km from the campus)  
[Eurohostel](#) (1.7 km from the campus)

## **Related literature**

- Arendt, Hannah. 1972. "Lying in Politics". In *Crises of the Republic*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1–48.
- Douglas, Karen M., Robbie M. Sutton and Alexandra Cichocka. 2017. "The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories", *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 26(6), 538–542.
- Greene, Richard and Robinson Greene, Rachel. 2020. *Conspiracy Theories: Philosophers Connect the Dots*. Chicago: Open Court Books.
- McIntyre, Lee. 2018. *Post-Truth*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Montgomery, Martin. 2017. "Post-Truth Politics?" In *Right-Wing Populism in Europe & USA: Contesting Politics & Discourse beyond 'Orbanism' and 'Trumpism'*. *Journal of Language and Politics* 16:4, 619–639. Eds Ruth Wodak and Michal Krzyzanovsky.
- Newman, Saul. 2022. "Post-Truth and the Controversy over Postmodernism: Or, Was Trump Reading Foucault?" *Continental Thought & Theory* 3–4, *Foucault's Method Today*, 54–72.