

S a m b h ā ṣ a ṇ

A Free Open Access Peer-Reviewed Interdisciplinary Journal

On the occasion of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's 129th birth anniversary on 14th April 2020, the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Humanities, University of Mumbai has launched a free open access online journal, Sambhāṣaṇ. This interdisciplinary journal hopes to bring diverse disciplines in dialogue with each other through critical reflections on contemporary themes.

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Sambhāṣaṇ or conversation as an art of dialogue has been crucial to the development of both Indian and Western thought. Dialogos in Greek literally means “through word”, where one establishes relationships on the basis of conversations to initiate processes of thinking, listening and speaking with others. Thinkers such as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, David Bohm, Hans Georg Gadamer, Anthony Appiah and Martha Nussbaum have projected shared dialogue as a way of understanding the relationship between the individual and society. While Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Pandita Ramabai, Jürgen Habermas, Paul Ricoeur, Patricia Hill Collins and Judith Butler, to name a few, have started out anew through ruptures in conversations. The inevitability of conversation in academic life emerges from its centrality to human development and ecology. Conversations are not restricted to any single territory, but are enacted between global and the local topographies. This online bi-lingual journal aims at continuing and renewing plural conversations across cultures that have sustained and invigorated academic activities.

In this spirit, Sambhāṣaṇ an interdisciplinary monthly online journal endeavours to:

- be an open platform, where scholars can freely enter into a discussion to speak, be heard and listen. In this spirit, this journal aims at generating open conversations between diverse disciplines in social sciences, humanities and law.
- preserve and cultivate pluralism as a normative ideal. Hence, it attempts to articulate a plurality of points of view for any theme, wherein there is both a need to listen and to speak, while engaging with another’s perspective.
- act as a springboard for briefly expressing points of view on a relevant subject with originality, evidence, argument, experience, imagination and the power of texts. It hopes that these points of view can be shaped towards full-fledged research papers and projects in the future.

Framework

- This journal is open to contributions from established academics, young teachers, research students and writers from diverse institutional and geographical locations.
- Papers can be empirical, analytical or hermeneutic following the scholarly culture of critique and creativity, while adhering to academic norms.
- Commentaries and reviews can also be submitted.
- Submissions will be peer-reviewed anonymously.
- Some of the issues will publish invited papers and reviews, though there will be a call for papers for most issues.
- There would be an occasional thematic focus.

Guidelines for Submission

- Original, scholarly, creative and critical papers with adequate references.
- All references to the author should be removed from the submission to enable the anonymous review process.
- There can be a limit of approximately 3500–4000 words (for papers) and 1500–2000 words (for commentaries) and 1000–1200 words (for reviews).
- Essays should follow the Times New Roman font in size 12 with double space.
- All contributions should follow the author–date referencing system detailed in chapter 15 of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17th Edition). The style guidelines in this journal can be consulted for quick reference.
- Authors should submit a statement that their contribution is original without any plagiarism. They can also, in addition, submit a plagiarism check certificate.
- The publication of research papers, commentaries and book reviews is subject to timely positive feedback from anonymous referees.

Publisher

***Office of the Dean of Humanities, University of Mumbai,
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Mumbai-400098***

This journal accepts original essays that critically address contemporary issues related to social sciences, humanities and law from an interdisciplinary perspective.

“In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared... In other words there must be social endosmosis.”

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Foreword

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Covid, Global Warming, Exploitation – The Same Struggle

From today's standpoint, the period of the first Covid panic appears almost in a nostalgic light: true, we were in quarantine, but we expected the quarantine to last for a month or two and then life will return to some kind of normal – even Dr. Fauci told Americans they should look forward to enjoying their Summer vacations. We perceived quarantine as a limited time of exception, almost a welcome standstill in our all too busy lives when we were able to afford some peace with our families, read books and listen to music, enjoy cooking our meals, knowing it will be over soon... Now we are in what some call the “whack-a-mole stage”, clusters are constantly popping up here and there, not to mention countries like the US, Brazil and India, where they are exploding. Only now we are forced to accept that we are entering a new era when we will have to learn to live with the virus. The situation is open, there

is no clear prospect of what direction the epidemics will take – or, as the German virologist Hendrik Streeck succinctly put it: “No second or third wave – we are in a permanent wave.”¹

But we are still all too focused on Covid statistics, many of us regularly checking the numbers of infected, dead and recovered on Worldometer. This fascination by Covid numbers automatically makes us forget the obvious fact that many more persons are dying from cancer, heart attacks, pollution, hunger, armed conflicts, and domestic violence, so that if we get the Covid infection fully under control, the main cause of our troubles will disappear... But human life will remain full of miseries – in some sense, human life IS a misery which ends in a painful way, often with meaningless suffering.

Furthermore, the link between the Covid epidemics and our ecological predicament is getting clearer and clearer. We may get Covid under control, but global warming will demand much more radical measures. Greta Thunberg² was right when she recently pointed out that “the climate and ecological crisis cannot be solved within today’s political and economic systems.” The same global mobilization that we were able to enact apropos Covid crisis is even more needed with global warming and pollution where millions die every year – but we continue not to act in this direction, or, as she put it in a wonderful reversal of the title of the Andersen’s fairy tale: “The emperors are naked. Every single one. It turns out our whole society is just one big nudist party.”

Let’s just mention a case of global warming which should convince even the greatest sceptics: the prolonged heatwave in Siberia which caused wildfires, a huge oil spill and a plague of tree-eating moths: “Russian towns in the Arctic circle have recorded extraordinary temperatures, with Nizhnyaya Pesha hitting 30C on 9 June. Thawing permafrost was at least partly

to blame for a spill of diesel fuel in Siberia this month that led Putin to declare a state of emergency. The supports of the storage tank suddenly sank”.³ Just think about all the long-frozen bacteria and viruses waiting to be reactivated by the thawing of permafrost!

The same goes for the link between Covid and the exploding anti-racist protests. The only true answer to the ongoing debate about “Black lives matter” (why should we not rather say “All lives matter”?, etc.) is a wonderfully-brutal photo-montage that now circulates in the US; it depicts Stalin holding a poster in his hands with the inscription: “No lives matter.” (I leave aside here the polemics about Stalinist murders in Australia which gave birth to this version of the motto) The moment of truth in this provocation is that there are things which matter more than bare life – is this not also the ultimate message of the protests apropos the police violence against Blacks? The Blacks (and others who support them) are not demanding mere survival, they are demanding to be treated with dignity, as free citizens fully equal to whites, and for this they are ready to risk a lot, including (sometimes) their lives. That’s why they gather to protests even if participation in collective protests raises the risk of Covid infection.

Does this mean that Giorgio Agamben was right when he rejected the state-imposed lockdowns and self-isolation as something that implies our reduction to bare life: when we follow these orders, we attest that we are ready to renounce what makes our lives worth living for the chance of bare survival? Do we have to risk our lives (by way of exposing ourselves to possible infection) in order to remain fully human? The problem with this stance is that today the main proponents of abolishing lockdowns are to be found in the populist new Right: its members see in all similar restrictive measures, from lockdowns to obligatory wearing of masks,

the humiliation of our freedom and dignity. To this claim, we should reply by raising the key question: what does abolishing lockdowns and isolation effectively amount to for ordinary workers? It means that, in order to survive, they have to go out into the unsafe world and risk contamination...

This brings us to the key point: the contradictory way the Covid epidemics affected our economy. On the one hand, it forced authorities to do things which sometimes almost point towards Communism: a form of Universal Basic Income, healthcare for all, etc. However, this unexpected opening for Communism is just one side of the coin. Simultaneously, the opposite process is going on with all violence: states saving big companies and big companies amassing wealth. The contours of corona-capitalism are gradually emerging, and with it, new forms of class struggle – or, to quote Joshua Simon⁴:

“US cities have seen the largest rent strike in decades, at least 150 worker strikes and walkouts (most notably by Amazon warehouse workers), and hunger strikes in refugee detention facilities. At the same time, research shows that US billionaires increased their collective wealth by \$282 billion in just twenty-three days during the initial weeks of the coronavirus lockdown. We are forced to recognize the immense inequalities proliferating with the pandemic and lockdown, with people losing their jobs, with gigantic bailouts that overwhelmingly benefit the biggest corporations and the already extremely wealthy, and with the ways those deemed essential workers are forced to keep working.”

The main form of the new exploitation which characterizes work in the conditions of pandemic is “the shifting of costs to workers. From people having no sick leave, to teachers using their broadband and laptops at home to teach, households

are performing all reproductive and productive labour.” In these conditions, it is no longer primarily the capitalist who owns the means of production and hires workers to deal with them: the worker brings with her the means of production. Directly, this happens with the Amazon delivery person or Uber driver bringing to work their own car, filled up with gasoline, with insurance and driver’s license all taken care of.” Simon evokes the poster held by Sarah Mason at an anti-lockdown protest: “Social Distancing equals Communism.” What we get when distancing is abolished is this “freedom” of workers who own their means of production, running around on errands for the company and risking infection. The paradox is here that both main versions of corona-economy, working at home in lockdown and delivering things like food or packages out of lockdown, are similarly appropriated by the capital and imply extra-exploitation.

So our reply to Sarah Mason should be: yes, and that’s why we need social distancing. But what we need even more is a new economic order, which will allow us to avoid the debilitating choice between economic revival and saving lives.

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- ¹ <https://www.welt.de/vermishtes/article210530869/Streeck-zu-Corona-Infektionen-Keine-zweite-oder-dritte-Welle-wir-sind-in-einer-Dauerwelle.html>.
- ² <https://www.ecowatch.com/greta-thunberg-2646241937.html?rebellitem=1#rebellitem1>.
- ³ <https://www.msn.com/en-xl/europe/top-stories/climate-crisis-alarm-at-record-breaking-heatwave-in-siberia/ar-BB15Cw41?li=BB12J0nL>.
- ⁴ https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/the-sign-language-of-the-tiny-hands-of-the-market/.

Editorial Note

The suffering unleashed by the pandemic's destructive impact highlights vulnerability – both human and ecological – as an inevitable feature of life. The very notion of destruction is value-laden. Sartre rightly notes that without the perspective of life, the storm does not destroy but only modifies the manner in which mass is distributed (Sartre 39). What is before and after remains stable from the quantitative point of view. However, the notion of destruction enters when one makes reference to a being; a being who tangibly experiences what was there before a storm or a pandemic and compares it with what remains as “no longer” (Sartre 39) there. Such a perspective is not simply one of judgment that provides information or hands out a set of dos and don'ts. Rather, the perspective is a primordial existential one, which indicates possibilities of not continuing to be or being destroyed; thus, inevitably linked to fragility or vulnerability. Yet the very idea

of fragility of being opens the self to others, and likewise others to the self (Butler 2). Such an interdependence of being handed over to others reveals the conflictual aspect of relationships that privilege ownership and the individual. But then relationships are not limited to the struggle for goods or recognition on a Hobbesian note. Alternate notions of relationships hinge on claims made by others, as Sartre and Butler argue, given the inevitability of interdependence; claims which are rooted in imagining a world of being responsible to one another. Such responsibility cannot merely be rooted in rules of following protocols of hygiene or medicine, in turn based on judgments. They require a deep sense of affect, of being able to empathize with the suffering of others, in an attempt to mitigate them. Compassion's Latin root is *pati* or to suffer, while *com* implies being with the sufferer, whereby compassion as *compati* implies suffering with the other. It connotes a common existential condition of lives that simultaneously undergo suffering and empathize with one another to mitigate it.

The pandemic, which we evaluate on an existential note as destructive, makes claims on our being responsible to the vulnerable in compassionate ways. However, it also discloses the vulnerability of one's own self. Moreover, one's own suffering related to such vulnerability also exposes the dependence of the self on the other. Hence, following Neff, self-compassion involves the same empathy to one's own self, as one would have towards the suffering of others (Neff 2012). Like compassion, self-compassion requires an engagement with and a feeling for one's own unique suffering. Moreover, one has to adopt a non-judgmental, existentialist perspective to the failures and limitations of one's own self. Both compassion and self-compassion foreground interdependence through forgiveness, kindness and story-telling.

Compassion is not pity, nor is self-compassion narcissism; they are rather integral to healing therapeutic practices. Gordon Flett (2018) observes that self-compassion and the capacity to soothe oneself

results in the constructive process of dialogue with oneself. Instead of indulging in self-blame, one begins to matter to oneself, which in turn expands to others mattering as well. Thus, self-compassion teaches us to be less harsh on others and ourselves. Harshness towards oneself leads to depression, which can be extended to others as acts of violence. Yet, non-violent and peaceful relations with both self and others do not simply happen spontaneously. Their compassionate and self-compassionate foundations have to be built through intervention, often therapeutic, as Neff has argued. In this process the therapist or counselor has to accept the complex relationship with the patient without being invasive or autocratic. This requires that the therapist adopt a perspective of self-acceptance so that it is transmitted to support and care for patients (Henry, Schacht et al 1990).

The pandemic has opened up innumerable vistas of being responsible and supportive to the vulnerabilities of interdependent lives making both healing and health tangible possibilities, rather than pipe dreams. The essays in this issue, written from the existential condition of global interdependence and vulnerability heightened by the pandemic, reflect as much. They reveal that Butler's "precarious" lives are not simply human, but encompass a whole ecology. The "precarious" and the global are inextricably related as the writings in this issue from different parts of the world reveal. Žižek's (Slovenia) foreword highlights the limits of an individualist perspective that leads to a false dichotomy between lives and livelihoods. One needs to think with and about the ways in which all lives are related to get past such a dichotomy. The reflections on health by Aydin (Turkey), Lal (U.S.A), Kot (Hong Kong) and Sandoval (U.S.A) reveal the centrality of collectivity and compassion in the pursuit of wellness. The narratives by Dang (Thailand), Ramaswami (Singapore), Sax (U.S.A), Sharma (China), Baskina and Tiunova (both from Russia) show how an emphasis on interaction can strengthen learning despite the inevitable distancing measures that prevail. Deepaul (Mauritius) and Pokhrel

and Raghavan (both from Nepal) invoke compassionate and self-compassionate strategies of coping with the changes of the new normal. Clark (South Africa), Kain (Australia) and Sookho (U.K.) reflect on the stark traces of social dichotomies persisting in digital contexts that have become so primary during the pandemic. They identify memory as a difficult and therapeutic partner in moments of isolation. The book reviews by D'Silva and Rathi (both from India) reinforce the theme of interrelatedness and nonviolence. Norris's (U.K.) poem revisits the pandemic twenty years later to reveal that one cannot simplistically claim to have overcome it; the original event of the pandemic has splintered in unexpected directions given our "precarious" and ecological lives.

Our apologies for this late September 2020 journal. The challenge of online academic and administrative prerogatives in these unprecedented times has resulted in a delay. We have also become an English language issue, a process which started since August.

We, the Honorary Editor, Editor and Co-editors remain grateful to Prof. Suhas Pednekar, Vice Chancellor and Prof. Ravindra Kulkarni, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for their encouragement. We thank our authors from different parts of the world for accepting our invitation to contribute to this volume. They have enriched Sambhāṣaṇ with their thought-provoking and inspiring contributions, despite their intense tight schedules and prior commitments. We are obliged to our Advisory Committee members and Board of Consulting Editors for their important suggestions. We put on record our shukriyaan to our Review Editor for inputs and support. We thank our Assistant Editors for their help. Ms. Arunima Kaushik cannot continue with Sambhāṣaṇ due to her new full time job commitment. *Dank* to her for her invaluable assistance during the initial months of this journal. We wish her all the best. Our *dhanyavaad* to Ms. Prajakti Pai, for her time and effort in gifting us an imaginative layout. Dr.

Srivaramangai and Mr. Sanket Sawant are bulwarks of support, as always. Our gratitude to them.

We pay our tribute to Prof. L.K. Deshpande, former Director and Professor at the Department of Economics, University of Mumbai (MSEPP) who passed away in September 2020 for academically enriching the University.

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counseling, and medicine*
working towards ecologies
of *health and hope* with
*compassion and
self-compassion.*

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REFLECTIONS ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS



A Narrative Group Project
from Turkey: Exploring Diverse
Responses to Covid-19

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Introduction

In Turkey, the Covid-19 started in March, 2020. From March to June, the country was locked down only for 2-4 days in a week. With June, the lock down days were removed. In these 6 months, some people started to work at home. The psychotherapy center that I work at also passed to online sessions until June. However, in Turkey, doing therapy sessions online was still a new idea. Most of the people prefer to have face-to-face sessions. Also most of the therapists were unaccustomed to make sessions online. So, it was an adaptation period both for the therapists and the people consulting to therapy. With the emergence of the pandemic, we (the masters students and I) made a group project that was guided with narrative ideas. In this paper, the story of the project, the guiding narrative ideas and group processes are mentioned.

Story of the Project

The project arose in relation to responding to the difficulties that popped up in our lives because of the Covid-19. I am working at Ibn Haldun University Center for Psychotherapy Research in Turkey. I am a narrative therapist and, also, I give supervision to the master students of clinical psychology at the university. The master students were making their internships at the center. Because of

the pandemic, their internships were left half finished. Also, their academic dissertation processes were affected. Some of them had to go back to their homes, out of İstanbul. So, they found themselves in a very uncertain place full of anxiety, disappointments, and stress with the emergence of the pandemic.

The center was planning to announce that the people who were experiencing difficulties could call for help for free. The students were willing to help other people. Therefore, the therapists at the center were expected to guide the students in approaching those who wanted support due to the process. During our session with students in which I was proposing a narrative framework in supporting applicants, they expressed that they were experiencing great hardship in those pandemic days, and they did not know how to help other people while they did not feel well enough. Spontaneously, I offered to arrange a narrative group work for them to talk about the difficulties they experienced and find some ways that may help them to respond to these difficulties. In addition, they could use the ideas they would learn from a narrative perspective from this group work. However, since there were 18 students who wanted to attend the group work, I offered to split them into 4 groups, thereby making it easier to work.

Narrative Perspectives that guided the group's work

Covid-19 came into our lives suddenly and we do not know when it will finish. Because of the Covid-19, our lifestyles changed dramatically in which social distance separated us from each other, and we lost the warmth of our loved ones, leading us to face isolation and causing depressive feelings. Because the future is blurred, and our plans were canceled or postponed for an indefinite period of time, uncertainty and anxiety appeared in our lives in different forms. While some people have to stay home with a violent partner, others have the risk of death. Unfortunately, some people lost their loved ones or their own lives which triggers grief. Due to the immense changes in our lives, some narrative ideas may help us to reconsider the conditions we live in.

Trauma

The shape of the corona virus made me think about trauma. We may say that it is a collective trauma because lots of people experienced the intrusive and unexpected emergence of the effects of the virus. In narrative therapy, Michael White says, “no-one is a passive recipient of trauma” (White 2006). White asserts that everyone does something in order to prevent or modify the trauma or its effects because people try to protect what is precious in their lives. Therefore, we should evaluate both the effects of the trauma and the responses to trauma. However, trauma generally tries to convince us to see only its effects and ignore the responses to trauma. Thus, in narrative approach “doubly listening” that refers to listening to both the effects of and the responses to trauma is a posture in therapy that enables “double-storied” conversations. The double-storied conversations assist people to thicken their story about their responses to trauma rather than single-storied (only the trauma story) conversations (White 2006).

In the group work, listening doubly helped me to find out the things that helped the group members to sustain in these pandemic days. Thereby, we could discover their skills, areas of knowledge and values that they hold in the face of the difficulties they were experiencing. With listening doubly, I assisted them to strengthen their story of responses to trauma.

Liminal phase

Liminal phase is a period of “rite of passage” in life and it is described as:

“...in which one’s familiar sense of being in the world is absent, and where nothing means quite what it did before. This phase is invariably characterised by periods of disorientation and confusion, and times of significant despair.” (White 2020)

It is possible to think of the pandemic days as a liminal phase in life. Before the pandemic days, we were working at workplaces; going outside; having holiday plans; having social relations and activities etc. However, with the emergence of

pandemic, our “sense of being in the world” became unfamiliar and we started to face disorientation, uncertainty, and hopelessness.

In the group works, we discussed this period of time as a liminal phase. In addition, we talked about other liminal phases in life that they had experienced before. These conversations made it possible to see what we experience is a period. Thereby, disorientation feelings changed with “it is a phase in life that I will go through and it will end like the other liminal phases in life I experienced and overcame before”. When we know that we are going through a liminal phase, it is easier to focus on the things that help us to sustain in this process.

Sustaining rather than solving

When we consider the situation as an overwhelming problem that should be solved, then we try to find solutions to end it, change it, escape from it. That may tire and exhaust us. However, when we accept the situation as a process, it may invite a sustaining and surviving position. A sustaining position may offer us to look at what we have in our hands: the things that help us to endure, to continue in the process.

Group Work Processes and Narrative Practices

The group works were conducted online in three sessions for all the four groups each of which lasted about 2.5 hours. The first session was done with some guiding questions that aimed to understand the difficulties they experience and discover the sustaining stories of the group members. In order to do that, some narrative ideas and practices guided us. The second meeting focused on generating collective documents. The third meeting was held to evaluate the process.

First meeting: Discovering the skills, knowledges and values

In the first meeting we talked about both, the difficulties that they experienced in the pandemic days and the responses that they gave to this hardship. I prepared some guiding questions for the conversations in the first meeting. However, during the group processes, I tried to take a de-centered position which in narrative therapy refers to bringing the areas of knowledge and skills of the people consulted to therapy, to the center of the therapeutic conversations, not of the therapist (White 2011). Here are the guiding questions:

- How do you evaluate the coronavirus period? What kind of anxiety or distress do you experience? Could you specify your anxiety/distress?
- Could you name the anxiety/distress? What kind of an image do you have in your mind when you think about this anxiety/distress?
- What are the effects of this anxiety/distress in your life?
- Are there any places, times, people, circumstances that the anxiety/distress increase?
- Are there any places, times, people, circumstances that the anxiety/distress decrease?
- Do you remember a tough time previously that you found a way for sustaining?
- In that tough time, what kind of a skill/knowledge/value helped you to sustain?
- Could you tell a story that this skill/knowledge/value made a difference in a tough time?
- What is the history of this skill/knowledge/value? How did you learn it? Who did you learn it from?
- Is this skill or value linked in some way to collective traditions (familial/community) and/or cultural traditions? Are there proverbs, sayings, stories, songs, images from your family, community and/or culture with which these skills and knowledge are linked?
- Could you share your feedback? What do you think about how this conversation went?

These questions were formed in order to benefit from some narrative ideas and practices discussed below.

Specification and externalization of the problem

The pandemic has a very pervasive form which affects lots of areas of our lives. Hence, when we see a problem as pervasive, we may feel the uncertainty. Therefore, if we narrow our conversation and choose a specific starting point, it is possible to feel a bit more certain, as an antidote to the uncertainty of the pandemic. So, I tried to specify the problem in the group conversations. For example, talking about “anxiety” is a very big topic, we may get lost inside it because there are lots of anxiety types. However, when we talk about “anxiety of losing our loved one”, the territory of the conversation may be more certain. So, I preferred to stay in this more specific area.

One of the helpful practices was externalization conversations. In relation to Michael White’s (2007) statement, “the person is not the problem; the problem is the problem”, we talked about the difficulties that they experience in a concrete way. In other words, I asked them to externalize and name the problem/difficulty that they experienced. They found an image to describe their problem as “experience-near” description (White 2007). For example, one of them identified the feeling of loneliness/isolation as “drawn into a black hole that is trying to strangle the silence and make us lonely”. By externalization, we were able to discuss the problems separately from the person’s identity. After identification of the problem, asked them the questions of the “the statement of position map” (Russell and Carey 2004). In relation to these questions, we searched the effects of the identified problem in their lives. In addition, we talked about the places, times, circumstances when the effects of the problem increase and decrease. The decreased circumstances helped us to find what works for them in these times, that is which skills, values, knowledge help them to reduce the effects of the problem.

Unique Outcomes and Double-Storyed Conversations

Externalization of conversations made it possible to separate the person from the “problem-saturated story” that enables them to feel the sense of “personal agency”

that means they have a participation in their own lives (White and Epston 1990). The question which aimed at searching for the times, circumstances and places when the effects of the problem decreased, revealed the “unique outcomes”. The unique outcomes refer to “those aspects of lived experience that fall outside of the dominant problem story” (White and Epston 1990). Finding out the unique outcomes made it possible to discover their skills, values, and knowledge, which helped them to see the experiences that “fall outside of the dominant problem story”.

Each group member found their own sustaining skills in which we discovered the stories, histories and broader connections of these skills and knowledge. When we were talking about the stories of the skills, I encouraged them to find a time where these skills and knowledge made a difference. In this frame, I used the questions that David Denborough mentioned in his book “Collective Narrative Practice” (Denborough 2008).

For the sake of tracing the stories of these skills, knowledge, and values that they found helpful for sustaining in these days, I asked them whether these sustaining skills have made a difference at another liminal phase in the past. They were so surprised to see that they had the same skills and knowledge in two different liminal phases in their lives. It was like a bridge that they discovered, something special for them, coming from experiences acquired through hardship and having been kept for a long time. One of them expressed her discovery with these words: “I realized that this skill was helping me for many years. However now I could know it and name it. This awareness made me feel strong and hopeful”. Some of them said that with the discoveries of skills and knowledge, they felt that “the control of their lives” is in their hands; not in the problem’s hands.

Revealing the skills and knowledge led us to engage in double-storied conversations. In other words, at the beginning of the first meeting, they came with a dominant problem story (single story) however after talking about the skills and knowledge, they developed double-stories (both the stories of the difficulties they experienced and the responses they gave to these difficulties) at the end of the first meeting.

Discovering the history and the connections of skills and knowledge

In the conversations that we were searching about what sustained them in the process of pandemic, I asked them to discover the history of the skills, knowledge and values with the following questions proposed by David Denborough : “How did you learn this? Who did you learn it from?” (Denborough 2008). They found some important, precious people in their lives that they had learned these skills from. The moments that the connections were established between these people were very powerful. They expressed that they felt the support of these people in their lives.

Then I asked them the broader connections of these skills and knowledge with the following questions: “Is this skill or value linked in some way to collective traditions (familial/community) and/or cultural traditions? Are there proverbs, sayings, stories, songs, images from your family, community and/or culture with which these skills and knowledge are linked?” With this question, skills and knowledge were described in a collective context (Denborough 2008).

Second Meeting: Generating Collective Documents

Denborough (2008) mentioned the aim of the collective documents as “. . .to collectively convey a range of hard-won skills and knowledge, in parallel with a rich acknowledgement of the circumstances in which these have been hard-won”. After the first meeting, group members wrote their own discoveries of their sustaining skills, knowledge and values. However, the stories were still individual. In order to tell stories in a collective way, in the second meeting, we collected all the writings and we read them aloud in the group. Each group read and edited the writings together. Before reading, we decided these guiding tips to gather them in a collective way:

1. *Selecting phrases, metaphors, images:* They focused on selecting the words, phrases, sentences that may attract the attention of the people who will read/watch the collective documents. They tried to find impressive phrases,

literary descriptions, metaphoric expressions that may help to evoke imagination and feelings of the audiences.

2. *Collective expressions*: The group members tried to eliminate the individual statements and pick out the collective expressions.
3. *Double-Storyed Telling*: Each document focused on both the shared difficulties that they experienced in pandemic and the skills, knowledge and values that helped them to survive in these days.

At the end of the first editions, I asked the following questions: “What do you want to do with these expressions? Do you want to write a poem, or make a video, or draw a painting or something else? How do you want to convey these documents to the audiences?” Each group responded in a different way: first group wanted to write paragraphs, the second group chose to write a poem, the other group wanted to make a video, and the last group decided to form a formula. So, each collective document went through very creative and unique processes.

Sharing Collective Documents and enabling contributions

“Once we begin to acknowledge people’s responses to trauma and what it is they give value to, we can start sharing our survival skills and making contributions to one another” (Denborough 2014). It is really important to share our skills, knowledge, and values with other people who have similar difficulties in their lives. As Denborough (2014) mentioned that on television, newspapers and online news we watch/read only trauma stories (violence, abuse, disasters etc.); however we don’t read/watch/listen the stories of surviving skills that include the steps the people take in order to protect themselves or others, to create safety.

After they developed collective documents, I asked them with whom they wanted to share these documents. All of them decided to share the documents with people in Turkey and the people around the world who experience difficulties.

Thus, they wrote the documents in Turkish and then translated them into English. The collective documents were put on the Ibn Haldun University's website in Turkish; and the Re-authoring Teaching website in English.

For receiving responses, they prepared some questions which they hope to be helpful for the audiences. The questions were formed for the sake of establishing the connection with the audience, evoking the contributions of other people, and thickening the sustaining stories. Here are some examples from the questions:

“When you watch the video, which expression(s) caught your attention?”

“What did the expressions which caught your attention remind you about your life?”

“Does the poem contribute in any way to your sustaining in this process?”

“If you wanted to write one more stanza to this poem, what could it be?”

“Do you think that you can also develop your own formula of your stories (both with the effects of difficulties and the ways in which you can survive against these difficulties)?”

“Did our stories remind you of anything that assists you in surviving in the face of pandemic?”

Third Meeting: Definitional Ceremony and Evaluating the Process

After the editions of the collective documents, we met again for definitional ceremonies which refer to “the process can move from the written word to an oral ritual” (Denborough 2008). Each group read/watched the collective documents together loudly. When they read/watched again in a ceremonial frame, they had the chance to give voice to a double-storied re-telling and they gathered around

their stories of survival. Afterwards, we evaluated the group process and received feedback for the project. You can find some of the feedbacks below:

“Actually I noticed that this skill has been in my life for many years, however I recognized it in this meeting. This makes me feel stronger and hopeful”

“I see that the control of my life has been in my hands in front of difficulties since I was a child”

“Sometimes we cannot think what can help us when we face hardship in life. However I now know and I can use this skill in the future instead of trying to find it”

“This awareness says to me ‘you could overcome the problems in life by using your own skills rather than trying to find something from outside and you can use your own resources when you need’.”

“I now realize that I was following a family tradition (cooking) and from now on cooking will have a meaning for me”

“I think it is a really helpful awareness to know what helps us in life.”

“When we were generating the collective document, it was a time that we were in that moment, we didn’t think about pandemic, difficulties, anxiety etc. We really enjoyed that period of time.”

“I am so surprised to receive responses from other people.”

“This project contributed both to our lives and to our therapeutic practices.”

Examples from Contributions

I want to share one of my colleagues’ response to the collective document:

“When I looked at the collective documents, I felt like I was watching a marbling

art that all the documents are a part of a unity; however none of them interfere with others, like the colors in the marbling art.”

After sharing collective documents, precious contributions were received. Here are some examples from these contributions:

Contribution to the collective poem:

Someone wanted to add one more stanza to the poem as:
 Color the life in your own way
 Of love everything in your heart
 Give so generously that you can warm every soul on earth
 Mingle the souls that no soul remains without love in the world

Contribution to the formula:

All the difficulties/ Endurance=0

Contribution to the paragraphs:

“This document helped me to see that the solutions in life are in ordinary things that we do here and now rather than sophisticated or outside”

Contribution to the video:

“I thought that my own skills, values are so important”

My Experience as a Therapist

As a therapist, all the group processes were very exciting for me. At the beginning of the first session, there were only difficulties, problems and feelings of hopelessness and desperation. However, I witnessed the discoveries of their responses to pandemic. I usually have individual sessions and when we discover

double-stories with the people who consulted for therapy, it really made me feel excited. However, in group work, seeing the responses with more than one person increased my excitement.

In addition, the processes of generating collective documents were very creative and I could see the evolving of the expressions from individual to collective. When the documents were prepared in a collective way, it was very different from the beginning. I felt like I was watching a riverbed in which the water flows through different geographical areas.

On the other hand, because the students were receiving supervision from me, we knew each other. However, after the group project, we felt warmth between us, and our relationship became closer. Also, after the group project, some of the students did sessions with people who had difficulties because of the pandemic and they used the narrative ideas. I was supervising them and I saw that they were so good at narrative practice even though they did not have the narrative therapy training. I saw that this project contributed to them both as a person having difficulties in pandemic days and as a therapist. In conclusion, the group project was very unique, creative and constructive for all of us.

Conclusion

This group project began spontaneously after a need of the therapists who wanted to help people having difficulties in the pandemic process. In group works, I preferred to see the pandemic as a liminal phase that is the sense of being lost; and a collective trauma that lots of people experience from the effects of the coronavirus. Therefore, we tried to find out the sustaining skills rather than solving skills. As the feedback points out, the group members discovered their own skills, knowledges and values in life. It was not coming from an 'expert' who said what was "healthy/unhealthy to do" in these days. The conversations in the group work encouraged them to look at their already used skills and knowledge. Thus, they felt that they had already survived in some way, in these pandemic days as they had survived previous hardships in their lives. They also involved their creativity

skills to the process. Thereby, each group tended to choose the type of document in relation to their interests in life.

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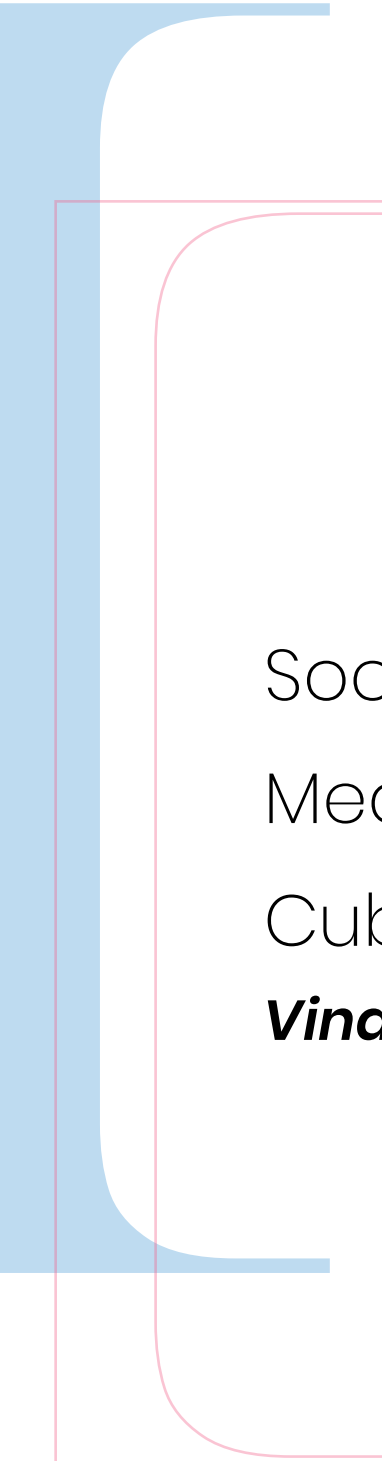
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Socialized Healthcare and
Medical Internationalism:
Cuba and the Coronavirus
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Six months into the worldwide panic induced by SARS-CoV-2 and the calamitous consequences in its wake, a few countries are often mentioned in the world press among those which have been more successful in stemming the advance of the virus. These countries include South Korea, New Zealand, Taiwan, and Singapore. The supposition, it is very likely, is that countries which are still struggling to contain the virus may have something to learn from those which have (nearly) vanquished the virus, though countries, much like individuals, seem notoriously impervious to the idea that there are any 'lessons' to be drawn from history. Everyone likes to speak of the 'lessons of history', but the habit is ingrained enough in most that such lessons are deemed worthy of emulation by others though not by oneself. Moreover, that memorable adage which opens *Anna Karenina* comes to mind: 'All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.'

One might complicate the narrative still more: barring New Zealand, the other three nations—and the sovereignty of Taiwan (formally, the Republic of China), let us recall, is disputed by the People's Republic of China—that I have mentioned fall within Southeast Asia, where, as many will argue, the historical memory of SARS (2003) played a role in preparing them for this iteration of the coronavirus's assault upon the human world. Some may therefore submit that the experience of these countries is at great variance from the experience of other nations. Similarly, barring South Korea, the other three nations are exceedingly small, and the

containment of epidemic disease has almost always been a greater challenge for more populous countries. The experience of China would, of course, appear to belie this claim, but understandably there are reasons to feel squeamish about putting forward China as a country that might be emulated in this connection. It is in China that the virus almost certainly originated, and there are substantial majorities in countries such as India, the United States, and Germany which, even as they may quietly marvel at China's success in squashing the virus after the first horrific scenes of its rampage through Wuhan had been flashed to the world, are clamoring to have China held responsible for the deep wounds that have been inflicted everywhere by COVID-19. Even those saner voices which rebel at the idea of holding one country accountable for a condition that has doubtless been precipitated by the reckless human advance upon reservoirs of nature are, nonetheless constrained to admit that China almost certainly was dissimulating in withholding information about the virus and the disease that it causes, from the rest of the world. Apart from all this, not every country is prepared, at least not yet, to follow the path of totalitarianism on which China seems set for the present.

It is in this connection that the near omission of Cuba from the global narrative that has come into shape around the coronavirus is altogether striking. As shall be presently seen, Cuba has been admirably successful in containing the virus, but there is comparatively little mention of it in the world press – certainly very little in comparison with the attention lavished upon the other aforementioned countries. While the United States exports arms, ammunition, and obesity - inducing diets to the rest of the world, Cuba has acquired a reputation the world over not just for its cigars but for its wholly unique corps of healthcare professionals. In the six decades since the revolution that overthrew the US-backed regime of Fulgencio Batista and brought Fidel Castro to power, and then turned Castro's comrade-at-arms, Che Guevara, into perhaps (besides Mohandas Gandhi) the world's most iconic figure of resistance to oppression, well over 400,000 Cuban doctors and healthcare workers have served abroad, rendered aid to countries at times of disaster and epidemics, and created what is unquestionably the most mobile force of medical professionals in history.¹

To be sure, not everything is hunky-dory in this island nation, which lies around 100 miles to the south of Florida and has for the last 60 years resisted attempts by the

gigantic hegemon to its north to bend it to its will. The US, by its own admission, has maintained a comprehensive economic embargo against Cuba since 1962, and not hesitated to penalize and bully countries that have dared to violate or evade the sanctions that have to, varying degrees, been in place since the initial embargo was announced by President John F. Kennedy. A Central Intelligence Agency assessment in 1986 noted that the annual subsidy from the Soviet Union to Cuba, averaging in the first half of the 1980s to around \$4.5 billion, had shored up what was in every other respect a failing economy. This subsidy took various forms, from the Soviet Union importing 80 per cent of all Cuban sugar to generous and favourable terms of trade extended to Cuba and heavy Soviet investments in the Cuban economy.² The dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 brought this period to an end and the withdrawal of Soviet aid, and the US has since taken various steps in attempts to throttle Cuba's economy, facilitate the country's collapse, and initiate what is called 'regime change'. To all these woes may be added the Communist party's own stranglehold on power—manifested in a tight control on economic activity, the containment of political dissent, and adroitness in using a propaganda machine aimed at enlisting the power of the people to help resist 'Yankee imperialism'.

Interesting and germane as is the history of communist Cuba's survival as an independent nation in the face of unremitting hostility from the US, its enviable success in containing the threat of COVID-19 contrasts sharply with the chaos that has unfolded in the US. It is difficult in the US, even for a purportedly liberal and cosmopolitan newspaper such as the New York Times, to admit as much and the coverage of Cuba's experience with COVID-19 has been, as I have suggested, slight in the American media—an omission that appears all the more glaring when contrasted with the gushing admiration showered upon New Zealand and its young female prime minister. On 1 July 2020, Cuba had 2,348 cases and 86 deaths; this number had inched up to 2,608 cases and 87 deaths at the end of July. At the end of August, the tally stood at a little over 4,000 cases and 100 deaths. New Zealand, which has a population of 5 million in comparison to Cuba's 11.4 million, has done marginally better than Cuba. It has approximately half the number of cases and one-fourth the number of deaths. Both countries, after an initial spike, had been remarkably successful in holding the number of deaths constant: though in mid-August the number of cases in both countries began to

rise once again, the virus is still remarkably under control and far from entering the community transmission stage. But the comparison is also misleading in at least two respects: first, with a GDP per capita that is five times larger than that of Cuba, New Zealand has far greater resources at its command to tackle the threat from the pandemic; and, secondly, Cuba continues to remain under an economic blockade that has curtailed the supply of medicine, medical equipment, and other essential goods. A group of 'UN human rights experts', supported by independent experts and groups, was moved in late April to call upon the US to lift the blockade noting that 'the impact of the comprehensive embargo has imposed additional financial burden, increased cargo travel time due to an inability to procure supplies, reagents, medical equipment and medicines necessary for the diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19.' These UN special rapporteurs pointedly remarked that 'the lack of will of the US Government to suspend sanctions may lead to a higher risk of such suffering in Cuba and other countries targeted by its sanctions.'³

When the first case of COVID-19 in Cuba was detected on March 11, the country already had in place an elaborate plan to counter the threat of the virus; indeed, it may be said that Cuba has been well prepared for such emergencies for decades, having shown the way to the rest of the world not only through its consistent commitment to public healthcare expenditures but its expeditious if understandably controversial response to the AIDS crisis. Some commentators have argued that the country's commitment to public health can be seen from the outset of the revolution, in concerted efforts to improve literacy, nutrition, sanitation, and housing for the working class, and an article published in the socialist journal, *Monthly Review*, appears to offer what may justifiably seem to some as an idealized representation of the revolution's healthcare goals in suggesting that 'Che Guevara taught Cuba how to confront COVID-19.'⁴ The article points to Che's nine-month break from medical school in 1951-52 to gain, among other things, practical experience of leprosy that is chronicled in his *Motorcycle Diaries*, though he and his companion, Alberto Granado, were far from being the international leprosy experts for whom they were sometimes mistaken by villagers.⁵ If the halo around Che in some circles, and contrariwise the American-led efforts to cast his life as one of unmitigated and spectacular failure,⁶ suggest that a nuanced assessment of Che's place in shaping the

priorities of the revolution is entirely outside the scope of this brief essay, what seems to be relatively more indisputable is Cuba's success in having achieved milestones in healthcare that are not merely significant but a model to the rest of the developing world. In a densely compact report published in January 2016, the greatly respected *Lancet* notes the changes in the Cuban health system over the last several decades, registering shifts in emphasis in infectious diseases, community care, and chronic diseases, but suggesting that throughout, Cuba did not diverge from the objective of securing preventive care. The report states unequivocally that 'health became a major priority' since 'the regime came into power in the 1960s' and that the emphasis on preventive care has 'paid off.'⁷

To gauge what circumstances have permitted Cuba to halt the advance of the coronavirus, it is also necessary to revisit the country's experience with infectious diseases. Cuba had set up a National AIDS Commission in 1983, well before AIDS arrived on the island in 1986, and all foreign-derived blood products were destroyed. As one scholarly study notes, 'although this action put a strain on the country's blood supply, it enabled Cuba to escape transmission of HIV to hemophiliacs and other blood recipients.'⁸ The government also instituted a system of mandatory isolation for persons suspected of suffering from a communicable disease, and sanatoriums were established, first in Havana and then extended to the rest of the country, for the forcible confinement of HIV-positive individuals. The sanatoria have been credited with helping control the epidemic; others have criticized them as prisons.⁹ By the early 1990s, Cuba had around 200 AIDS cases, while New York, which had roughly the same population, had 43,000 cases. In 1994, the system of compulsory confinement to a sanatorium was relaxed, but other stringent regulations have been retained. Pregnant women must undergo an HIV test; HIV-positive people are required to provide the names of all their sexual partners in the last six months, and each of those persons is required to take an HIV test; and patients released from a sanatorium must similarly continue to report to a physician at periodic intervals for education and counseling. Cuba developed its own HIV diagnostic test in 1987 and has since 2001 produced anti-retroviral drugs which are administered free to HIV-positive patients. It is not surprising, in view of these circumstances, that even as ethical concerns arise from the harshness of some of the country's regulations, including the forcible quarantining of HIV infected people, what impresses most is Cuba's

success which has been virtually ‘unmatched anywhere in the world.’ In Cuba, concludes one scholar, ‘the collective community is protected by sacrifices made by the individual. Judging by statistics, there is little doubt that if other countries around the world had adopted Cuba’s program twenty years ago, it would have saved millions of lives.’¹⁰ The aforementioned 2016 report in *The Lancet* provides other startling figures—for example, there has been a decline in Cuba in infant mortality of 40 per cent since the 1960s, ‘even as the basic economy remained flat. . . . Today, Cuba’s infant mortality rate is lower than that of the USA.’¹¹

Sometime in January 2020, the Cuban government, having taken the warning signs emanating from China seriously, put into place a ‘prevention and control’ plan, one also facilitated by the nearly unique system of community healthcare already prevalent in the country.¹² Cuba has the highest number of doctors per capita in the world: 84.5 for every 10,000 inhabitants, while India, China, Brazil, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Sweden have 8.5, 20, 22, 26, 28, and 40, respectively.¹³ These figures, unless parsed further, do not sufficiently reveal the immense gap between Cuba’s investment in public healthcare and the appalling, indeed one should say criminal, neglect of it in many countries—especially a country such as India. There are no private medical practitioners in Cuba; in India, on the other hand, the state has increasingly withdrawn from critical social services, leaving most people to fend for themselves. The average of 8.5 doctors for every 10,000 inhabitants in India does not reflect the enormous and still widening discrepancies in accessibility to healthcare between the poor and the affluent, and between those in rural areas and the urban-dwelling population; nor does it reflect the fact that accessibility is a function of both proximity and affordability.

Cuba similarly outstrips every other country in apportioning nearly 13 per cent of its GDP for healthcare. Each neighbourhood is assigned at least one general practitioner and one nurse, and medical personnel are almost always on intimate terms with their patients, living in the very neighbourhood, comprising generally of 150–200 families, that they serve. A little more than a week after the first case was reported on March 11, the government announced a ban on tourist arrivals — a much greater sacrifice than it may have been in other countries, since Cuba, operating under the chokehold that the US has applied for decades,

is heavily dependent on tourism for revenue and its foreign exchange reserves.¹⁴ Community health surveys are carried out periodically, and in this instance, as has happened previously during dengue outbreaks, teams were dispatched to carry out door-to-door surveys to identify those with greater vulnerability to the virus, identify and test those with symptoms, and place those proven or suspected to be positive under quarantine. 'The whole organization of their healthcare system', a professor of government at an American university remarks, 'is to be in close touch with the population, identify health problems as they emerge, and deal with them immediately.'¹⁵ It is in this manner that Cuba was able to prevent the virus from entering the community transmission stage. A more critical assessment of Cuba's methods, while dwelling on the country's success in battling COVID-19, argues that what has been debated in some other countries — 'whether you should wear masks, what that means for your freedom, whether people should be tested, or they should remain at home or be treated' — is in Cuba not debatable at all, and violation of the rule requiring the use of masks can lead to a fine and, after multiple offenses, a prison term.¹⁶ But requiring people to wear face masks is, or has been, mandatory in over 50 countries, including Austria, the Czech Republic, Israel, Argentina, Luxembourg, Germany, France, and Jamaica — none of these being countries that critics of Cuba would deign to characterize as 'fascist' or 'authoritarian' states.

In considering Cuba's success in keeping the virus at bay, a few simple facts merit mention or reiteration. First, healthcare in Cuba is universal and free, no mean accomplishment for any country in the world. Secondly, with its limited economic resources and comparative isolation, Cuba has displayed considerable wisdom in its investments in public health, literacy, and sanitation. Its achievement in containing the advance of the coronavirus is all the more admirable considering that the country faces a considerable housing shortage and that the system of queuing up for food and essential items at ration shops — a system known as *La Libreta* — means that the risk of infection increases just as it suggests that the enforcement of physical distancing poses difficulties that every country does not have to face.¹⁷ Thirdly, the country has a history of showing a level of preparedness for public health emergencies from which most countries, and most particularly a behemoth such as the US which far from facilitating international cooperation has done everything possible to obstruct it, could take some cues.¹⁸ Fourthly, the

system of community healthcare, which is at the same time interwoven into a national healthcare system that permits a rapid system of testing, tracing, treatment, and evacuation of the vulnerable, allows for a coherent system of response at every level. Fifthly, and most critically, notwithstanding the fact that some Cubans are bound to experience the regulations that have been imposed in the wake of the pandemic as an imposition, the majority of the people feel invested in the healthcare system and have shown that the problems posed by the coronavirus can only be tackled if there is some synergy between the state and civil society.

A more exhaustive account of Cuba's healthcare system and its success in meeting the immense challenge posed by the threat of the pandemic would bring other considerations to the fore, two of which may be mentioned by way of a conclusion. Contrary to the prevalent orthodox wisdom which grants full and unquestionable sovereignty to allopathic medicine, Cuban medical education and practice have also been hospitable to homeopathy.¹⁹ Conventional physicians can do little more than express outrage or chuckle when they hear the word 'homeopathy', associating it with sugary pills, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the US insists that 'there is little evidence to support homeopathy as an effective treatment for any specific health condition' just as the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved any homeopathic compound for medicinal use.²⁰ Considering the present state of the US, neither organization can be viewed as an undisputed fount of authority on such matters, and over 30 countries have sought to buy from Cuba supplies of PrevenzHo-Vir, a homeopathic immunological booster used to help prevent viral infections. (The Cuban pharmaceutical industry has also developed an allopathic drug, Interferon alfa-2b, that has previously been used for the treatment of certain types of cancer, hepatitis, and AIDS, and has now been used in China to treat COVID-19 patients, but that is another story – though it is worth noting that Cuba 'has now received requests for the product from 45 countries.'²¹) It may well be that the treatment is not in the least efficacious; nor would it be surprising if PrevenzHo-Vir, which Cuban authorities do not at all claim as a cure to COVID-19, should be dismissed by many as a form of quackery.

Some writers have argued that there is a record of Cuba having achieved some success in combating epidemics partly with the aid of homeopathy. One striking illustration of the homeoprophylactic approach, states a defender of Cuba's more ecumenical thinking on medical practice, is furnished by the greatly reduced incidence and control of leptospirosis, defined by the CDC as 'a bacterial disease that affects humans and animals caused by bacteria of the genus *Leptospira*', which struck Cuba in 2007 and was addressed in part by the administration of a homeopathic compound.²² Homeopathy is not a mere afterthought in Cuba, a remedy sought in desperation, or a form of treatment taken in a spirit of defiant rejection of allopathic or mainstream medicine. The point here is a more complex one, taking us to the heart of the politics of knowledge that is at stake here: where allopathy has insisted on its full and complete sovereignty, as the only form of medical intervention derived from the scientific method, the exponents of homeopathy – and likewise of traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurveda – have a far more expansive and pluralistic view of what counts as science. In this respect, Cuba's integration of homeopathy into the curriculum of its renowned medical school, The Latin American School of Medicine, generally known by the acronym ELAM, is as far-reaching and radical as anything else that the country has done to secure the well-being of its people. What is also distinct to homeopathic practice, and aligns it more closely to the spirit embodied in the Cuban idea of healthcare revolving around neighbourhood doctors, is the kind of relationship it encourages between the doctor and the patient. As Paul Starr wrote in his magisterial work on the making of modern medicine, built on the edifice of a ruthless drive to weed out all competing systems, 'homeopathy stressed the need for sympathetic attention by the physician and individualized diagnosis and treatment of patients.'²³

This essay commenced with an invocation of Cuban medical internationalism and it is fitting that it should conclude on the same note. Cuban medical missions date back to 1960, when an earthquake struck Chile, and have since firmly established Cuba as a global health leader. The story has been told often of the 10,000 Cuban medical professionals who volunteered for a mission to West Africa during the Ebola outbreak, 260 of whom were selected to work, in the World Health Organization's own assessment, 'under very demanding conditions'.²⁴ Whatever one's view of the Obama administration, it had the decency to recognize the

stellar work of the Cuban medical mission, which is credited with having worked effectively in Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia to reduce the patients' mortality rate from 50 per cent to 20 per cent.²⁵ The editorial board of the New York Times, no friend of Cuba, wrote at the time in grudgingly admiring terms that 'Cuba stands to play the most robust role among the nations seeking to contain the virus. Cuba's contribution is doubtlessly meant at least in part to bolster its beleaguered international standing. Nonetheless, it should be lauded and emulated.'²⁶

What is insinuated here, namely that Cuba's medical internationalism is primarily a form of cultural capital sought by a largely or wholly discredited nation, which is also desperate for foreign exchange reserves, is given substantially more weight by critics who, apart from the general animosity harboured against the communist state, have taken the island nation to task for the violation of rights of patients and the labor rights of physicians. Cuban doctors, for instance, are only permitted to retain a small portion of the wages they earn overseas for themselves, having to transmit the rest to the state, but this criticism entirely overlooks the fact that their education is entirely subsidized by the state.²⁷ That is a far cry from the predatory practices of American medical schools where an MD degree would typically set a student back \$250,000 – one reason among others why ELAM's graduates include Americans among other international students.²⁸ One could with good reason, similarly be just as critical of Cuba as I have been of China in its draconian deployment of measures to contain the virus, but such criticisms must also show some awareness of the extraordinary resilience with which Cuba has faced the depredations of its neighbor el norte. In the present crisis, it has certainly done far more than the US in showing the way both to international cooperation and the way out of the pandemic – from its acceptance of a British ocean liner with 50 virus - stricken passengers and crew aboard that no other country was willing to allow to dock, to its dispatch of medical teams to nearly 40 countries, commencing with China and Italy, where COVID-19 patients were treated.²⁹ John Donne's poem, 'No man is an island', is familiar to nearly everyone; but Cuba, a small island nation, suggests a more apt modification: an island is not always just an island, and may yet even be a continent.

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COVID-19: Collective Responses to Challenges in Hong Kong

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Introduction

Hong Kong is located at the frontier of a battlefield fighting against the pandemic since the first outbreak in China and is still struggling with the third wave of COVID-19 in August 2020. When the world had no idea about the upcoming threat, the people of Hong Kong were aware of the news of a cluster of suspected pneumonia cases in the city of Wuhan in December 2019. In the beginning of the outbreak of COVID-19, in China, the people of Hong Kong responded calmly because of the lesson they learnt from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in 2003. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has lasted for more than half a year, precautionary measures have been imposed and tightened up, which raised challenges for all sectors in society. With the practice of social distancing and limitation for public gathering, education and in-person services including counseling are deeply affected. This opened up opportunities for helping professions to reconsider their modes of service, ethics in practice and self-care.

Lesson learnt from the SARS epidemic in 2003 and Social Unrest 2019

In November 2002, Guangdong, the nearby province in Mainland China geographically connected with Hong Kong, experienced an outbreak of the

atypical pneumonia later termed SARS. It reached Hong Kong in March 2003 and caused a total of 1750 cases, 286 death from 11 March to 6 June 2003. People learnt the importance of adequate epidemiological information, risk of infection of medical and healthcare workers during the epidemic, and the need of improving the overall healthcare system in Hong Kong (Hung 2003). At the individual level, wearing a mask became a habit among people in Hong Kong (Ting 2020), not only as personal precaution but also for humility and for the community, in order to prevent the disease from spreading further.

This story repeated itself in December 2019. When there was an outbreak of cases in China, the Hong Kong community was alert. Pre-cautionary measures were enhanced by individuals, such as wearing mask and washing hands. Prices of masks were tripled up in late January 2020. Mainland China netizens took to ridiculing people of Hong Kong for buying masks, stating that this is an overreaction, or it was just an excuse for continuing social unrests. In fact, due to the pro-democracy protests, critical thinking, distrust towards the Hong Kong government, fact-checking, collective and mutual support actions grew among the people. Although the anti-mask law has been effective since early October 2019, during the social unrests, citizens tended to wear masks and ignore the law that prohibited the use of masks.

On 4 January, the Hong Kong Government declared a “serious response level” to the virus outbreak in Wuhan, while medical experts in Hong Kong urged mainland authorities to be more transparent in releasing Wuhan patient data for epidemiological study (Cheung 2020). People advocated the shutting of borders with China, in the community. Front-line medical workers launched a 5-day strike in early February, 2020 to urge for closing all borders, in order to relieve the pressure on the healthcare system. The Hong Kong Government closed all but three border control points which remained open after the strike, and the demand made by the public was not answered completely. A huge increase of demand in disinfectant products such as alcohol and bleach, daily products including rice and toilet paper, and most importantly masks, led to an ongoing panic buying. Frontline medical workers were also under pressure due to shortage of protective gear, such as surgical masks. There had been criticism leveled against the Hong Kong Government for being incompetent in fighting against the pandemic, in

comparison with the Macau and Taiwan Governments, which are located closely to China and had also suffered from SARS.

The 2019 social unrests turned silent because of the pandemic, however, the knowledge and skills generated, which are rooted in the community promptly transferred to meet the challenges of the pandemic successfully within the community. In the light of the situation wherein the people in Hong Kong strongly distrusted the Hong Kong Government, fact-checking and speedy information circulation during social unrests transformed into a comprehensive information hub of pandemic website, including public places visited by patients and well-presented epidemiological relationship of clusters cases. Journalists urged the Hong Kong Government to disclose details of cases in the daily press conference held by officials with clues provided by netizens. In response to the panic shopping, community neighbours relied on Facebook groups to barter daily products, individuals supported the elderly and disabled people in the community proactively by checking-in for their daily needs. Retailers, especially those who supported the social movements in 2019, mobilized resources to secure a supply of daily essentials with the purpose of protecting people and ensuring their safety and health especially of the most vulnerable in the community. Many retailers donated surgical masks for frontline medical workers in the healthcare system. Netizens designed an online “Mask calculator” for people to estimate the need of masks based on number of household members and working days, and encouraged people not to stock up and share extra masks with the underprivileged. Proactive collaboration in the community, together with a high level of self-discipline in social distancing, helped the city flatten the confirmed case curve in the first wave imported from China in January 2020, and in the second wave imported from people infected from overseas in March 2020.

Third wave of Covid-19 in Hong Kong

Unfortunately, collective practices could not save Hong Kong from COVID-19. The city experienced a third wave in July and August 2020. The daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases reached as high as 149 on 30 July, the city had 4,692 confirmed

cases and 77 deaths as of 24 August 2020. Sadly, the death toll increased sharply under the third wave and most of these cases accounted for the elderly, infected in elderly care homes. The Hong Kong Government not only refused to close all the borders with the Mainland to reduce the risk of the virus entering Hong Kong, but also ignored the medical experts' advice. Experts pointed out the measure of home quarantine instead of mandatory quarantine camps for returnees from overseas. The Government exempted testing and quarantine for people like seamen, aircrew and executives of listed companies, which allowed around 200,000 people to enter Hong Kong with no medical inspection which proved to be one of the loopholes in the system (HKU 2020).

Since the second wave, the Government implemented precautionary measures such as limiting public gathering, temporary closure of public and entertainment premises such as gyms, cinemas, libraries, suspension of public services, restricting "dine-in". All these measures were tightened during the third wave. In late July, the Hong Kong Government did not allow dining in restaurants, other than hospital and police canteens, which forced blue-collar workers such as cleaners, street promoters and construction workers to eat on the dusty streets during heavy rain and heat. The community demonstrated solidarity again in response to the inhumane measures implemented by the government, churches, small shops, including hair salons and clothing shops welcomed people to eat inside their premises with social distancing measures in place. The Government agreed to open the community hall for people to eat inside and suspended this facility after two days. Sentiments of anger, frustration and complaints against the government increased, but the Government refused to apologize and take up responsibilities for the cause of the third wave that led to a sharp increase in the death toll and the inhumane rule of prohibiting eating in restaurants. Furthermore, it is said that the precautionary measures and financial support in response to the down slide of the economy were to protect the corporate consortia with no consideration for grassroots causes. Moreover, the Hong Kong Police is being criticized for implementing precautionary measures to control protests. With the implementation of National Security Law and the postponing of Legislative Council elections, the sentiments of hopelessness and helplessness have grown within the public over the Summer of 2020.

Impact on Helping Professions

The Education sector has been deeply affected. Schools, including kindergarten, primary schools, secondary schools, special education schools and universities have been suspended since January 2020. Although face-to-face classes have resumed since late May, the third wave took away the memorable event of graduation ceremony for a lot of students and smashed their hopes of resuming face-to-face classes in the new academic year starting from September 2020. Teachers faced huge challenges in conducting online classes, double-income parents were tired of balancing taking care of children and working at home, students with special education needs lacked face-to-face services. Kindergartens are at a risk of closing, as parents consider that face-to-face class cannot be substituted by online class for young students. They thus stopped paying tuition fees. This is especially true for families facing financial difficulties due to the COVID-19. Educators are not only facing challenges and risks in their careers, but are also tired of answering to the demands from parents and the Education Bureau, when most of the school arrangements in response to COVID-19 are delegated to the school authorities for the final decision of implementation. In addition, schools are expected to cooperate with the Government for National Anthem Law and National Security Law that are put into effect recently. Schools are facing the dilemma of pressure from the Education Bureau to cater to the pressing needs of caring for students' mental wellbeing due to the social movements in 2019 and COVID-19. Due to the social movements, and the implementation of the National Security Law, not only students, but also educators are concerned with issues of trust and privacy, which hinder their ability to seek help and advice for the mental well being of students.

Social welfare sector is also affected by COVID-19, especially those serving foreign domestic helpers. On top of the entry restriction due to COVID-19, language barriers, lack of information regarding COVID-19, compulsory quarantine, poor living environments in hostels and employment issues raised during the pandemic, the workload of workers supporting foreign domestic helpers has increased, especially when there is a cluster of Indonesian domestic helpers with confirmed cases during the third wave. In order to maintain social distancing, work from home arrangements in various agencies also multiplied the workload of this

group of helping professions. With the well-known work efficiency among people of Hong Kong, work from home arrangement implied that people may extend working hours as there are no clear boundaries between work and personal life. While there is a concern and support for the needs of the underprivileged population during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a lack of concern regarding psychological support for their helping professions.

With increasing frustration, the concern of mental wellbeing was raised. However, counselors and therapists in Hong Kong are challenged by restrictions during the pandemic as their traditional training and modes of service are mainly conducted face-to-face. Different from the scenario overseas, with high accessibility in the city, the services of online counseling are underdeveloped. There is a lack of training, ethical concerns such as confidentiality, knowledge of supportive devices and interface, etc. Only a few agencies are offering counseling services for suicide prevention, AIDS prevention and youth engagement etc. To a certain extent, maintaining social distancing means suspension of most of the psychotherapy and counseling services in Hong Kong during the outbreak of COVID-19. The urge to change and adopt technologically assisted modes of service induces pressure on psychotherapists and counselors, whether they work in the public or private sector.

Application of Narrative Practice Under COVID-19

Text counseling is an alternative way to offer support, while social distancing needs to be maintained, and people are living in small crowded flats that do not ensure privacy. Online video counseling needs a person to have a physical place ensuring privacy, where their conversation may not be heard by others, along with a password-secured stable internet. It has also been difficult for families in Hong Kong to avail such services if all members stay at home, simultaneously sharing Wi-Fi to access internet. Text counseling is an alternative way for people to share their worries, concerns, and stories, with real-time or delayed response from their counselor via apps or email. With the integration of narrative practices, a postmodern approach based on the meaning of the language

used in which people understand their lives and narrate their life stories, text counseling could be a therapeutic documentation for the people. In narrative practices, documentation is used in multiple and creative ways (Dulwich Centre 2020). Although it is applied during in-person meetings, 'rescuing the said from the saying of it', the mindful principles and practices are good reminders in text counseling. According to Newman (2008), it is important to double-check with people for the words or phrases they use when writing documentations. Through the process, preferred actions and values of the person might also be explored. The counselor is the audience of the person, connecting with the person through sharing of resonance. It also serves as a 'responsive diary' for the person, that encourages the person to spend time on self-care and have them reflect on their life under the seamless daily routine of work from home. In the safe space of text counseling, people do not need to show their face to ensure privacy, especially when it has become a great concern in Hong Kong now. Both the person and counselor have the obligation to ensure security of the device and internet used, by using VPN, and changing and not disclosing passwords to third-parties. Furthermore, although people are separated due to social-distancing, through careful and anonymous circulation of documents with the consent of the person, local knowledge and skills of tackling challenges generated from the individuals will be a contribution to the wider community that may connect with other people in a similar situation, but may not be willing to speak up due to privacy concerns.

Support for Helping Professions

There are huge demands of training in transforming services into online mode for helping professions, including teachers and counselors. When people were getting used to Zoom, there was a privacy concern, which induced additional pressure on them. Teachers were facing the pressure of not being able to ensure students' attendance and attention, as online pedagogies were not widely applied before COVID-19 too. For counselors, especially those in private practice, to avoid in-person contact business dropped sharply, which caused financial pressure for the business. In addition, there was a lack of guideline in tele-health and online counseling as well. Although training and review of guidelines on ethical issues

for online counseling are offered by training and professional bodies, the need of support for mental wellbeing of helping professions have been forgotten. On-going supervision is not a requirement for the requirement of counselor registration in Hong Kong. Without support for the personal growth and guidance in professional development, caring of the self needs awareness and initiative from the counselors themselves. Under COVID-19 pandemic, counselors need to be well-prepared psychologically – before the economic downfall sets in heavily on the city – to serve people with a healthy mental wellbeing. It is an ethical issue if the counselor is under financial pressure, and thus providing promotion or offering services in ways stressing the needs of mental health care; it could then turn into oppression of others.

Summary

In conclusion, people of Hong Kong will be proud of their collaboration in fighting against COVID-19 pandemic, and not being beaten down by the third wave. COVID-19 brings challenges and crises for helping professions, but it also creates opportunities for educators to equip themselves with more updated pedagogies, and it is a time for students and the society to understand the importance of school life. For counsellors, it provides a break for them to review ethics issues in providing services, expand and transform service modes, and most importantly, to take time for self-care.

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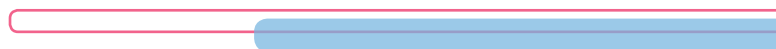
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Resiliency and Abundance: Finding Our Path to Wellness During COVID-19

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In the morning I open my window and smell the fresh air. The smell of rain from last night fills my nose. The scent reminds me to be grateful for the precious gift of the rivers, oceans and the waters that live inside of me. I can see the subtle new growth in the garden as the sunflowers smile back at me. I say a prayer of gratitude for all that is growing, ask abundance to multiple so, others may have the sustenance they need as well.

With each passing day as more people are impacted by COVID-19, this prayer is being amplified. COVID-19 has become a teacher for both wanted and unsolicited life lessons. COVID-19 has taken its toll on human beings across the globe. People of color and poor people are being impacted at alarming rates. Choices made by political leaders based in greed and corruption have furthered the damages to the point of a global economic collapse. Fracking and poisoning our earth's waters are happening every day. While healthcare workers and teachers fight to afford their lives, billionaires' profits increase.

In the U.S. alone millions of people have filed for unemployment, a safety net that is not available in most countries around the world and are on the verge of eviction. Businesses are closing at alarming rates, many people are on the brink of hunger if, they were not already there. This is the result when we do not value the sacredness of our land, water, children and elders.

The average income in the U.S. is \$52,000 a year. The valley I call home is only \$14,000. COVID-19 has dropped incomes significantly. Many people are out of work doing their best to make ends meet, as the cost of food sky rockets. The panic and hopelessness grows daily. There is a global perspective that the U.S. is wealthy. Not everyone here has that luxury. A large wealth gap exists. Those most vulnerable are people of color and people with already low incomes. There are many families that will go to bed hungry this evening. COVID-19 is widening the disparities. Our culture of individualism is coming to haunt us. Those who wear a mask and those who do not is practically split down party lines. More conservative individuals are making it more difficult to control COVID-19 numbers in their refusal to maintain their “rights”.

Consideration for elders and immune compromised people are at the mercy of this individualistic freedom seeking mentality. As of today, six million people in the U.S. have been infected with COVID-19. In my practice as a therapist parents tell they are down to their last bag of beans, “We don’t have enough to pay the rent.” “How will we survive without a job? one client asks”.

My teenage clients talk about their bleak futures and broken dreams as they enter the world of online schooling. The challenges for people continue to mount. I have a hard time keeping up with the number of referrals of people seeking help. My connection with clients are now through a computer screen on Zoom. Thoughts about my own stability creep inside my mind while I am in session. It takes more work these days to redirect my thoughts and to stay in the present. How does one stay calm in the midst of a pandemic and mounting tensions?

Eight years ago, I was invited to join a group of women to talk about the challenges of living rural in our area of northern New Mexico. One month prior, I had moved from a big city to the valley affectionately known as El Valle. The valley has about 2,500 people is one hour from any grocery store. Many people questioned my decision to move to such a rural area as a single parent with a one-year-old daughter.

Women gathered in the front room. Plates filled with delicious food each we all brought were on our laps and we began to share our stories. The women shared

their joys and struggles of living in the valley. They spoke about the isolation of not seeing friends while appreciating the beauty rural life in the high desert brings. Feelings of concern were shared about access to healthcare. The valley is located one hour from any store or hospital. Many of the women had health concerns and were unsure of what they might happen in an emergency. Several of the women had concerns about how to make a living with so few jobs in the surrounding area. The conversation lasted for hours, filled with laughter and tears. As the women brainstormed their ideas, they were placed on the wall on a paper. Dreams of communal farming, harvesting herbs for health and starting a thrift store was placed on paper and then into action. We began to call ourselves the El Valle Women's Collaborative.

Less than 30 days from meeting, the group began renting an old house bringing them unwanted wares from home to start a thrift store. The first day of organizing the thrift store was momentous. We saw what was possible when people come together for common humanity. Like the lesson mycelium teaches us, our reliance on one another began to grow and our networks became far reaching. With each passing week the thrift store continued to expand. More donations continued to come in locally and from the city one hour away. However, we were beginning to struggle with pricing the wares. Many women wanted to price the used items to make it accessible to the community. Others felt that if we priced the items higher, we would draw in more people from the city and the money could be used for other emerging projects. Everyone had good reasons for their pricing. There was just no consensus.

I began reflecting on how healers would make a living many years ago. Many people valued their healers in their community and brought items to support their families' needs.

There was no need to charge money because they were supported by the community. My friend and I began reading articles about sacred economics and gift economy. These seemingly new ideas were not new at all. They were in fact how many earth-based people around the globe have operated outside of the modern currency system. After all, our currency is only a couple of hundred years

old. After multiple discussions and challenges with pricing we decided as a group to try “pay what you want”.

In the beginning our neighbors were confused. “You mean I can take these clothes and pay anything I want?” “Yes, that is exactly what we are saying.” Some neighbors would come in and clear out a section of the store and pay a nominal fee. But that slowly started to change. Neighbors started to see it as a means to share with others. The donations items increased and people started to pay more to offset the cost of those who did not have the same financial resources. One woman who had very little resources came in and gave me her necklace. The necklace was a family heirloom. “I wanted you to have this. You gave me clothing and blankets when I could not afford them.” Her generous spirit deepened my understanding of what true abundance is. Abundance is not finite. It is an energy that comes from source ready for us to tap into.

I see those same lessons of abundance highlighted on my farm. Our farm called Bueno Para Todos is a project of the El Valle Women’s Collaborative. A few months after starting the thrift store a group of women including myself discussed the importance of growing food together. We began dreaming of creating a beautiful garden where we could feed our neighbors and ourselves alongside the thrift store. The dreams began to unfold and we soon had a community garden. The garden only lasted two growing seasons before we decided to close the thrift store. We attempted to negotiate a better price on the building and land but we were unable to do so. Just two years later we closed the store and had to look for another place to farm. One season we planted at a neighbor’s house. The travel to a less central location and growing tensions with other renters on the land made it less favorable than before.

At the time I was debating whether to return to the city. My contract as an adjunct professor ended. I had no money living in a small town, with a sick 13-year-old dog and struggling to hide my tears from my daughter. I did not want her to see me cry from being stressed out. I surrendered and began praying. “Creator if I am meant to be here in this valley provide me with a safe house for my daughter and give me land and give me water to work the land with.” “Help me to understand my purpose.” I had nothing left to give but my prayer. Three and a half months

later I received a call from some dear friends. “There a place on the other side of the valley we think you’d like.” How was I going to pay rent? I had no real income I just left teaching at the university. In all honesty I went to see the property out of a false sense of obligation. As I got out of my car I could hear the sound of the birds chirping. The first step on the land and I knew I was home. The property was 10 acres with a brand-new home and water rights. A perfect place for a community farm. Was this really happening? This was my prayer manifested. Within two week my friends negotiated minimal rent and my daughter and I were in our new home with plenty of space to plant.

Today Bueno Para Todos (Good for all) is a shared partnership with neighbors. It has become a mutual aid for COVID-19 as many people lose their jobs and employment becomes scarce. Each one of us takes turns watering and weeding. On the weekends we mask up and practice social distancing to do farm projects together to build camaraderie and grow food together. Native indigenous practices, sometimes called permaculture, have been used to build up healthy soil and increase production. We plant with intention.

All of our planting practices begin with an offering of traditional medicines of our people such as blue corn and tobacco. Our relationship to the plants is important. We treat them with respect as living beings by using pronouns or their names to address them. As Robin Wall Kimmerer writes in her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, “In some native languages the term for plants are those who take care of us.” This type of synergistic mutualism is all over the natural world. A strong case for the anti-thesis of free market capitalism.

Before COVID-19 I was driving 12-16 hours a week to go to my office in the city, sometimes weeks would go by without going outside. Today seeing clients online has been a welcomed blessing. These days after my prayers and morning meditation, I walk outside to the farm. It is my place of grounding before seeing clients online. Sometimes my daughter, Yolotzin will join me in the morning if she’s not too tired. I treasure these moments when she joins me. Looking around I see the explosion of colors. The bees and ladybugs are hard at work, pollinating and

caring for their plant friends. Sometimes I am in awe thinking about how each of these full-size plants grew from tiny seeds. These plants are now my friends offering nutrition and a full spectrum of medicine. All they ask of me is to water them and pick them. On one hand the relationship with them is simple, I water and pick and they grow. Over the years I have learned that I can deepen this relationship by connecting with the plants. This can be done through offerings of blue corn, tobacco or a song. They like when I spend time with them watching them grow.

The garden will always give if I am intentional with the relationship. When I commune with her the abundance is even greater.

Bueno Para Todos has become a symbol of hope. Students from the United World College, an international high school have partnered with us over the last three years to build a large hoop house, craft raised beds, and start an edible food forest. The hands and minds of these young people have laid the foundation for the farm's success. Students join us monthly for a weekend to work on the farm and learn about healing the mind, body and spirit. We get the honor of engaging with them for two years. It is difficult to see them off when they graduate. The students become family. The mending of my heart comes when they call or message to say they are interning or taking a job to support mother earth. I feel like a proud mama whose child returned home for a visit. Just last week one of our students from Germany launched a fundraiser to support refugees and the environment. Another student from Greece told me she is helping to protect bats as pollinators. Meanwhile one of our other students is taking a gap year to work on a farm inspired by the work she did with BPT. My daughter is gaining a perspective of the world with the students without having to step foot off the land. These precious students have been a blessing, a welcome blessing.

Along with the offerings of tobacco and blue corn that go into the earth when planting, so do these stories. When someone comes to gather vegetables, they are taking in the goodness at a cellular level. Students from the United World College come from all over the globe. I can recall a day when we had over 60 people at the farm raising the hoop house. That day we had six continents represented, 13 countries, 11 languages, and 7 religions present. A friend leaned over and said, "Do

you know how amazing this is? Jews, Muslims and Christians are here on Passover working together.” I have always held high hopes for humanity. In that moment I knew that a new world was possible. The earth is our common ground and here we were caring for her together.

In trying to stay present and looking toward the future I remind myself to remember the past. The high desert lands that I stand upon were once home to the Pecos Native American Tribe. The Pecos people were one of the largest Tewa Pueblos (villages) at one time. Tewa territory, which consists of multiple pueblos, covers a large part of the state of New Mexico. Three years ago, in a fit of frustration and feeling my body overheat, I sat down in my chair and asked why am I even here. “I am from the city.” “I am not a typical farmer.” “Why creator do you have me here?” I was suddenly prompted to look at my computer. I was being guided to look at different webpages and found the history of the territory. During the Spanish conquest most of the Pueblo people were killed. The remaining 17 Pecos natives fled to be with their kin in Jemez Pueblo. I had recently learned at a family reunion that we were Jemez Pueblo people. My great grandparent had even been in the boarding schools. I heard a voice, “You have come full circle.” I understood in that moment I was exactly where I needed to be. My work was to honor those who have passed by paying respects to the land.

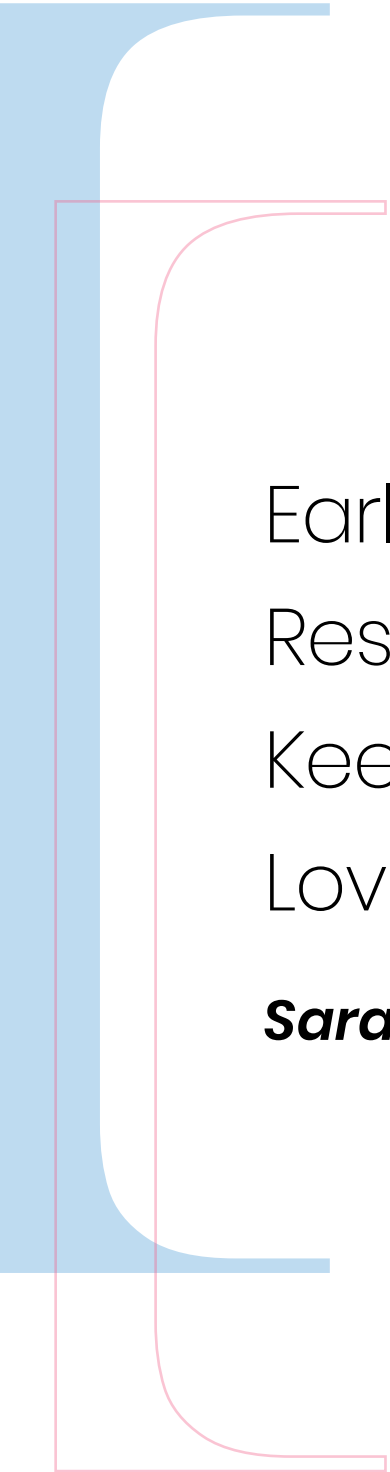
Learning to regenerate land has been a steep learning curve for me. The pretty pictures they show in magazines or a Google search takes a lot of work. Very rarely are we given a real perspective of what it takes to regenerate the land. On the same note we are rarely shown the gifts mother earth gives to us. These gifts are not quantified the way we might count a tomato or an apple. No. These gems come in the form when my daughter gets excited after trying a homegrown strawberry for the first time. She looks at it with such joy and realizes the taste is different from store bought strawberries. When I can make herbal tea for a friend who is feeling anxious, or when you start to learn the healing properties of herbs, and where you once saw weeds, now you see food and medicine, the moment when you can hear your plant allies speak to you, you realize you are not alone in this world. In fact, you are surrounded by immense support and beauty.

The lessons plants teach us are the laws of the natural world. We are interconnected and we are blessed when we have the courage to be in the right relationship with the living world around us. Like most healthy relationship, land regeneration takes time.

Learning to honor the ancestors' land we are upon, listening to the plants and water speak and learning how to defend the sacred is a process. Each layer of wounding we shed opens up space for these lessons to be learned. COVID-19 has given us the opportunity to be in right relationship with one another and all other living beings on this planet. If we take these lessons forward in this uncharted territory of civil unrest and COVID we may have a chance to recalibrate the heart of mother earth and open up a pathway for the next seven generations to come. Everyday will be a test of our strength and our courage moving forward.



LEARNING NARRATIVES



Early Learning Roadmap in Response to COVID-19 : Keeping Young Children Safe, Loved and Learning

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The pandemic threatens young children's development in unparalleled ways. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 250 million children (43%) younger than 5 years were at risk of not reaching their developmental potential¹ and millions of children were facing a global learning crisis, where even after several years of school, they could not read, write or do basic math². Global surveys studying the impact of the pandemic have shown that over 1.5 billion children have missed out on school and 10 million may never return, especially girls who are now being forced into early marriage³. Moreover, a third of households experienced domestic violence, 82% of poorer households reported a loss of income, and 89% had difficulties accessing healthcare and medicine due to the pandemic⁴.

Effects of prior pandemics confirm the risk of both immediate and long-term adverse consequences for children, with particular risks faced during early childhood, when brain architecture is still rapidly developing and highly sensitive

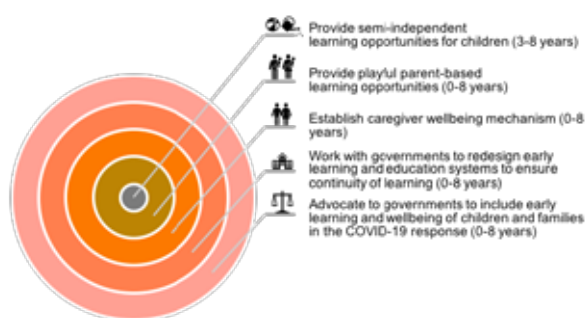
1 [https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(16\)31389-7.pdf](https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(16)31389-7.pdf)

2 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/09/26/world-bank-warns-of-learning-crisis-in-global-education>

3 <https://www.savethechildren.net/save-our-education>

4 <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/about-us/media-and-news/2020-press-releases/during-covid-19-children-in-poverty-experience-greatest-financial-education-loss-highest-risk-of-violence>

to environmental adversity⁵. When children grow up deprived of stimulation, with low interaction with adults, and ongoing, persistent stress, their young minds fail to build or maintain important brain connections. This ongoing "toxic" stress causes visible changes in brain structure⁶ and can have damaging effects on children's learning, development, behaviour, and health across the lifespan⁷. Yoshikawa, et. al (2020)⁸ claim that follow-up studies of individuals in utero during pandemics, natural disasters and famines show the potential for life-long negative consequences of such shocks⁹. Save the Children must ensure that early learning and wellbeing is an essential part of the COVID-19 response.



This roadmap to ECCD programming in the context of COVID-19 aims to support countries to implement, monitor, and evaluate experiences throughout the stages of a crisis and to enable governments

and other ECCD actors to advocate for and operationalize caregiver wellbeing, parenting and semi-independent learning. It focuses on establishing a caregiver wellbeing mechanism to set the foundations for early learning and development, strengthening the capacity of the caregiver to support young children's learning,

5 Shonkoff J.P., Garner A.S. Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health; Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care; Section on Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics. The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress. *Pediatrics*. 2012;129:e232–e246.

6 <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/our-analysis/opportunities-to-achieve-impact/early-childhood-toolkit/why-invest/new-brain-research/>

7 https://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2005/05/Stress_Disrupts_Architecture_Developing_Brain-1.pdf

8 Yoshikawa, H., et.al (2020). Effects of the Global Coronavirus Disease-2019 Pandemic on Early Childhood Development: Short- and Long-Term Risks and Mitigating Program and Policy Actions. *Journal of Pediatrics*. 223: 188–193.

9 Almond D. Is the 1918 influenza pandemic over? Long-term effects of in utero influenza exposure in the post-1940 US population. *J Polit Econ*. 2006;114:672–712. King S., Laplante D.P. Using natural disasters to study prenatal maternal stress in humans. *Adv Neurobiol*. 2015;10:285–313 Lumey L.H., Stein A.D., Kahn H.S., van der Pal-de Bruin K.M., Blauw G.J., Zybert P.A. Cohort profile: the Dutch Hunger Winter families study. *Int J Epidemiol*. 2007;36:1196–1204.

providing semi-independent learning opportunities, working with governments to ensure the continuity of learning throughout the stages of the pandemic, and advocating with key actors to include ECCD in response efforts. The roadmap draws from country experiences to demonstrate how to create an environment for homes, in partnership with supportive caregivers, as well as how to ensure that young children receive quality semi-independent experiences through other channels. The roadmap aims to foster a shift in thinking around how enabling homes can protect childhoods and mitigate learning loss in emergency contexts. The expected results are that:

1. Caregivers with children of 0–8 years have knowledge of stress management strategies for themselves and their children.
2. Caregivers with children of 0–8 years engage their children in learning and socio-emotional learning activities and apply more positive parenting practices.
3. Children of 3–8 years receive semi-independent learning opportunities at home.
4. National/local governments are implementing a learning strategy for children of 0–8 years that ensures continuity of learning throughout the stages of the pandemic.
5. National/local governments plan for and allocate resources to support the wellbeing and development of young children and their caregivers, especially the most vulnerable, in the COVID-19 response.

Objective 1: Establish a caregiver wellbeing mechanism (0–8 years)

In times of crisis, caregivers are more prone to stress, anxiety and depression, which reduces their ability to engage with their children.¹⁰ Therefore, caregiver wellbeing, which encompasses mental health and psychosocial support and

10 Yoshikawa, H., Wuermli, A. J., Britto, P., Dreyer, B., Leckman, J., Lye, S. J., Ponguta, A., Richter, L., & Stein, A. (2020). Effects of the Global COVID-19 Pandemic on Early Childhood Development: Short and Long-Term Risks and Mitigating Program and Policy Actions. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, January. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2020.05.020>

the ability to identify and manage stress, is a prerequisite for positive parenting. Families can be enrolled in a program as members of a small, supportive network (virtual or phone-based), with a group facilitator. Through these networks, families can learn essential skills to recognize their own stress and how this can affect young children's behaviour (more crying, more defiance, regression, etc.). Messages and prompts can encourage caregivers to manage stress, practice self-care and respond appropriately and equally to girls' and boys' behaviour and needs. The messages can cover psychosocial education, socio-emotional learning activities that can be done at home, self-care, connecting with existing family violence services and referral pathways, how children experience stress and positive parenting. This program can be coordinated with a MHPSS program to provide phone consultations with professional counsellors as needed and support referrals of identified cases. The group facilitators can be trained in psychosocial first aid and basic emotional support. The Dissemination Strategy section describes how the program can be delivered. Through this component, caregivers can receive the support they need to unlock their potential to engage their children in experiences.

Objective 2. Provide caregiver-based learning opportunities (0-8 years)

Save the Children can empower both male and female caregivers with the capability, knowhow and confidence to integrate early stimulation and responsive care into everyday activities, promoting all developmental domains, and help to provide children with a safe, loving and nurturing home environment. These learning activities can be disseminated through a parents' audio and SMS program, the radio¹¹, mobile phones and any other available communication channels. The program can convey both caregiver wellbeing and positive parenting practices, as well as simple ways to turn routine tasks into enjoyable learning activities. Household materials can stimulate joyful interactions that promote brain development, parental self-confidence, the bond between

11 In Nepal, capsule radio shows of five minutes in duration can be strategically placed between local news.

caregivers and children, and the child's sense of security. They can also address gender stereotypes that restrict young girls' and boys' ability to play with materials of their choice. Specific adjustments can be made for more disadvantaged communities and families, including children with disabilities and caregivers with disabilities (see Dissemination Strategy section for details).

Objective 3. Provide semi-independent learning opportunities (3–8 years)

In addition to strengthening parenting practices at home, early learning programs can offer a learning program that children can engage in semi-independently. This children's program can be delivered through mass media, mobile phones, videos, radio, television and social media. Gender-transformative role models can be highlighted and encourage thinking, exploration and learning outside of stereotypical social norms. Programming can include songs and stories, and the distribution of a home learning kit for the most disadvantaged communities and families, following government safety guidelines. The home learning kit may include construction toys, playing cards, counters, self-learning materials, story books, doll, ball, paper and drawing materials, a calendar of activities portraying girls and boys engaging in non-stereotypical activities, and a guide for parents to create their own home play area with safe materials for semi-independent learning (e.g. unbreakable plates, cups, spoons, cloths, shakers). The children's program can include games, songs and stories appropriate for children under five years (see Dissemination Strategy section for details).

Objective 4. Work with the government to redesign early learning models and education systems for young children to ensure continuity of learning for all (0–8 years)

Save the Children will need to redesign early learning models and education systems for young children, including children with disabilities, by devising

creative and effective solutions to address disparities. We can ensure continuity of learning by offering flexible in person and remote options that can be administered individually and in small groups (see figure). We can strengthen the culture of innovation within country offices by encouraging the design of creative non-center-based early learning programs, drawing on our many years of programming experience in this area. We can also introduce platforms for collaborative reflection that encourage country offices to study issues, apply creative and relevant solutions, use rapid assessments to evaluate their effectiveness, and then either refine promising approaches, or try out new ones. Monitoring and documenting our experiences will be pivotal to inform the government on good practices for implementing ECCD during COVID-19. Participating in an inter-departmental early learning task force could be a forum to share field experiences and support scale up by the government. Closely working with the government to review ECCD COVID response action plans, back-to-school strategies, coordinating the delivery of training and sharing best practices are examples of ways to engage with the government to ensure delivery of quality early learning.

Objective 5. Advocate to national and local governments and donors to include early learning and wellbeing of young children and their families in the COVID-19 response (0-8 years)

The final objective of the roadmap focuses on advocacy to include early learning and development from birth within the COVID-19 response, especially for the most disadvantaged girls and boys. The early years are much more formative than many realize and the impact of the pandemic on young children's lifelong learning and success could be very serious without intervention. Caregivers from more disadvantaged groups are less likely to have the skills and confidence to engage their children at home, and require more intensive, practical and coordinated programs. Save the Children's impact evaluations have shown that simple and low-cost home learning programs can significantly improve early learning and development scores and reduce inequity. Save the Children can work in partnership with the government. We can support the creation and

implementation of policies that plan for, fund, pilot and scale up effective early learning and wellbeing programs, especially for the most vulnerable communities. These home-based programs must be delivered not only to children who are not able to access ECCD centers due to the pandemic, but also children who were never enrolled in the first place.

COVID has forced us to rethink ECCD programs for the future, and it has become clear to us: We have a choice to make. If we invest only in older children, young children facing adversity, whose parents cannot engage them and cannot meet their basic needs for safety, food, shelter and wellbeing, will be at a significant disadvantage that will continue to deepen. But if we work with government systems to design flexible, innovative and effective early learning programs that extend beyond the school walls, with home-engagement and cross-sectoral caregiver wellbeing components, we have the potential to mitigate this learning loss and ensure that even more children have the early learning foundations they need to succeed in life.



Lessons from Covid-19

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2020 has been an incredible year for everyone. Our families, teams, schools, workplaces, communities, and governments – across countries, industries, and age groups – have undergone tremendous disruption requiring new ways of thinking, being, living, learning, educating, traveling, and working. That said, Covid-19 can be thought of as only symptomatic of challenging situations, crises, and disruption. What have been the lessons from the past months?

The changing nature of education, the varying appetite for anything digital (education, marketing, operations and supply chain, leadership, and so on), the varying preparedness of various internal task forces and the resources at hand, have forced us to reimagine our present educational and business models, reflect on what from the past would still be relevant, and have greater preparedness for the future.

In this article I will share with you a few actions we put in place as part of our preparedness – preparedness for questions from stakeholders (be they parents, students, staff, faculty, alumni, corporate partners), preparedness for better teaching and learning, and preparedness for managing in the new normal.

Preparedness

2020 has been a challenging year for us across campuses and across programs. The silver lining is the continued positive retention of students, successful launch of digital initiatives, and a renewed workstyle – online – with our employees. While we are separated by distance we are connected by a sense of community.

Our preparedness took into account short-term and mid to long-term actions involving various task forces to understand needs and ensure organizational capability. We had task forces each for recruitment and business development, program experience, career and professional development, faculty pedagogy, executive education, infrastructure and facilities, employee wellbeing, and managing stakeholders.

While many of our activities under lockdown moved online (the Talent Day, Career Fair, Open House, Webinars and Masterclasses, Staff Meetings, and teaching of course) we observed higher participation and engagement online.

We also conducted across campuses surveys of online learning. We found that there are some challenges and opportunities that online teaching presents: for example, the IT equipment at home or at school, the dynamics of the classroom (participation, mood, preparedness of students for courses, time zones they are in), multi-tasking faculty, adjustment to grading and assignments and of course the time that faculty have to prepare for such a situation.

The challenges also bring opportunities that we have seen based on surveys done among various stakeholders. For example, we observed that students who would normally not raise their hands were comfortable to type their questions in the chat box. Online learning also opens up strategic opportunities for the future – how shall we continue to deliver our pedagogy. Technical opportunities come about through research and provision of better infrastructure, learning of new tools. There are also practical benefits such as saving commute time.

In order to prepare for the next normal, we also offered pedagogical resources to students and faculty. For example, resource websites and tutorials dedicated to

online and hybrid teaching, online communities and forums to share experiences in classrooms, upgrades to all classrooms into video-conferencing mode, with more screens, speakers, and finally recording facilities.

Before arriving on campus, common concerns among students and participants across all programs included travel restrictions, visa process, quality of online learning, perceived limitation in interaction with faculty and other student, accommodation and post arrival adjustment, the fees and perceptions of ROI. Continuous communication with the students and participants on experiences of others, transition period and so on were helpful.

After arriving on campus, the student experience task force concerned itself with arrivals, quarantine requirements, team building under online conditions, induction into the program, assessing various formats of learning, social distancing in the classroom, libraries, cafeteria, and other gathering places for our various communities. There is also an impact on campus social life and company projects given the social distancing requirements and travel restrictions. Professional development is another area that needed adjustments to online delivery of coaching, training, workshops, alumni and industry talks, virtual field visits, meetings and so on.

The physical and psychological safety of our communities remains the first priority. In terms of student or employee wellbeing, to help deal with burnout, social and physical isolation, anxiety over the uncertainty of the situation, professional counselling has been offered.

The Leadership Challenge

The pandemic has brought to fore the need for a special kind of leadership that embodies empathy, communication, connection, ultimately for a sense of community and hope. I believe there are no “new” lessons – this is indeed not the first, only, or last time the world has gone through upheaval. But rather, there

are reminders of what matters most in such situations. Here's what Covid-19 reminded me.

The Importance of Mindset

I want to state upfront my biases: I embrace change, and don't mind for the most part to shake up the status quo. The lens through which I view the Covid-19 situation shows me a picture of opportunity in chaos. As much as the dark clouds have hovered above us for months and will continue to, I want to see how this situation will help me answer the new "what ifs" and the new "what else?". This is not always easy or natural for everyone.

Someone with another lens is likely to see the situation quite differently. That said, the mindset a leader brings to the situation influences the mood of meetings, the conversations, and the possibilities one sees in the situation for future action. Can we bring a more present and future oriented mindset? Can we bring a learning, playful mindset? Can we encourage ourselves and each other to have a growth mindset? What new conversations are we then able to have? What new actions can we then bring about?

Leading with Empathy

Speaking of lenses through which we see the situation, success in our leadership comes from recognizing that the "other" is not like "me" and understanding what lenses they use to see the situation. We are very aware that each of colleagues and friends has different personal circumstances, different levels of support and resources at home, different learning and/or working styles. Perhaps they now have extra costs and inconveniences to work from home, deal with dependent children and relatives, not to mention a demand on already strained psychological resources. Leading with empathy requires that we understand and accept each of their personal situations, communicate that understanding and relate to the emotion they are experiencing – be it pain, fear, anxiety, frustration, boredom,

relief, or joy. Leading with empathy requires that we remain flexible in order to get the work done through our teams.

Indeed, our stakeholders (manager, colleague, customer, suppliers, client, and so on) continue to have expectations from us. How can we enable our teams to deliver despite the disruption?

Effectively Communicating Expectations

Working from home, and especially under such unprecedented circumstances requires trusting, and building trust remotely. One could not have a limit on honest frequent communication. We need to communicate expectations from each other (your colleagues, or family for example), set boundaries (with colleagues, and family). These might be some new conversations that our colleagues, friends, and family members will need to have but this is the time to do so. When in doubt, talk it out. Asking our managers, colleagues, or family member for clarification or support, as the situation demands or allows, opens the possibility for new and critical conversations to not be missed.

Staying Connected

When physical contact and the ease of walking across to your colleague's desk are taken away from us, the "out of sight out of mind syndrome" may be heightened. During such times, there may be a need to over-communicate and over-connect and be over-available at least, initially so that a routine may be established for connecting online. This also helps to resolve any misperceptions or misunderstandings about commitment, accountability, and so on. It is imperative we take the initiative to work it out with relevant colleagues the frequency and mode of connecting per day/week individually or as a team.

Staying Agile and Discovering Hidden Opportunities

Agility is not just about speed, agility is mobilizing the team for responsiveness. Recognition of the urgency of the situation, the volatility and uncertainty of the crisis leaves no room for denial – our stakeholders are waiting for action and help to deal with ground realities. Clear guidance, access to resources, creatively innovating new solutions despite lack of resources, pivoting to new ways when the data direct us, using digitalization as a way to make personal lives and work-lives better...the nature of the challenge will demand a range of responses and the goal is not to find the quickest response – yes, in a way it is but the higher goal is to find an optimal response that aligns with our values and one that the team can buy-into, engage with, and implement. The need to be agile may open up conversations about opportunities to reimagine the “old ways”.

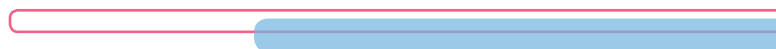
Building Trust and Accountability

Such crises also lead to discovery about team members, who can handle uncertainty and ambiguity, who can be accountable, who are the catalysts for change, and who are the keepers of the culture? Situations like Covid-19 amplify the existing dynamic within teams and shed the light on challenging pathways in the organization. If a team has trust and works well, a crisis situation can amplify that trust and synergy. For a team that is already challenged by its dynamic, a crisis situation can amplify those challenges, making team members diminish trust, and assume bad intent. Whether a team falls apart or comes together in periods of strain very much is anchored in the initial mood and dynamics. It is of particular importance to enable the smooth coordination of teams that are more likely to struggle in crisis, working and building back the trust remotely.

Taking Care of Oneself

We all react to change differently. Be patient with yourself and your colleagues and assume good intent before any judgments are made (of yourself or

others). Beyond work hours, taking the opportunity of the situation to step back, disconnect and reflect, or reconnect with loved ones, our hobbies, or activities that energize us – whatever the need of the situation, these have held me and my team members in good stead.





Re-authoring Confinement: Enduring Covid-19 and Creating a Collaboratory

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“We found on Re-authoring Teaching a common house, a watering hole where everyone can come to drink and quench their thirst for discussion and exchange.”
 Pierre Blanc-Sahnoun, Bordeaux France: On Behalf of the Galactic Federation of Narrative Planets¹

Around the world, we face the Covid-19 crisis. While not in the same boat, we are in the same storm as each community - local and global - strives to come together to harness its unique skills, knowledge and experiences. This paper explores how Re-authoring Teaching – a global learning community of narrative therapy practitioners, teachers and enthusiasts - is drawing from experiences as narrative practitioners in the digital age to create a watering hole congruent with the sensibilities, ethics and practices that guide a narrative approach. We explore communal practices that create audiences, link lives and reclaim community out of catastrophe, as expressed through our online Re-authoring Confinement project. We hope these endeavors illustrate our shared commitment to embody the spirit of collaboration and community by being such a community.

Why Narrative Therapy?

For over 25 years, the ideas, practices and ethics of narrative therapy have highly influenced my practices as a family therapist and teacher. Narrative therapy pays

attention to how people make sense of their experiences and assists in changing their relationship with problems affecting their lives, focusing not only on a given problem, but on what stands outside of the problem. Co-founders David Epston and Michael White characterize this approach with particular philosophical foundations, interviewing practices and a range of playful possibilities (White & Epston 1990). In addition to guiding counseling conversations, these principles and ways of working offer tremendous possibilities in community, organizational and coaching contexts. For this reason, the term "Narrative Practice" is sometimes used instead of "narrative therapy."

Rather than thinking of human difficulties as manifestations of deep or underlying structures, narrative therapy seeks to separate the person from the problem and explores how stories shape people's identities and the development of a storyline. Narrative practitioners are always double listening: listening to the problem and also to accounts of what lies outside the problem. Through our questions, we invite people to notice and explore initiatives or events – otherwise known as "sparkling moments" or unique outcomes—that would not be predicted by problematic stories and thereby offer different meanings and possibilities for people's lives. (Carey & Russell, 2003). In recent years, David Epston and his close colleagues are identifying specific practices that contribute to the art of counter-storying (Ingamells, 2016).

Built on folk psychology traditions, narrative practice privileges experience-knowledge over expert vocabularies. Significant care is taken to ensure that language conveys people's actual experiences, rather than others' interpretations of these experiences (White, 2004). In narrative practice, "co-research" refers to the process by which people inquire together to create original research about insider knowledge – to learn from people's direct experiences about what is most meaningful to them from life situations and relationships (Epston, 1999).

Several important ethical considerations inform narrative conceptions and practices. Envisioning training as collaborative research, Michael White often reflected on the ethic of collaboration and of de-centered practice as assisting practitioners to break from despair and reinvigorate their work and lives (White, 1997a). An ethic of hospitality refers to the consideration and practices given to

meeting with families as though they are “guests” in the practitioner’s “home” (Hancock & Epston 2005). Often, this approach attracts people intrigued by Foucault’s notion of “modern power”, and committed to social justice (Combs & Freedman, 2012).

Creating audiences, linking lives and reclaiming community out of catastrophe

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. African Proverb.

As a postmodern therapy, narrative practice rests on the belief that our identities are socially constructed. This signifies a shift from centering individuals and their actions to centering processes of relating, and from “aboutness” thinking to witness” (Hoffman, 2007). In addition to impacting our ethical considerations, this difference in approach influences how we envision contexts for healing practice (McNamee, 2007) and legitimizes communal practices as an alternative to traditional clinical practice (Hoffman, 2011). A growing literature on resiliency and posttraumatic growth explores alternative accounts of surviving traumatic events such as solidarity, joy, friendship, love, generosity, spontaneous acts of courage, resourcefulness and resiliency. (Solnit, 2009).

Rather than centering individuals and their actions, narrative approaches views strengthening webs of connection, and community supports as an integral part of the therapeutic work.

Often, narrative practitioners seek to incorporate audiences in efforts such as letter-writing campaigns, outsider witness practices, reflecting teamwork, Tree of Life gatherings, ‘reclaiming community’, and other community rituals. In the article, (Sax 2013) I explore ideas, practices and teaching stories that support the deep healing and satisfaction that can come from ally to ally relationships, getting involved with local/community resources, giving back to others and making meaningful contributions to others’ lives (Sax, 2013).

Narrative Therapy in the Digital Age

Narrative approaches build on creating audiences, linking lives and reclaiming community out of catastrophe. Having embraced Postmodern pedagogy, I have been exploring since 2000 how similar principles can guide narrative pedagogy in the classroom, trainings and online. Over the past decade, these interests in teaching narrative therapy online have concentrated on building the Re-authoring Teaching virtual community. How can we apply similar practices to help us as individuals and communities as we endure the current pandemic in the digital age?

Teaching Narrative Therapy Online

I first experienced the possibilities and limitations of distance learning narrative therapy while teaching graduate students twenty years ago in the rural state of Vermont USA. In those days, teacher and students traveled to various local computer labs, to meet up at specific times. Akin to reserving the room-sized calculator for statistical analysis as a graduate student in the 1970s, big technical machines dominated distance learning labs. It was both awesome and overwhelming to gather in high tech rooms, facing the challenge of overcoming the prevailing bankers' approach to adult education (Freire, 1970), positioning the teacher as the epistemological authority, and students to receive, file and store deposits of knowledge.

Since then, online education has developed a number of technological tools conducive to collaboration, rich conversation and co-sparking ideas around shared materials. While asynchronous tools allow people to exchange from a "different time-different place" mode at each person's own convenience and own schedule, synchronous methods offer opportunities to meet up in real time through Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, Microsoft teams and/or other synchronous methods. It is now possible for a non-Geek to construct one's own website using Wordpress and other open source website creation platforms.

Re-authoring Teaching: Creating a Collaboratory

In 2008, I wrote the book *Re-authoring Teaching: Creating a Collaboratory*, based on nearly a decade of experiences using the online medium to supplement teaching narrative approaches to graduate and undergraduate students (Sax, 2008). The term, “Re-authoring Teaching” is a play on the term “Re-authoring Conversations” that Michael White and David Epston, coined in their original description of narrative therapy. I was compelled to write this book having experienced vast online possibilities for students and teacher meeting across geographic distances, to interact between classes, and to learn not from the teacher but from each other and guest visitors. The book wove together my voice alongside students’ reflections, shifting the position of teacher as expert to more of a reciprocal two-way process, congruent with the focus and values of narrative therapy (White, 1997). Having carefully constructed a central meeting place with discussion forums, I became the facilitator for exchanges of ideas with students participating at their own convenience and own schedule from asynchronous “different time-different place” mode.

Michael White died unexpectedly in 2008 at the age of 59. Shortly after his death, I started the digital version of Re-authoring Teaching as an online study group to share the commitment to honor Michael’s legacy. Bonded by our grief over losing such an important mentor, we co-created an island of belonging where people, drawn to narrative practice and other collaborative approaches, could continue our narrative studies together across geographic distance. Over the next decade, we rebuilt the Re-authoring Teaching website through several reiterations, to become the hub for a range of narrative therapy offerings and resources.

Having become a nonprofit organization, our board shares the commitment to build a global learning community – both synchronous and asynchronous – that transcends geography, professional status, and other differences. As a collaborative venture, our mission is to share expertise through training opportunities and online learning resources designed for practice, reflection, replenishment and community building. Throughout all our endeavors, we seek to embody that spirit of collaboration and community by being such a community,

and invite our participants to join us in preserving, developing and extending the legacy of narrative therapy.

Guiding Learning Principles

Five learning principles guide Re-authoring Teaching's growth as a learning community where participants can at times meet in person and otherwise use computing and communication technologies to connect and co-spark online.

Collaboratory blends the two words collaboration and laboratory to convey an environment without walls where participants use computing and communication technologies to connect with a sense of discovery over a shared project. All of our online features – The Collab Salon, Online courses and webinars– build on this principle.

Tewhakaakona: This New Zealand Māori word includes the concepts of teaching and learning, which traditionally in Western ways of thinking are viewed as different processes involving different positions for the participants (Lewis & Cheshire, 2009).

Making space for multiple voices: Our participants come from throughout the world with different cultural and racial identities, professional backgrounds, levels of experience and access to resources. We strive to be aware of structural inequalities and to act according to our belief in social justice and human kindness.

Flipping the Classroom: We deliver content through a variety of forms such as sharing online videos, Powerpoint slides and readings. Whenever possible, we deliver content outside of the real-time meetings, thereby preserving time to engage each other to explore topics in greater depth and to facilitate meaningful exchanges. We encourage our facilitators and faculty to guide and support rather than didactically 'teach' and encourage peer-to-peer interaction and learning.

Build dialogue, create bridges: Our narrative training aims to create space where people can meet under the banner of curiosity and collaboration to learn from each other, build bridges, and engage in conversations about how we, as practitioners, can be most effective in the work that we do. As practitioners we all come from different theoretical, geographical and ideological backgrounds. These backgrounds define where we come from as professionals but do not limit where we are going. In the work that we do, we believe it is hugely important that we remain curious and open to learning from others both within and outside our theoretical framework(s).

Building a Hub for Narrative Therapy Training and Resources

Re-authoring Teaching Inc., strives to bring together the best of teaching experiences and everyday practices from narrative practitioners around the world, with a focus on skill-building and application in a range of contexts. As an introductory online course, [Narrative Therapy: Foundations & Key Concepts](#) identified three key ideas influencing narrative therapy: 1) narrative inquiry guided by poststructuralist philosophy; 2) the narrative metaphor and how stories are shaping identity; and 3) intentional understandings of identity that connect us with our values and commitments. Since then, we have been developing additional online courses as well as the monthly Collab Salon, Faculty Consultation Groups, Workshops and materials for Higher Education.

In addition to narrative training opportunities, we continually update resources on the Re-authoring Teaching website. Drawing from our sensibilities and skill set as narrative practitioners as well as belief in multimedia, we created a [YouTube Channel](#) where we continually add new free videos, organized in playlists. Each video gives glimpses of rich online content from Narrative Camp, workshops, glimpses into our online courses, and presentations recorded by our partners.

Most recently we created Twelve Hot Topics for The New Decade. Each theme brings together a range of multi-media materials and is curated by a small

group and coordinator: 1) Building on Michael White's Legacy; 2) David Epston: Innovations & Collaborations; 3) Emerging Voices Across narrative generations; 4) The Affective Turn; 5) Cultivating diversity & Accountability; 6) Narrative Skill Development; 7) Narrative Practices around the World; 8) Sustaining our spirit in the work; 9) Earth's Environmental Crisis and Opportunity; 10) Narrative Applications; 11) Teaching & Supervision; 12) Using Technology Constructively. At the bottom of each topic, we encourage our readers to contribute materials of their own.

Double-listening to the Pandemic

Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Do not become bitter or hostile. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble. We will find a way to make a way out of no way. – John Lewis

Covid-19 is fraught with very real challenges in everyday life. Facing the unimaginable, many of us are dealing with worrisome, terrifying and heartbreaking crises or worrying about the future for ourselves and our loved ones. As narrative practitioners, we are also drawn to initiatives and events that might not be predicted by the problematic stories generated by the pandemic. What are we discovering as we endure this pandemic together? What are some of the sparkling moments where the dominance of the pandemic problem disappears?

Dickerson (2020) describes a post-structural approach of responding to the pandemic by flipping the usual ways of responding. Rather than getting captured by the current problem, we look for openings or gaps that build on what already works. In her article, "The Flip" – Sustaining Complexity and Multiplicity Post-Quarantine", she highlights Re-authoring Teaching as one of three programs that employs a practice of "disciplined improvisation" to flip more traditional ways of responding. *"Each program has a built-in structure that depends on technology to make it work; each has a disciplined approach that allows the helpers to improvise to meet the needs of the receivers. It is this "flip", this way of thinking,*

that can sustain us and our work in times of great complexity and multiplicity.”
Abstract, (Dickerson, in press).

The remainder of this paper will explore how we are now building on our mission, guiding learning principles, themes and resources. Re-authoring Teaching is crafting online responses to the pandemic. Regularly updating our website we created two community pages: 1) Together Enduring Covid-19: Resources and Events; 2) Re-authoring Confinement: Inspirational moments in everyday life. Throughout, we aspired to create a central place for remembering our commitment to walk the talk of collaboration and community.

Together Enduring Covid-19



Planetary problem, galactic solidarity

Today, in the face of an unprecedented, traumatic situation, we wish to welcome all our colleagues who love narrative ideas in this undertaking of common construction of meaning and connection. We welcome you to share your ideas, your feelings, your indignations, your unique outcomes, your magic spells, your moments of poetry, your wonderfulnesses... and everything that is important to you in this very particular - and tragic but not only - moment of our lives.
 Pierre Blanc-Sahnoun, Bordeaux France: On Behalf of the Galactic Federation of Narrative Planets.

Wherever in the world, our members face real effects of the pandemic on their lives, relationships and work. With help from our “Narrative Practices Around the World” team, we constructed the Enduring Covid-19: Events and Resources page for people to share favorite resources as well as a discussion forum. As Covid-19 impacted some of us sooner, we did our best throughout to highlight “voices from the future” to give tips learned along the way. In addition, we reviewed our monthly Collab Salon to highlight the effects of the Pandemic on their particular topic. First, we offered a special Enduring Covid Collab, which we made freely available to everyone, regardless of Collab membership. We also conversed with presenters to think together how best to bring forward this theme into their upcoming presentations.

Re-authoring Confinement: Inspirational Sparkling Moments in Everyday Life



(illustration by Ananya Broker Parekh)

In response to Covid-19, most of us worldwide have been experiencing new realities as we shelter at home, sometimes experiencing lockdown in cramped quarters. While fraught with challenges, this period of confinement is also fertile ground for the emergence of many creative projects and collaborations. What might Re-authoring Teaching contribute? The offerings on this website draw from our sensibilities and skill set as narrative practitioners, as well as our experiences in online learning, community building and neighborly ways of being. Please

think of this endeavor as in progress as we aspire to bring together special events and offerings. There is an easy to use contribution form at the bottom of the page. Please join us!

Re-authoring Confinement: Inspirational sparkling moments in everyday life

Our Re-authoring Confinement resource brings together contributions from members of our community: a YouTube playlist with video reflections from around the world, Covid inspired music, Fundraisers, Communities collecting wisdoms, Children and Family projects, Animal companions, Arts & Crafts, Gardens & Nature, Performances, poetry & prose and a Discussion Forum. By making it easy for people to send in contributions from around the world, we are together aspiring to “create a collaboratory” together. We chose the following illustrations: 1) Making music; 2) Communities collecting wisdoms; 3) Poetry.

Making Music

Thank you for encouraging people to be their preferred and amazing selves!
Elena Baskina

During home confinement, many people are not only making music but creating original songs. Current collaborations take advantage of technological advances that bring together musicians across geographic distances. Abuzar Akhtar, Hemant Tiwari & music video director, Shamin Mehrotra contributed a special lockdown musical made in Mumbai to our Youtube playlist.

Our audio musical playlist brings together beautiful collaborations from across the world: *My Forecast* is an original song with lyrics by Maria Tiunova (Moscow, Russia), music by Dean Lobovits (El Cerrito, California USA) and vocals by Elena Baskina (New York, Miami and Moscow). *Covid* is an original song by Pierre Blanc-Sahnoun (France), sung by Charlie Crettenand (Sion Switzerland) and produced

by Dean Lobovits (Berkeley California). Stephen by Will Sherwin (Michael Castelli on Slide Guitar, Gene Combs on Guitar) is another cherished contribution. Michael Castelli (Middlebury Vermont) contributed *Redrocks* along with his friend, Tim Joy who laid down the piano and organ tracks; having played this song at live gigs, he started recording it about a year ago; “*It only took a global pandemic for me to finish it.*”



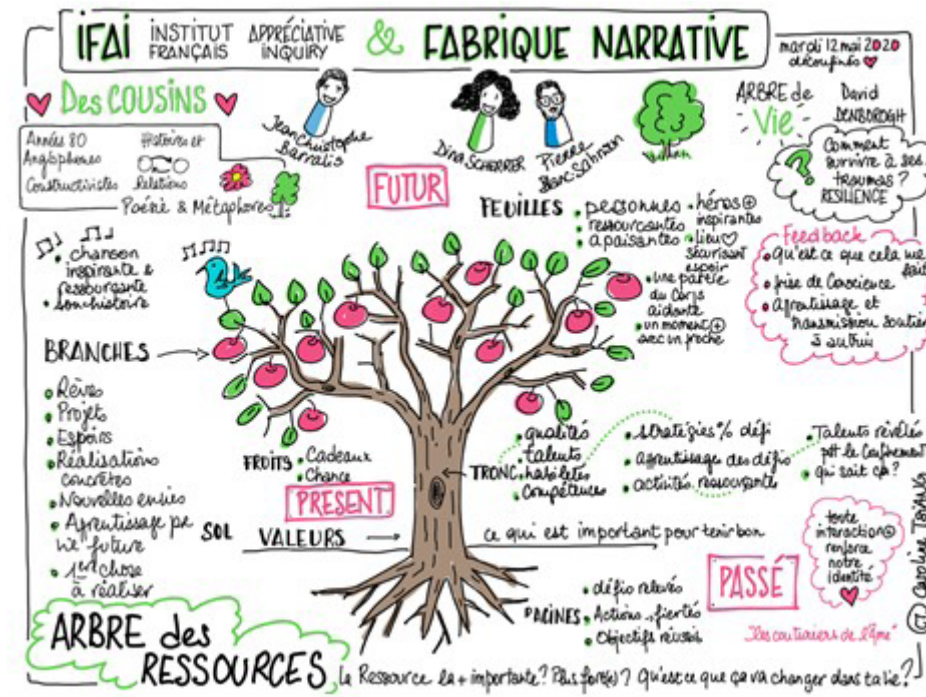
Communities Collecting Wisdoms

Over conversations, reflections and silences, the participants located hope in its little-big acts of resistance, in metaphors of nature and in acts of solidarity, in picture-books and poetry verses, in music and acts of care. These conversations of hope were coming alive in parallel, through illustrations and each of them sought to weave in their hope into the collective. The collective document is a testimony to people's acts of response and resistance to the current distress, their acts of collective care and continuing to access hope for the coming days.

Narrative Practices India and The Mental Health Team, Ummeed Child Development Center, Mumbai

A number of communities have been getting together for special lockdown gatherings to share their wisdoms and create collective documents with each

other. France, Turkey, India each adapted The Tree of Life in a community context to support each other, create collective documents and generate hope. The Narrative Group Project: Exploring Different Responses to Covid-19 from Turkey – as further featured in this journal – explores skills, ‘knowledges’ and values that help endure such effects as uncertainty of the future, anxiety of losing loved ones and feelings of loneliness with links to enduring values, hopes, dreams, skills and knowledges. By posting their project on our Re-authoring Teaching page, they hope to inspire others to respond to their questions, by sharing their own ideas and feelings.



This sketch noting graphic by Caroline Tsiang (Ville d'Avray, France) illustrates a special Lockdown Tree of Life for children and family collected by narrative practitioner Dina Scherrer (Paris, France) for people who live and/or work with children and teenagers.

Poetry

For some of us, sheltering at home can offer contemplative writing time. Pam Burr Smith (Maine, USA) shared this poem:

Poem from the Early Pandemic

All of a sudden
all of us have been tossed
with exquisite aim
into a new world.

Busyness which has demanded
such loyalty in our recent lives
lies useless in empty streets.

And quiet at home,
we face a simple truth
that we need each other.

We need each other
like the teenage boy and his mother
who stand at sundown on a small balcony
and raise trumpet and violin
in the soft fog of a night that grows.

Together they begin Beethoven's Ninth.
Soon through the mist, distant piano joins
then vivid, close, a neighbor's cello.

The hesitance of beginning
drops away
replaced by the wakened air of music.

Windows open to the surprising joy
of gorgeous sound.

A new song of hope flows into motion
and fills the world anew.

Conclusion

Whatever emerges on the other side of our current mega-crisis, community will be key in turning it toward the good. Gene Combs, Evanston Family Therapy Center

This pandemic will have a beginning, middle and end. While sheltering at home, there are enormous differences in contexts and privileges. As we face challenges in enduring Covid-19, Re-authoring Teaching hopes our initiatives will strengthen a global learning community reflective of our values, commitments and preferences.

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¹ Pierre Blanc-Sahnoun, Bordeaux France On Behalf of the Galactic Federation of Narrative Planets <https://reauthoringteaching.com/resources/together-enduring-covid-19-events-and-resources/>

International Education as a Response to COVID-19: an Indian Perspective.

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The International Education sector has created multiple job opportunities for teachers from around the world. ISC Research, a market research company that collects data on international schools, places the privately-owned international schools in China at about 850 (Atack, 2019). China's relaxed policies towards international education and its attempts at refurbishing its reputation in Education to become the international education destination has seen an increase in the number of foreign nationals taking up teaching positions in several international schools and universities (Huang, 2003). An increasing number of wealthy Chinese nationals are driven by the need for their children to pursue higher education in universities abroad and are vigorously seeking international education. This coupled with the need for higher exposure to English, have been the reasons for the increase in international schools in China. Returning Chinese, whose children now hold international passports, want the same level of education as abroad, and therefore seek to enroll them in international schools. Thus, the number of students in private international schools have increased around 64% in the past 5 years to about 2,45,000 (Atack, 2019). Such schools offer Cambridge International AS and A levels and the International Baccalaureate curriculums. Most of these international schools pride themselves in hiring native English-speaking nationals from countries such as UK, Canada, America, and New Zealand. Apart from those hired for teaching curriculum subjects, international teachers take up positions for teaching English to Chinese students. As per 2017 statistics, there were an

estimated 400,000 foreign teachers in China (Cadell, 2019), with higher numbers until 2020.

In majority of such schools, Covid-19 presented a unique situation for the internationally employed teaching staff. The first news of the Covid-19 outbreak was published in China on 31st December 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed cases of the Covid-19 on 5th January 2020 in a published news article. Having confirmed the first few deaths from the novel Coronavirus in China around 19th January, its impact on international teachers was still unanticipated. China was preoccupied with its New Year Celebrations in the latter part of January 2020, where all schools and educational institutions closed for a period of two weeks. Majority of foreign teachers employed in China often travel to parts of south-east Asia during this time, while others travel to their home countries in the United States and Europe. Thus, when Covid-19 was at its peak in China lots of teachers were outside of China. In the fear of catching the coronavirus, many teachers extended their stay in places where they were stationed during the holidays. Teachers stranded abroad experienced tremendous anxiety and stress due to the uncertainty of returning home to China, since many have married Chinese locals and now call China their homeland.

International Teachers, Covid-19 and Online Learning

Schools set to open in the first week of February, saw a transformation of learning overnight. Teaching changed from face-to-face instruction to online learning. However, teaching students who have very little English language capabilities, along with teachers who have little Chinese language capabilities add an interesting set of challenges in an online environment. Students in China follow the 'Confucian value system' in education. Kennedy (2002) describes the very nature of Confucian educational value system which includes respect for the teacher's authority, with an utmost reluctance to question the teacher. The teacher is always the 'one with the right answer' (Carless, 2011) and any individual opinion regarding any matter are discouraged and considered selfish. In order to

save 'face' or *mei-tzu* – which translates to maintaining status in front of others, student interaction is minimalistic, and student responses to teachers' questions are often met with silence and blank stares (Carless, 2011 Kennedy, 2002). The perception of teachers is compared in relation to how well the teacher prepares students for the test, and thus, the teaching and learning methodologies should be test focused. Hence, international schools that cater to the pure Chinese population of students, often struggle with incorporating an engagement-based student learning culture. However, despite lack of engagement, a face-to-face class provided physical cues to the teacher about a student's level of learning, but the use of online learning methods during Covid-19 eliminated the input of these physical cues. Therefore, along with the limited English level capabilities of students, cultural perspectives, lack of physical cues and no class engagement created multiple challenges in effective lesson delivery, classroom management including student attendance, feedback, assessments and student learning. Along with these, the limited online teaching experience of many teachers, as well as their limitations in using online teaching technology effectively, such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Zoom etc. led to stressful days for many teachers.

Along with classroom preparation, using new technological tools and preparing for a completely new way of teaching and learning overnight, teachers outside of the country also taught online classes at odd hours in the night due to the time differences of up to 12 hours. Additionally, education bureaus in different provinces in China provided different directives to educational institutions regarding next steps and this additionally, created panic and confusion, along with misinformation to foreign staff in China. However, despite challenges, teachers were able to adapt to this methodology. Restrictions in the effective use of online teaching and learning were for a few specific subjects. Physical education lost its meaning of being physical, as students could not indulge in any activities outside of their house. Many schools focused on the theory of physical education, as physical education in its truest sense was impossible. Other subjects such as art and chemistry, that required the use of on school facilities were limited in their learning, as facilities were inaccessible, and students had no access to these at home. Although the first few months of online education were riddled with confusion, uncertainty, and anxiety, it has paved a new way of learning.

Educational Leadership During Covid-19

Covid-19 was at its peak in China during the latter part of February 2020 and there were no signs of schools opening any time soon. Schools changed dates frequently for re-opening, and there was uncertainty about the next course of action, especially for those teachers stranded in other parts of world not necessarily their home countries. They faced huge monetary losses to sustain in another country. If leadership was important, then this was its time. Arnold Glasgow, an American businessman's quote summarizes educational leadership faced during the Covid-19 pandemic "One of the tests of leadership is the ability to recognize a problem before it becomes an emergency" (Daskal, 2015). If one thing was certain, it was the fact that nothing was certain. Decision making was divided in terms of those who valued their employees and those who saw this as an opportunity to cut staff. Some leading international schools in Beijing and Shanghai realized the emergency and provided clarity, informing teachers about their possible return dates. Other schools provided an opportunity for teachers to decide their own course of action, whilst others were quick to make staff redundant. Provinces in the southern part of China were not as prompt in evaluating the situation to be an emergency as schools in Beijing and Shanghai, as they depended on the education departments in these provinces to provide a directive. Therefore, many teachers in these parts found themselves stranded within China during the peak of its outbreak.

Leadership in international schools was stuck in a catch 22 position, effectively engaging their stakeholders - with immense pressure from parents and students to provide quality teaching, and at the same time, to support its teachers who had little to no training or experience with online teaching. Along with these, new policies and procedures were crucial to be developed, those that were never thought of before the Covid-19 era. Technological support in terms of improved internet connection were provided to the teachers, new platforms such as 'Zoom' were tested for online delivery. Student protection in the wake of student online learning, nature of online classroom discipline, and assessments were just some of the crucial points to be considered by educational leadership. This time also saw parents being involved in their children's learning, as taking assessments online required supervision, and it was up to the parents to monitor their child's

learning and assessment environments. Teachers were directed to discuss topics about sincerity, discipline and truthfulness in work and action as part of learning online.

Authorities tried to support their foreign teachers by providing the necessities, such as food and masks. They worked on changing schedules, and reducing class time to range from 30 min to 45 min. However, the biggest challenges faced by authorities was to ensure continuous quality learning despite Covid-19, convincing parents of the value of education online in comparison to the cost of international education, and ensuring that online schools would provide the necessary preparation for the upcoming exams in the month of May and June 2020.

In response to catering to the parent population, schools had to let the Chinese authorities medically test their foreign teaching staff for the virus. During the peak time of Covid-19 majority of teaching staff were asked by their schools to cater to health checks by the local authorities. Foreigners during this time were monitored closely as fear of contamination from foreign nationals was high, due to the increasing number of infected cases being reported from other parts of the world. Although the schools had to support the government directives for testing of its foreign teachers, these were also questioned by the schools as many foreign teachers were tested multiple times despite results being negative. However, majority of schools supported their teachers, ensuring that any stress caused due to the testing was reduced. Necessities such as transportation to and from the hospital, or ensuring food was delivered to the teachers, were taken care of.

Students And Learning During Covid-19

Student experiences of online learning was driven by anxiety in terms of exam preparation and subsequent performance. The overall time frame that students went through online learning was from February to May 2020, after which majority of schools in China went back to face-to face teaching. Many younger students

faced linguistic and technological challenges in understanding instructions and following learning. China's internet restrictions further raised concerns with accessing online content on YouTube and other websites, unless a virtual private network (VPN) is used. Most schools access the VPN through their internet provider; however, since students were in their own homes, many parents did not have access to a VPN and hence student learning on many occasions was limited. Learning experience was overwhelming to say the least, as students were forced to engage with it during a rising sense of panic, chaos and anxiety due to the virus and the uncertainty of performance in the exams. Further, university placements added to their woes. Along with these, fulfilling parent's expectations and to 'save face' added to the feeling of grief and doom for many students. The breakdown of internet services due to the overwhelming use of internet consumption also limited access to learning resources. Students therefore suffered mentally and emotionally.

However, students' resilience was also observed during this time as they did cope well with the change in the styles of content delivery. Thus, students were able to cope with the overall anxiety and adapt to the changes quickly.

Teaching And Learning Post The Closing Of International Borders In China

China took a directive to close its borders to international visitors by the end of March 2020. This has continued till date as of 23rd August 2020. This was done largely in order to curb a second wave of infection from individuals landing in from countries such as the US or the UK. The closing of the borders has created a massive shortage of teachers available to take face-to-face classes in China. Those schools whose teachers were directed to return by mid-March, before the closing of the borders and who failed to do so, lost their jobs. Other schools asked their teachers not to return. The current scarcity of teachers caused by the closing of borders has created many job opportunities for foreign teachers within China who are willing to relocate. Amidst this chaos, the rampant racism within the international education industry came to light and international

teacher recruitment practice was questioned. Governing bodies such as Council of International Schools (CIS) and leading international teacher recruitment firms have pledged to fight structural racism in the international education sector. Therefore, Covid-19 has challenged the very fabric of what international education stands for – Global citizenship, perhaps the unbiased and un-prejudiced recruiting of its teaching faculty across international schools, based simply on merit.

Most schools in China have resumed face-to-face teaching since May 2020, however teacher workloads have extended beyond normal, as schools are struggling with hiring teachers who are subject specialists. The closing of borders has made it difficult for teachers to come back to China, thus putting pressure on existing staff to deliver the same quality of teaching despite shortages. This has called into question existing policies and practices of teaching and learning and flexi work time possibilities. Many schools have decided to hire local staff to cover classes, thereby raising doubts about the capabilities of local staff to bring in the same diversity most crucial for an international experience of learning. To counter this shortage, many teachers stranded abroad continue to take classes online to support their students in every way possible.

Conclusion

Covid-19 has demonstrated that humans are resilient beings and will evolve and adapt to circumstances that were completely unfathomable before the pandemic. Education, therefore, is in the phase of evolution, as it seeks to question 'Does the current education system develop people for a new world?'

Covid-19 has brought some additional questions into focus for the education industry,

1. How must the nature of education and assessment evolve for the future?
2. How can leadership evolve to support high quality learning remotely?

3. How can policies evolve to support higher work life balance within education? It remains to be seen how individuals will direct teaching and learning post Covid-19. Until then, all teachers across the globe continue adapting, and innovating to develop a new generation of well-informed, learned men and women to guide the world to better future.

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Reconnecting in a Post-pandemic World

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Human connections have been challenged in many ways already prior to the pandemic. New forms of relationships emerged, making people face more options. Those options often, as Peggy Orenstein put it provoked us into “a constant state of negotiation, trying to live out more modern ideas yet unwilling or unable to let go of the old ones.” New technologies providing joyful and novel ways of connection, have been also bringing painful forms of disconnection. Work environments have been often equating our identities to work objectives and goals - which we were then applying to ourselves, our partners and our relationships.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only made this harder, as humans attempt to connect from larger distances, behind masks, and amidst high pressure and stress. More and more conflicting expectations of what should be done started bringing new, painful frontiers of loneliness.

As a result, people have more things to figure out and reflect upon. There are even more discourses that affect them. A whole new language emerged out of the pandemic.

We are taking a look at some of the practices that emerged throughout the pandemic. Some of them were discovered through desk research, others - through the interviews and talks we conducted with people from different

countries (sample: 25 people). Please note that these practices are not the only ones. Actually, we would like this paper to be an open call for more relational practices that we would like to further explore.

Becoming the authors of the new reality

- 1) There is a saying attributed to philosophers such as Wittgenstein that is quoted by the founder of narrative approach, Michael White “words create worlds.” Social constructionism brings forward an idea that our realities are co-constructed through the verbal exchange. The Economist published an article on the effects of the pandemic of language, bringing forward such words as:

1. ドライブスルーお見合い (doraibusurū o miai)

Drive-through matchmaking (noun) - singles in Japan flirt with one another from their cars, in the empty car parks of wedding halls, arranged by match-making agencies

2. Coronalingus

“To get down to it (virtually) during lockdown (verb)” - refers to dirtier sexting

3. Cuomosexual

“A devotee of Andrew Cuomo (noun)”, the governor of New York

4. Zumping

“The act of ending a relationship during a Zoom call (noun)”

5. Coronavirus and chill

“To watch (virtually) a film or tv show with your quarantined partner (verb)”

6. Quarantinderen

“To use Tinder while in quarantine (verb)”

7. Covidivorce

“A covid-induced break-up (noun)”

8. 冷静期 (lěngjìngqī)

a) Cooling-off period (noun)

b) A 30-day wait to get a divorce in China

From the narrative standpoint, creating new words to describe the experiences is a powerful way to reclaim the authorship that was taken away by the events we seemingly do not have power over (the pandemic, the lockdown, the limitations in communication, government handling of the crises). It's interesting that the new words formation, so easily available in contemporary American English, is not at all a norm in some other languages, like Russian. Having looked for the post-pandemic words that appeared throughout the [carantine]quarantine, we can't really name a few. It is of interest to us to further explore this topic and find out how it relates to the overall feeling of authorship among primarily Russian-language people.

- 2) There is a great sense of urgency that people mention in our conversations. There is clearly a group of people who realize that now is the time to explore, experiment, try things out.

First of all, this relates to their connection with themselves. People started sewing, playing the piano, moving apartments, traveling, taking vocal lessons, consider changing jobs and countries of living. Many started trying out new spiritual practices – like new meditation formats and attending new personal development programs. All of this came out of the desire to better connect with themselves, “true and authentic” selves. One of our respondents said: “You can only discover yourself through living. And I haven't really allowed myself to live”.

There are people who decided to open up relationships, to end or start relationships, to come up with new relationships formats. For some those were thought-through decisions, others decided to go for new practices because

“it’s better to regret the things done rather than the things not done.” Practices that were previously regarded as fantasies, something that “would be nice to try out” started being regarded as opportunities now. For instance, young men and women in Russia and the US claimed to explore their potential polysexuality through the dating apps – that was not relevant for them before. They knew of polysexuality but identified as heterosexuals. Yet, the pandemic invited them to try out different versions of their sexual identities.

- 3) Some people in Russia and the US started living in communities. Obviously, communal ways of living existed previously. However, throughout the pandemic this tendency was intensified as people’s response to the lockdown was to go out of the city with a group of friends. After the lockdown was over, they chose to stay with the same group of people and make it their new standard rather than a time-bound practice. This response is also related to the loss of trust into governments and institutions and desire to create a sustainable “state” around themselves. Renting houses together, doing group meditations and reflections, sharing meals became an option not just for “hippie-type” intellectuals, but for broader circles of people. Communal living for them started standing for security, belonging, being able to share joy and pain and manage the otherwise difficult-to-manage reality. In San Francisco, we met people living in friendly communes, attending each other’s houses and events. Being disappointed with governments and how they arrange our lives, they created a network of communities around themselves that has a potential to grow into an alternative system with shared values.
- 4) Following the previous topic, it is important to mention protests – that became stronger in 2020. While there is a lot of awareness about the Black Lives Matter protests, and obviously there will be papers devoted to this very important movement reshaping the face and soul of American society, we would like to talk briefly about the protests in Belarus. After the current president Lukashenko falsified the election results, the people of Belarus started peaceful protests that were met with extreme violence from the government police and military forces. The people of Belarus however kept the protests entirely peaceful/not breaking even one

window glass or attacking police. The images of women dressed in white giving flowers to the police, singing songs invited a wave of solidarity among people with Post-Soviet roots all over the world. The call of US-based Belarus entrepreneur Mikita Mikado to those in military forces and police to refuse from fighting the peaceful population received numerous applications. Having been fascinated by the beauty and peacefulness of the protests on top of the government violence, people all over the world stood in solidarity with the people of Belarus.

- 5) A very different and large topic is remote relationships. The lockdown brought about both the extreme helpfulness and extreme disappointment with the remote. Having been first excited to jump on zoom, people shortly developed zoom-out and started returning to voice messaging, calls, and even email. Of course, one of the answers to the lockdown and socializing limitations became the post-lockdown euphoria (to be described later). However, some people did form new relationships and started using online formats they haven't tried before (and this is not about Zoom or Miro used for personal communication next to professional).

One of the formats that we discovered is having voice messaging friends or remote roommates. For people living separately, away from families and communities, this has become a solid way to be in close, casual, practical relations not having to move in with the people they don't want to live with. Everyday casual exchanges on a variety of topics starting from what one had for breakfast or what they are putting on, helped people to create closeness on a very down-to-earth level.

Another format that became more acceptable for adults was sexting. While previously sexting was seen as a dangerous occupation of young people, during the pandemic it became a way of co-creating intimacy and sustaining closeness for adult people as well. Sexting provided to our respondents a magic circle where they could be safe and welcome, opening a door to creativity and improvisation. While still not talked much about, we are wondering whether practices like this will contribute to sex positivity.

6) Post-lockdown euphoria

Having seen the crowds on the streets of Moscow after the lockdown was over – and the crowds on the beach of San Diego, we talked to people at both places about how this corresponds with the previous behaviors. Looks like the limitations for people were so difficult, and the lack of interactions with the world and people so painful, that their post-lockdown response was to connect in all possible ways. Of course, this was mostly true for younger people. While some of the people are still quarantining, and the large cities like New York are showing a lot of Covid-cautious behavior, some places are celebrating the end of being socially distant and disconnected through going into the beaches and streets.

7) Of course, there are a lot of practices, responses to which still have to be discovered. If previously closing one's face with a burka was regarded as causing doubt and undermining trust, for many people now an open face is causing exactly the same responses. People were saying they did acquire an automatic reaction of leaving the room with a mask which stayed with them even when they were going out of their bedroom into a living room. Though masks of all colors and fabrics became available, so people can express themselves, still it doesn't leave a lot of space for facial expressions. The question is which practices become a response to closed faces. Except for the obvious protesting-to-wear-masks behaviors.

8) Business and politics require a lot of immediate attention, 'getting back to normal' fast. While talking to Anne Liese, Guerin-LeTendre (UK) and Aurelie Glorieux (France) at a discussion group on this topic (that actually provoked part of the thinking behind this article), we concluded it would have been helpful to give some space to recognize this has been a tough experience, give space to grief and sorrow, give space to understanding what's emerging for people and between people. Many people claimed the sense of being lost, and lacking connection with themselves first of all.

Anne Liese expressed a particular concern about the caregivers, who have significant influence over people and haven't been receiving enough care and

recognition (especially in countries like Russia with high numbers of doctors' deaths).

- 9) Being not able to touch/hug people lost to the growing interest in bodily practices, next to the desire to explore sensuality and be more around people. While new gestures have emerged (like saying hi touching the elbows), still the lack of physical contact is provoking responses that also have to be further explored.

We are currently gathering a databank of all the responses to 2020 (including but not limited to the pandemic), for our semiotics and narrative research. Having covered the major topics that emerged in our conversations with people in the US, Russia, Belarus, UK and France, we would like to hear from more people and countries. Please let us know what resonated with you and which practices you observed in your media or immediate contexts.

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(Endnotes)

- 1 See "Pandating the virus" 2020





Glimpses of Servant Leadership in Mauritius: A Bold and Effective Response to COVID-19

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Introduction

As soon as the WHO characterized COVID-19 as a global pandemic (WHO, 2020), continents have braced themselves in different ways to face this unprecedented and unexpected challenge. Consequently, responses have been varied both within and across continents. Some countries responded to the COVID-19 outbreak with draconian, mandatory social distancing policies whilst others have reacted more timidly, either by deliberate choice or due to implementation constraints, leaving individuals to choose for themselves an appropriate degree of self-isolation. Others have still opted for a relatively permissive approach based on institutional and cultural underpinnings.

China implemented extraordinary public health measures at great socioeconomic cost, moving swiftly and decisively to ensure early identification of cases, prompt laboratory testing, facility-based isolation of all cases, contact tracing, and quarantine. In the community, mobility was at a near standstill, with social distancing implemented at a grand scale. China's massive transmission rates called for extreme measures, and the measures were successful. Remarkably, South Korea lost control and regained it with no lockdown and simply strong application of the above principles, enhanced by using novel digital technologies for contact tracing (Fisher et al., 2020). Kerala was the first Indian state to

encounter the virus and had kept deaths down to three initially. It had largely curbed COVID-19 but later on was dealing with nearly 200 cases, all people arriving from other parts of India. Senegal from the African continent seemed to be quite innovative in its approach, having devised a cheap test for the virus and using 3-D printing to produce ventilators at a fraction of the going price. China, South Korea, India and Senegal had one common feature and that is, preceding experience in dealing with corona viruses and other viral outbreaks.

The Republic of Mauritius, located off the southeast coast of Africa, shining as a democracy with roughly 1.3 million inhabitants on its three main islands: Mauritius, Rodrigues, and Agalega, with no prior experience in dealing with any outbreak of such declared magnitude and cost, had a unique response to the COVID-19 test.

To a parliamentary question addressed to the Honourable Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity in regard to the opening of the Republic's borders amid the COVID-19 Pandemic, stating which actions will be taken to ensure the safety of the population against a second wave of COVID-19, he replied as follows:

“The World Health Organisation had estimated that Mauritius had the highest risk of exposure in Africa, and would have the second highest rate of infections in a report dated 11 March 2020 amidst the new pandemic:

Number of mild infections: 87424

Number of severe infections: more than 1000

Hospital admissions: more than 22000

Deaths: 837” (pq 21July, 2020).

The projection from the WHO seemed to cast apprehensions on the majority of Mauritians as to whether the government would be able to handle the looming crisis. Not only did the island have extensive links with hotspots in Europe and Asia – tourism being the foundation of its economy – but also the tenth most densely

populated country in the world. These were fertile conditions for the spread of the new corona virus.

The infection rates of COVID-19 as from March 2020 in Mauritius offer a startling distinction though. This paper attempts to explore how Mauritius responded strategically in terms of prevention, outbreak management and communication to the COVID-19 challenge through the 'Servant Leadership' philosophy of the Prime Minister and how the latter institutionalized this value to his Government, the Heads of Ministries, Front-liners and NGOs when the COVID-19 pandemic beckoned ominously.

One of the core tenets of servant leadership theory is that servant leaders instill in followers a desire to serve others. Research in this field has convincingly argued that servant leaders are uniquely effective in developing and nurturing service values among followers. More specifically, it is thought that servant leaders represent strong role models that influence followers via learning processes and vicarious experiences and, thus, eventually imbue the importance of service within their teams (Liden et al., 2014).

Greenleaf (1977) who coined the term servant leadership gave a broad definition and stated how to best measure the phenomenon:

The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant—first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?

Many find it hard to accept the phenomenon of servant leadership because they do not understand how a servant can be a leader and how a leader can be a servant; that is, it seems to be an oxymoron. Graham (1991) identified humility, relational power, autonomy, moral development of followers, and emulation of leaders' service orientation as characteristics of servant leadership. De Pree (1992) listed 12 characteristics of leadership in which he included

integrity; vulnerability; discernment; awareness of the human spirit; courage in relationships; sense of humor; intellectual energy and curiosity; respect of the future, regard for the present, understanding of the past; predictability; breadth; comfort with ambiguity; and presence. Spears (1995) published a list of 10 critical characteristics of servant leadership based on Greenleaf's writings which included listening, empathy, healing, persuasion, awareness, foresight, conceptualizing, commitment to growth, stewardship, and community. Spears' list remains to this day the most respected and referred to list of servant leadership characteristics (Focht & Ponton, 2015). Though the above Spears' list is by no means exhaustive but open to considerable interpretation as well as value judgments; therefore an attempt is made to utilize the foresight, stewardship, conceptualizing, listening, healing, awareness and commitment to the growth of people characteristics, to analyze the Mauritian response to the COVID-19 challenge.

Foresight

Chinese authorities had started containment measures on 1 January 2020 and blocked all public transportation links between Wuhan and the rest of the world on 23 January. Meanwhile, cases were identified across other Asian countries. The Government of Mauritius willingly started screening people on arrival at its airport as from 22 January, introducing fever measurements and separation of at-risk passengers on 29 January. Based on the increasing number of COVID-19 cases worldwide, the Ministry of Health and Wellness issued several communiqués regarding travel restrictions from high risk countries. On 16 March 2020, Mauritius extended travel restrictions for a period of two weeks on foreign passengers coming from or having transited during the last 14 days in countries of the European Union, including the United Kingdom, Switzerland and also from Reunion Island. As for Mauritians coming from these countries, they were automatically placed in quarantine for a period of two weeks. (voxeu.org, 9 May 2020).

Still, COVID-19 arrived anyway. Official press briefings by the spokesperson of the National Communication Committee on COVID-19 later revealed that before 18 March 2020, 28 infected persons had already entered the island despite checks at air and sea ports (press briefings, May 2020).

Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant-leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future. It is also deeply rooted within the intuitive mind. Foresight remains a largely unexplored area in leadership studies, but one most deserving of careful attention. Based on the exploration of Greenleaf's foresight in his analysis, Wong (2014) suggests that this characteristic can in fact play a significant role in shaping strategies to mitigate risks, eliminate danger, and harvest growth in an organization or agency (Wong, 2014).

Rather than studying foresight in an organizational context, Slaughter (1995) examined the concept in a broader framework of future study. He argued that the future could not be predicted precisely, nor were there any "iron laws" or "blueprints" governing "the process of human or cultural development" that might contribute to shaping the future. Slaughter further postulated that instead of being an ability to view the future for what it precisely is, foresight is a "human attribute that allows us to weigh up pros and cons, to evaluate different courses of action and to invest possible futures on every level with enough reality and meaning to use them as decision-making aids" (Slaughter, 1995).

Stewardship

On 18th March, the first three cases were confirmed, Prime Minister Jugnauth set up a high-level ministerial Corona Virus Committee. This was the driving force behind the country's response, and included the ministers of health, finance, tourism, infrastructure and commerce. It was chaired personally by the Prime Minister. The committee met every day, including weekends, and sometimes meetings would go on for three hours. Initially the meetings were face to face – later, when one of the committee members became infected, they started meeting online.

"Having a Prime Minister meeting and chairing the meeting every day, it's a commitment that I have never seen in any other country," said Dr. Laurent Musango, who sat on the committee. Musango, a Rwandan physician with extensive public health experience, is the WHO's representative in Mauritius. He

played a key role in advising the Mauritian Prime Minister. Almost every day, the Prime Minister would call him or send him Whats App messages, asking for WHO guidelines on specific issues (Mail & Guardian, May 2020).

Robert Greenleaf's view of all institutions was one in which CEOs, staffs, and trustees all played significant roles in holding their institutions in trust for the greater good of society. Servant-leadership, like stewardship, assumes first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others. It also emphasizes the use of openness and persuasion rather than control.

Reinke (2004) explores the relationship between perceptions of leadership and the level of trust between employees and supervisors. More specifically, her article seeks to begin a theoretical discussion of a particular leadership approach, that is servant leadership and introduces an instrument for measuring servant leadership. The results show that one component of servant leadership, stewardship, is a determinant of trust level, indicating that "service before self" is not just a slogan, but a powerful reality that builds trust between employees and supervisors (Reinke, 2004).

Conceptualization

Upon the declaration of the first three confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius on Wednesday 18 March 2020 (Outbreak Day 1), Mauritius closed its international borders to all foreigners and even its citizens the following day (Day 2). Closure of all educational institutions also became effective the same day. The prevention strategy also consisted of community confinement. A national lockdown was implemented as from 20 March 2020 (Day 3) which was enforced into a curfew order on 23 March 2020 (Day 6). It is to be noted that the curfew order was extended thrice on 30 March, 10 April and 1 May and was valid until 30 May 2020 midnight (Sun & Wah, June 2020).

The ability to look at a problem or an organization from a conceptualizing perspective means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities. For many leaders, this is a characteristic that requires discipline and practice. The traditional leader is consumed by the need to achieve short-term operational

goals. The leader who wishes to also be a servant leader must stretch his or her thinking to encompass broader-based conceptual thinking. Servant leaders are called to seek a delicate balance between conceptual thinking and a day-to-day operational approach.

Listening

Listening is described as the active acceptance of employees' opinions, ideas, and suggestions (Spears, 1995). Johnson and Bechler (1998) found strong positive relationships between listening skills and leadership emergence. Kramer (1997) tested interpersonal skills and found relationships between listening and transformational leadership effectiveness. Bechler and Johnson (1995) reported a relationship between listening skills and leadership effectiveness. These studies document the importance of listening skills for leadership effectiveness (Barbuto & Wheeler, June 2006).

The strategy adopted by the Mauritian authorities for the outbreak management followed the WHO recommendations (WHO, 2020). All confirmed COVID-19 cases were immediately transferred for isolation in dedicated treatment facilities. As highlighted by WHO Scientific and Technical Advisory Group for Infectious Hazards (STAG-IH), working with the WHO secretariat (Heymann & Shindo, Feb. 2020), close monitoring of the number of confirmed and suspected cases was undertaken in Mauritius. Acknowledgement is provided to the valuable contact tracing which was undertaken in a diligent manner by teams of health professionals for rapid isolation of cases. Laboratory testing of suspected cases by PCR started on 3 February 2020 in Mauritius and has been crucial in the diagnosis of the COVID-19 cases during the outbreak. Mass screening of frontline staff by rapid diagnostic testing started on 27 April 2020. As on 15 May 2020, 24,608 PCR tests and 60,867 rapid diagnostic tests had been carried out. (Sun & Wah, June 2020).

Leaders have traditionally been valued for their communication and decision-making skills. While these are also important skills for the servant-leader, they need to be reinforced by a deep commitment to listening intently to others. The servant-leader seeks to identify the will of a group and helps clarify that will. She or

he seeks to listen receptively to what is being said. Listening, coupled with regular periods of reflection, is essential to the growth of the servant-leader.

Healing

A servant-leader — with reported behaviour characteristics such as empathy, compassion, and altruistic calling and healing — builds not only a mentally and emotionally healthy workforce but also inculcates a sense of cohesiveness, collaboration, and sustainable relationships among the followers by understanding and addressing their feelings and emotions. The servant-leaders, with characteristics of empathy and compassion, are oriented towards the followers' suffering. This leads to empathic concern and compassion that trigger in them an urge to take action to relieve the followers' suffering. This action, also termed as compassionate responding, manifests itself in a three-step behaviour: (1) patient listening and discussion; (2) empathetic handling that includes comforting and calming as well as guiding and counseling the suffering employee; and (3) taking personal responsibility and providing support (emotional, social, financial, and administrative) (Jit et al.,2017).

The next stage of escalation of COVID-19 infections came on 24 March, when the number of detected infections had climbed to forty-two and people were still overcrowding supermarkets. The Prime Minister announced that the country would be under complete lock-down until 31 March 2020 with only essential services being operational. A total 'sanitary curfew' was instituted. Supermarkets, bakeries, and shops were no longer allowed to operate, with immediate effect. Evidently, the most vulnerable of the society would be affected by such draconian measures. The Government decided to undertake the following measures:

At the start of the lockdown, the government announced the immediate distribution of 35,000 food packs to families in poverty (as per the Social Register of Mauritius), to the disabled and to at-home residents. All labour contracts set to expire this year were extended through to December 2020. Wage and income support measures to employers were introduced, ranging from US\$125 to \$315 for workers with salaries below \$625 (15 days' salary basis) per month to \$315 for those in the \$625-1,300 range (through the Government Wage Assistance

Scheme). Workers earning over \$1,300 received no support. Self-employed individuals as well as trade persons in both the formal and the informal sector received financial support of US\$130 (equivalent to half of the monthly national minimum wage) through the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme (SEAC). These measures were extended until 31 May. The government also announced about 1.6% of GDP increase in spending along with extra tax deductions for SMEs (voxeu.org, 28 May 2020).

One of the great strengths of servant-leadership is the potential for healing one's self and others. Many people have broken spirits and have suffered from a variety of emotional hurts. Although this is part of being human, servant-leaders recognize that they also have an opportunity to "help make whole" those with whom they come in contact.

Awareness

Servant-leaders lead through awareness and healing. A person with relation-awareness and situation-awareness is able to identify situational, historical, religious, cultural, and social elements in a complex situation (Song, 2018).

The data communicated on a daily basis by the National Communication Committee on COVID-19 was used to examine the effectiveness of the measures being undertaken to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. The daily communication of that information was considered an effective means of sensitizing the population to control the outbreak. From Outbreak Day 1 (18 March 2020) to Day 24 (10 April 2020), the number of confirmed cases increased daily from 3 to 318. That number started to stabilize and reached 332 on Day 40 (26 April 2020). On 15 May 2020, as the first phase of easing curfew restrictions began, no new COVID-19 case had been reported for nineteen consecutive days. On Day 20 (6 April 2020) the first four recoveries were reported, and the number of recovered patients kept increasing since that day. The number of active cases peaked at 286 on Day 24 (10 April 2020) with nine deaths. There was subsequently a steady decline, though there was an additional death on Day 41 (27 April 2020). Day 55 (11 May 2020) was an important date as there was zero active COVID-19 case in Mauritius (Sun & Wah, June 2020).

General awareness, and especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant-leader. Awareness also aids one in understanding issues involving ethics and values. It lends itself to being able to view most situations from a more integrated, holistic position.

Commitment to the growth of people

Servant-leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers. As a result, the servant-leader is deeply committed to the growth of each and every individual within the institution. The servant-leader recognizes the tremendous responsibility to do everything possible to nurture the growth of employees.

The COVID-19 pandemic is testing the limits of societies and economies across the world, and African countries are likely to be hit particularly hard. All possible resources are being rallied to help countries meet people's immediate health and survival needs while also safeguarding livelihoods and jobs in the longer term – including calling for a standstill on official bilateral debt service payments which would free up funds for strengthening health systems to deal with COVID-19 and save lives, social safety nets to save livelihoods and help workers who lose jobs, support to small and medium enterprises, and food security. Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa has been significantly impacted by the ongoing Corona virus outbreak and is forecast to fall sharply from 2.4% in 2019 to -2.1 to -5.1% in 2020, the first recession in the region over the past 25 years (World Bank, 2020).

Despite this bleak situation, the Government of Mauritius promptly committed around 12 billion rupees (\$300 million) to support its businesses and workers, even as the effect of COVID-19 is likely to be felt well into 2021 and beyond (voxeu.org, 9 May 2020).

Conclusion

For the Republic of Mauritius which had never handled a pandemic before, the response seemed effective with the required leadership. When human, political, economic, social and health stakes are high, Servant Leadership, as this study highlights, is not a 'soft' philosophy. The Prime Minister, through the COVID-19 challenge, was able to institutionalize Servant Leadership across key stakeholders at a crisis time.

1. People's highest priority needs had been served. The Government's prevention strategy to curb the pandemic curve worked. A major health disaster had been averted.
2. Those served grew as persons. Mauritians, while being served had become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous and aware of the handling of an epidemic. The age-old adage 'Health is Wealth' never perhaps rung so true. The sanitary curfew along with the 'early hard lockdown' was an illuminating experience for many on the island.
3. Authorities and public, after having garnered such an experience, went out and helped underprivileged countrymen and thus became servants in turn. The different financial assistance schemes provided will affect the country's reserves.
4. Yet a choice was made between health and wealth. The former won this time.

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Collective Documentation of Lives during Covid19 in Kathmandu

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Introduction

Collective Documents are an archive of a community's knowledge, wisdom, skills, hopes and dreams for a future and a world. Collective Documentation, a practice informed by the Narrative Practices takes the form of poems, books, collection of pictures, interviews, lists, illustrations, drawings, letters, etc. "Narrative practice is a term that is replacing 'narrative therapy'. Many practitioners work in public sector settings such as early child care and education, social services, community mental health where "therapy" does not adequately describe their roles. Applications of narrative practices in community circumstances also demonstrate the limitations of speaking about "therapy." (Narrative Practices Adelaide, 2015)

Michael White (2003) and David Denborough (2008) have introduced us to many examples of collective narrative documents. Denborough 2008, has described collective narrative documentation as involving the process of collaboration in constructing ways to archive and "...describe the skills and knowledge that people are engaging with to deal with hard times" (p 28).

Collective Documentation can also record a moment in time, the responses of communities to a moment and stand as an alternative to the dominant narratives generated by the mainstream ways of documentation. Myerhoff (2007) calls them acts of 'cultural creativity'. They can represent the past, the current moment in time and possibilities and imaginations for the future. The hope from sharing these documents is for the audience to stand as witness to these preferred ways of being and living of communities. Sharing increases the visibility of these often marginalised experiences and brings with it the possibility of nurturing diverse narratives of people and communities.

In the case of this article, they are an archive of the responses of a few people with diverse life experiences, living in Kathmandu, Nepal during the COVID 19 pandemic. Here we have chosen the form of a document of responses to some key questions determined by the authors. We have woven together a tapestry of diverse responses that each stand out in their uniqueness and together resonate in their shared values and principles.

We interviewed:

Safal Lama, 21 years old.

Tripty, 25 years old is a photographer on her way to becoming a professional house sitter. She loves cooking, gardening and petting other pets.

Rihana, activist and ex-drug user working at the intersection of transgender rights and addiction, currently co-managing a women's drug rehab centre north side of Kathmandu.

Pranika, poet and activist living with her son P and his father Prajwal. To read her writings go to Setopati.

Uma, is a photographer, a visual storyteller who has been working as a photojournalist for almost a decade. To see her work related to the pandemic go to her instagram page: [uma.bista](https://www.instagram.com/uma.bista)

What has been the experience of living during COVID19?

Safal: I am an outgoing person so it was really difficult for me. Covid made me stuck in one place, it made me suffer from stress. I was lonely, bored and tired. I used to feel sleepy all the time. In the beginning I felt like there is nothing in the future. I got alopecia which also got me worried. In the beginning not only for me – but my friends were also suffering from financial difficulties, without any support from their parents. Now we are adapting to the situation.

Tripty: In the beginning after the lockdown was imposed, I was really scared. My family is in Jhapa and they called me and asked me to come home. I thought I am just going to stay here, it would be safer, I might get infected going home. We had started COVID response campaign at work. We would put information around COVID. We were working 8-10 hours which kept me busy and not thinking about this situation. I was living alone. I would only talk to friends and family on the phone. Having something to do was good for me.

I have been house sitting for some people. I also started working on relief distribution and documenting the work. I have moved from house to house. It has been constant change – personal space as well as the situation outside. This has been confusing sometimes, but I am trying to work it out.

Rihana: Before the first lockdown in March I had started working at the women's drug rehab centre north side of Kathmandu. The centre was started by female drug users. We currently have 6 residents and 3 caretakers and I am one of them. I am a transgender woman and an ex drug user and now I find an overlap in my work, something I want to do, so that was good. Personally, at the beginning it was a bit monotonous. And the noise and news all around was too much. I stopped listening to the news at one point and focused on providing day to day structure for residents.

Pranika: I like the side of Kathmandu I live in because it is quieter, fresher. I live in a big space which feels like a lot to work on daily. I think an apartment would have been better for us. I live with Prajwal and our son P and we co-parent together. There is not much difference because in a sense that prior to lockdown also I

wouldn't go out much anyways and lockdown has also been the same mobility wise. Before lockdown I would get invited to so many discussions, including speaking engagements but couldn't go to all these places but now it's all virtual so now I can actually participate in more. Sometimes from 11 am to 6 pm there are marathon webinars. This situation has made it possible, due to internet access. People who have that access can listen to me all over Nepal about violence during conflict, caste issues, citizenship, women's rights issues, the books I am reading or have read, and I have reached a new audience I think. This has happened all because of this lockdown. However, how will it translate into my future work? That is still in a limbo. Don't know whether people are serious about following it, whether this online engagement will continue and be sustainable or not. So these days I am again refraining from speaking. How effective is it? Could it be just a show?



Uma: Once I came to Kathmandu, I didn't think it would be so bad. I went to work and on the lift I saw notices about social distancing and mask wearing. The notices were everywhere. People were in panic and I felt the panic too while going to the office everyday. Then it was decided we wouldn't have to go to work regularly but I would have to work during lockdown. Our team of 4 decided to work alternate days to be safe. One of my co-workers would work everyday to help out. The joy I felt was seeing the city feel clean as I went out to work as an essential worker. I was afraid but seeing the changing face of the city I felt ananda, calm.

Along with office work, I also took pictures for myself and showcased it which became a way to engage myself, console myself of the fear. Earlier, I used to watch a lot of news, but I decreased the frequency, which helped to reduce my panic. At home everyone was normal, acting like nothing will happen, but I would be in panic and was told not to think too much.

Who has made it possible for you to get on with your day to day life?

Safal: At first I didn't talk to anybody, I was so worried. After I got alopecia – I started talking with someone at the organisation where I intern. I shared with her – about my feelings, my insecurities about beauty and the hair fall. Then I started talking to some friends that I trust. Talking to them I realized, others are also suffering in similar ways like me. They helped me by talking to me everyday.

Tripty: Friends and people around me have been trying to help me. I know I will be ok because of this. Even when I have to leave the house I am in currently, I know I won't be on the street because of these friends. Even though the first two months I was living alone, over phone calls I could talk to people if I needed to. One thing surprising during COVID was how you made the effort to talk to people over video calls. I also realized that it was the same for so many of my friends – having reunion calls with high school friends – people were making the effort to wake up in different time zones to talk to each other. We didn't do that before Corona. After I started doing relief distribution work – I would see people thrice a week, being in the same space with other people, eating the same food, I missed that. One of the people doing relief work was my neighbour. During the lockdown phase, we bonded, we cooked for each other, went for runs and cycling together. This neighbour in particular, helped me. One of my friends sent me flowers when I told her I was not feeling so well.

Rihana: My sisters who have been doing this work on addiction for a long time, have been a huge support for me. And now being able to work here, helping women struggling with addiction has given me a sense of purpose. It has brought us together. Also the NA groups I am part of and the international NA groups for LGBTIQ folks have been a huge source of ongoing support. Nature, surprisingly plays a big role in helping me get through my day to day, and I never thought I would ever say such a thing! Seeing the vegetable garden grow, the nature around here is such a wonderful experience.

Pranika: Time wise even before the lockdown we had a schedule and I would be able to take my time and do my work. We cook. I don't like to order food anyways.

Before I would eat out a lot now its eating at home. My grand-aunt was living with us for a while. Prajwal and she, both of them liked cooking so that was sorted for me. And the choice of food that I cook or prepare is what P chooses! I got some fleeting thoughts of picking up a hobby. And now gardening which I have begun to learn has become a hobby all of a sudden. And it's been nice though I do so little.

Uma: My fellowship class for photography, narrative diploma class, women photography community working on the pandemic on instagram, are some areas where I have been able to contribute. Collaborating and getting to know photographers and international networks have helped me a lot. I live with my family. Since 19 I have been away doing this work and I was unaware of what happens at home. I haven't been aware of the changing of seasons, wheat fields followed by paddy fields. The timetable followed that day at home. New noise and distractions and having to play with the children at home and they would call me to interact with them, play with them. My home is a bit far away from the centre of town so we have the advantage of having a more open environment and it feels good to spend time with family. There is a forest a walk away. My mom cooks and we eat together and it's a new experience. Dai chiura khane din asaar ma, the day to eat curd and beaten rice is in June and it had been 8 years or more since I had sat together during the day leisurely observing small moments with family.



What have you made possible for others around you in their day to day life that with you being there, their lives have felt safer etc?

Safal: I was talking to disabled queer persons – they were distressed that their parents will find out they are queer. Their parents are queerphobic and being disabled, being a queer person and not being accepted in their family was very hard for them. Some of my friends are HIV +, they were worried that their parents will find out. Since I know their parents too, I would talk to them and deliver their medication to their houses. We got to understand each other's worlds. We made groups to talk and share about experiences, memes, funny moments of queer people during this COVID situation. I have talked to many unknown people in this lockdown. We can share positive energy even without knowing people.

Tripty: For my neighbour, I did for him what he did for me as friends, as family. We were there for each other for food, for exercise. I went for relief distribution for a few days to take photos and interview people. After I interviewed people who were receiving relief, it hit me how bad the situation was. I was safe, I was in a bubble. I realized how people were really struggling after the lockdown situation, the reality struck me. I was very sad for weeks after that. I felt so helpless, the relief we were distributing helped people but their problems were so much more than that.

Rihana: For the residents here I provide a structure in their day to day life. I provide dance classes and yoga. I have always been vocal about my own struggles with addiction. Last year I was having a really difficult time in my life and even while facing difficulties, I did not stop going to meetings. I stayed connected with the ex-drug users' community and stayed sober. I think that was possible for me because they are such a big part of my life.

Pranika: For Prajwal to have a break during the day, I schedule everything in the morning. When I have calls in the afternoon, I can turn off the video and be with P as well and that works out. Doing online engagements has made it possible for me to be with P. In the past I would travel for work without P and it didn't work at all. I have been [pointed out]? as making a fuss for having a child and I have to

explain that P is not like other children. If I were to take P to a public event and he would get upset and cry, people would look at me like I wanted attention.

Uma: In the home front I tell my family members to be cautious, I provide information. I help with doing the grocery. I interact with family members and I am around during the day which wasn't possible before.

Something you learnt about yourself that surprised you?

Safal: Firstly, I always feel that I am a useless person. I have never thought I will do this in the future. I usually think of the past. But in this COVID situation, I thought I could be a sex therapist, which helped me a lot. I was researching about sex therapists and sex cultures, especially queer sex cultures. I find it easy to talk to my parents, family, brothers and sisters about sex cultures. I also find that I can easily connect with people, people listen to me. I do not feel negative about the alopecia I am suffering from. I feel beauty never stops, everything is beautiful. In Nepalese society being disabled, having alopecia, being queer person is a problem. I read, I explored myself, I accepted myself – so I can help other people accept themselves. I am confident nowadays about myself. I feel unique. I talk openly about any subject on different platforms. I talk about sex openly – I shared articles about sex on Facebook. I asked sex therapists in Nepal if they knew about sex cultures, and they said they didn't. This makes me think I need to be a sex therapist in Nepal. Now I have a goal, I need to do this.

Tripty: I am the kind of person who makes plans, I get upset if it doesn't happen. But now, I am trying not to do that in larger plans, involving my living space. I still get upset when plans change with friends, etc. but with this living situation I am surprising myself.

Rihana: I have always been a complete unbeliever, naastik, when it comes to things like yoga and meditation. But due to the lock down, I met this new Rihana who has started meditating and doing yoga. There is faith and self love that I realized about myself. There is special growth and I am amazed at myself! I am coming face to face with this real me at this moment! Where I am these days, there is a forest and a hill nearby and a river beside it. And I go on walks. Dance

has been a big passion of mine and one of the ways I spend time is creating dance classes for people with different needs--that's been the profit of Covid19 lockdown time for me!

Pranika: I would think I would be way more anxious right now but I am not. I don't know if this is acceptance or denial! I am not taking a lot of work even though I should pay my loans but I am so relaxed. I have been financially independent since I was 19 and I would only get comfort from a certain amount of savings in the bank. Right now I am using my savings. Thinking about this I do look for work and apply but it doesn't seem so urgent to be working to earn I am not feeling the heat! And this is definitely not ME you know. I have LOANS. Looking at my son, I do feel desperate. Maybe there is calmness because of what is going on. Now it's all the world that is helpless, so could it be why I am calmer as opposed to other times, Everyone is arrested in time, bound by time right now. Before the world was on the move and I would feel so helpless. And it would trigger me. Earlier, there would be consolation that it's not just you, but it felt like an excuse to try to pacify me but now it's actually that. Talking about what's surprising-- I am surprised how I can live with this anger and resentment I have against the government. Writing abstract poems (Koyu, 2020), warning our present regime that let there not be an uprising because then you won't have a place to hide.... I wrote that and many people read it and I felt happy about it.

Uma: Wouldn't call it surprising. But I get the sense that I know myself better. I realized I sleep when I am upset or angry! Related to job, at work I wasn't satisfied for a long time and i would tell myself to quit but would then keep going. But now I have a sense of clarity, I didn't gain much and there is no space to showcase what I know. Jyan vanda thoolo jaagir hoina, job is never more precious than life. Spent a lot of time in my 20s investing in the organization so I feel sad. So now I realize that there is no use to give myself wholeheartedly. I can look for other work. I used to think I have to do the hard work but if there is no space then, no open communication . . . so it isn't worth it. This issue was already here but came to the forefront now. As a photographer I am surprised by how even without a camera through a regular screen I can capture moments through screen shots, there are portraits that I have taken like that. Exhibitions aren't possible in spaces. Now to

meet or network with a veteran I don't need to go somewhere, it can happen online, that possibility has increased.

What has this moment got you thinking about what you would like to be different in the world?

What would you like to keep and what would you like to change in the world?

Safal: Caste, cultural discrimination, race discrimination has been increasing in the world in these COVID times. We should never judge people by their circumstances. This is a situation where we should be together. We need to support each other, we need each other without caste, discrimination, without any conflict. We can help each other. We can explore what we want to be, with access to the internet in our homes. We can make parents understand our experiences, since we have time during this lockdown - showing them interesting videos, materials, tools. Everything happens if we are together and we help each other without any judgement, without any discrimination. Identity doesn't matter - what I feel, how I identify, if we help each other with pure heart, pure soul and sharing positive energy. People are bullying each other but there are also people helping each other without any fear, being strong themselves. You never know who is helping us - like we don't know who is distributing relief but we are taking it and therefore accepting help from people we don't know.

Tripty: Difficult times like Corona affects different people differently. I would like that to change. It is so unfair. People should have access to basic things. I interviewed someone who said that you are giving relief and that's great, but we don't have gas to cook the ration you are giving. Everyone should have access to free healthcare and basic things to live a simple life and not have to struggle so much just to eat and live.

Lot of people came together to do so many things - relief distributions. People were doing things for others for free. I wish this would continue and not just be a thing when something bad is happening like Corona. At photo circle where I work, we were doing reading sessions for the photographers' community. People came not only for reading but to talk to each other and do something meaningful

and stay productive and connect to people they like. People trying to be there for each other in different ways, being thoughtful.

Rihana: Nature risayera malai nai time deu vaneko jastai chha, nature is angry and is saying give me all your time! Nature is so important. It has been a very new realization for me and I would like to keep nature and make it more safe. Also this system we are forced to live within, I have always been against this system, it has ruined everything. It is not the fault of the individual and my desire is to change the system. I know at present so many transgender individuals must be struggling with substance abuse. I am an ex-drug user and a transgender woman and there is no representation at all. And doing this work in the beginning I felt proud and now that pride has shifted into focusing on the motive of the work. And with my involvement I feel there seems to be more possibility of opening up and using my own experience.

Pranika: Doing online participation, it is economic, environment friendly, and it's less time consuming (saves your travel time which can get hectic and tiresome in Kathmandu's traffic). Let's hope this continues. Earlier, I would feel I couldn't do anything online. But the other day a dear friend said I am very present in online discussions and she said you can do it! I give importance to physically being present but that has sifted. Also, I wish we were more of risk takers. I wish we were bound by different things. If I didn't have P, I would be out in the street for sure The State wants the citizens to do things on their own, PCR do it on your own, 26 lakh for ventilator, pay it yourself. Social injustice that is rampant and its propagated by the state that is apathetic, corrupt. They don't do it directly but the refusal of setting up health measures, and denying dignity even in these badly put up shelter is killing dalits, aiding in trafficking women or individuals. All this proves that they don't care whether we live or die. So why are we silent? Social media activism is the safe resort at this time and it feels like it has minimal impact. It's as good as not using it and staying at home and accepting the situation for survival. We have been reduced to this. I wish I could work on that, changing the mindset of people. We don't have to be passive recipients. To what extent can I write if no one is influenced by it to act? In the US, people coming out against lockdown, that could be silly but they are expressing their individual needs. Here in Nepal, social, communal needs are more important than an individual need, we say, so how

come we don't come out to protest together because it is crippling all of us? There are people who are doing it of course but we need to have a ripple effect. Taking P would make it look like I am attention seeking. If he could walk then it wouldn't be a problem. Unless they have a child like him, they will not understand. And this is not only in times like this. This situation for families of people with disabilities has always been the same in Nepal - the absence of a comfortable and healthy atmosphere (both mental as well as physical), that allows you to take your child like P has been absent. The onus is on us to the extent that it is burdensome and discouraging.

Uma: Being at home and eating home food, my health has become better so I would want to keep that. We need to get rid of Corona! We can't go back to normal now and it's affecting everything. Personally for me, the assignments that I get might need me to travel. So since I do need to work to make a living, I can't refuse and insist that I will work from home only. This is a crisis and people need to work together. Also as photojournalists, our work needs to be appreciated by the institutions we work for.



Common threads in this diverse tapestry

Care for ourselves and others

Care for others and how it is intricately linked to caring for ourselves is something many of our interviewees spoke about. Making new connections and talking to people we would not have done in 'normal' life circumstances is also visible in many of the above narratives. Helping unknown people and accepting help from unknown people resonates through many of the experiences shared. This is further highlighted in how nature comes up in the conversation and the feeling that it has nurtured and the responsibility to nurture it in return.

Exploring new territories of identity

Whether it is learning to adapt to changing circumstances and embracing it or exploring new interests and discovering ways in which we would like to take our lives forward, this time has allowed, amidst the chaos and distress, to anchor ourselves in newer ways of being.

Connecting more deeply with various facets of one's own identities, being surprised and amused at those discoveries has also been spoken about and resonates throughout all the conversations.

People speak about learning to live the sadness that this moment brings, due to the gaping disparities of the society around us or the helplessness and inability to do everything we would like and the constraints of our lives and societies.

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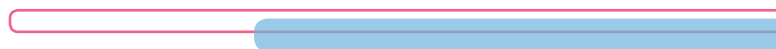
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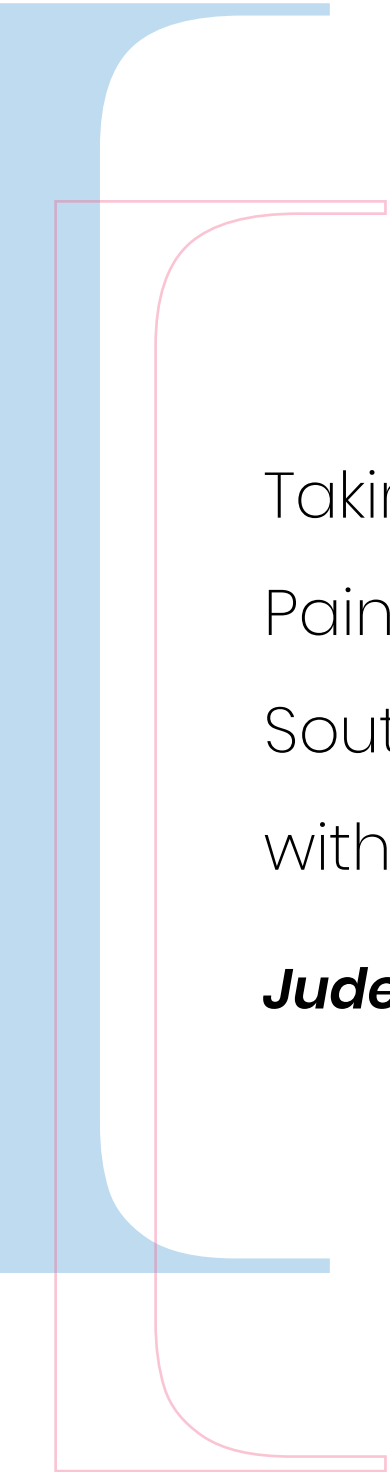
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Taking Current Strains and Feeling Past
Pain, Yet Again: Reflections on Black
South African Women's Experiences
within the Context of COVID-19

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“We are, each one of us, locations where the stories of our place and time become partially tellable.” (Mair 1989, 127)

This brief commentary provides a gendered reflection on this critical moment in time that is characterised by the global pandemic of Covid-19 and looks specifically at the South African context. It draws on my identity and experience as an African feminist, a Black woman, a mother, a partner in a heterosexual partnership and a clinical psychologist journeying with other Black women in therapeutic processes. It takes as its premise three points:

i) that a gendered lens is invariably an intersectional analysis, acknowledging the simultaneous multiplicity of social identity as a kind of prism through which multifaceted power is experienced (Crenshaw 2017). This commentary therefore does not aim to be and cannot be representative of all Black South African women’s experience under Covid-19, given that we are not a homogeneous group, but differently interpolated in the social geometry of identity and power.

ii) that the “the personal is political”. This feminist slogan and truism is alluded to in the opening quotation of Mair - that the story of my everyday lived experience is also a telling of the socio-political and historical context within which I live and the systems of power that act upon me and that I internalise as well as resist.

III) That how we understand, research, make meaning of Covid-19 has considerable implications not only for the ways in which we come to 'know' and represent women's experiences within the pandemic, but the ways in which we come to know and represent the broader historical, cultural and political systems of power that position these women in specific ways during crises.

It has been 26 years since South Africa's transition to democratic governance. In post-apartheid South Africa, the interwoven constructions of 'memory' and 'trauma' continue to be played out in discourses that traverse both private and public domains. The Covid-19 contextual phenomenon can be seen as a significant conduit for historical and personal memory of the effects of gendered power upon the daily lived experience of individual women, Black women in particular.

Particular moments such as the current Covid-19 moment we are living through remind us that the past is always alive in the present. These moments create a rupture in our investment in the discourse of "putting the past behind us". This pandemic, like other moments of crises and disasters, brings to the foreground the deep social divisions and inequalities of the past created by the legacy of colonial systems and other interlinked ideologies of dominance that persist and are perpetuated along the fault-lines of our racialised and gendered everyday experiences. We carry this painful past with us, in our (gendered) bodies, in our (gendered) social relations – our behaviours, our conscious and unconscious biases – in our (gendered) systems and ideologies. So, there is a strange 'deja vu' to the phenomenon of Covid-19, a historicity to the shape and texture of 2020 that seems to reverberate through our individual psyches and the collective national imagination. One reason that the trauma of the South African past is never very far from the surface of our consciousness, is that violence is the main historical continuity between "then" and "now". For Black women in particular the main continuity through colonialism, apartheid and democracy, enacted in our social relations has been gender-based violence. For Black women, in a manner of speaking, the more the things change the more they stay the same. While our Constitution has been lauded for the progressive nature of its gender policies and legislation, this co-exists with our reality of having amongst the highest

rates of gender-based violence in the world. And so, in both embodied material ways and in symbolic ways, this period of Covid-19 is traumatic for Black women. Covid-19 brought with it a familiar militarisation, reports of police brutality and “heavy-handed” enforcement of curfew and prohibition laws, heightening the ever-present threat of violence.

For the Black women with whom I have formally engaged in therapeutic processes and informally connected with within feminist circles, this period of Covid-19 has been a time which many have described as having “pushed them to the edge”. Past violations and traumas have re-emerged in symptoms of anxiety, depression and ‘burnout’, that are rooted in dynamics of disempowerment, fragmentation and loss of autonomy and agency. These central experiences of trauma – disempowerment and disconnection from others (Herman 2015) are being relived in the current moment as women remember in a visceral way under the “Lockdown” and physical and social distancing and isolation, the sense of having their sense of power and control over their life, taken away. They remember the contexts and feelings of volatility and uncertainty, of the surveillance and regulation of their bodies and their mobility. It is critical that in any effort and intentions of supporting Black South African women’s psychosocial well being during these times, we must take seriously the ways in which the Covid-19 context triggers our individual and collective history of trauma, so as not to pathologise the various ways in which Black women are responding to Covid-19 stressors. The personal is political. We need to be cognisant of the ways in which the feminised burden of care significantly compromises the mental well-being of women, Black women in particular. Women who are formally employed (and have not lost their jobs) are having to cope with the already heavy workload of their paid employment, in addition to the expectation of assuming and resuming the duties of the domestic domain: domestic chores, child care, care for parents and extended family members – the unpaid and ‘invisibilised’ labour that comes with being physically present in the domestic space during “office hours”. At the centre of this crossover between private and public labour is the deployment of notions of femininity that draw heavily on the naturalized and normalized affective role of women as nurturers and carers. These normalised discourses function coercively, mobilising notions of cultural authenticity to reinforce patriarchal agendas that perpetuate the servitude of women (Lewis 2003). It is therefore important to

interrogate the notions and discourses of “caring”, “coping” and being the “strong African woman”.

In my personal and professional experience many women have sought psychological support asking for tools that could help them cope better with the increased workload and heightened stress of the Covid context. There was also a tangible self-blame and shame that many women named regarding ‘not being able to cope as normal’ with the ‘Covid load’. The gendered expectation of patriarchy (which colludes with a cultural expectation of the role of women within African patriarchy) is to ‘keep going’ and successfully juggle increasing responsibilities, expectations and demands. There is very little social permission for Black women to admit that we are taking strain, we are not ok, that we are just barely coping. We do not give ourselves that permission either, so deeply entrenched is the messaging that ‘care’ is in the service of others, external to ourselves. Admitting that we need support or care is accompanied by shame and guilt that precludes us from sourcing and resourcing the support and care we need. This dynamic exists even within the feminist movement where we intellectually understand and profess the importance of self-care and collective care as a necessary politics of self-preservation.

“We are wary and weary of the trope of the strong African woman, ever-willing and able to sacrifice, to subsume her well-being in service of others, to carry an ever-increasing burden with humility and a tacit pride in being able to do so. These discursive representations obscure the reality of our systemic oppressions as gendered oppressions and set us up to blame ourselves when we feel powerless, helpless, overburdened or generally overwhelmed. These tropes do not offer us a way out or through our racialised and gendered internalised oppression and we are critical of the ideological imperatives in response to which the Black African women is constructed” (Clark, Mafokane, and Nyathi 2019, 3). So, many of us are “coping” with Covid in ways that do not take us any closer to our well-being and perpetuate the patterns and structures of power that are at the root of the problem in the first place. As we extend and over-extend ourselves under these COVID-19 conditions, it is important to remember that we cannot be well until the structure of the institution of the family as a patriarchal, classist, heteronormative site of inequity shifts. We cannot be well until the feminised burden of care is

completely overturned. This commentary hopefully alerts us to the ways in which the strain and pain of Black women under Covid-19 in 2020 is inextricably linked to the multifaceted legacies of our past and challenges us to do something about it – today.

Notes

The term ‘women’ represents an explicit inclusion of a broader intersectionality of gendered identification that includes trans, Black and variously othered women.

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The Embers Remain

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We've been wearing masks since December. As the Black Summer bushfires were raging with no end in sight, smoke and ash swept through the city and heralded the New Year with a phenomenon I never thought I would see in my lifetime: Delhi air transposed onto a Sydney skyline.

The only silver lining in the dense plumes was a taste of unprecedented disaster. Before the rest of the world, we were being primed with the language of crises and as the blazes dwindled, the changing season brought new versions of 'hotspots' and daily toll counts with COVID-19.

There was, however, no preparing for the micro assailant that was to dismantle, disrupt and defy every structure of our creation. In March, case numbers followed a dreaded trajectory and a temporary lockdown ensued. I packed my materials, transported my canvases and before I knew it, my artist studio and living space were one.

In the immense stillness of lockdown, all that had been sidelined by maintaining a constant busyness, could be avoided no longer. Impending exhibitions and projects fell away and my books ushered me into their parallel worlds.

I was well acquainted with the first text on my reading list. I had been carrying *The Prisons We Broke* like a talisman for months, skirting the pages, keeping a safe distance by holding it close. My hesitation was not for its incomprehensibility, but quite the opposite – I was never ready for its searing clarity.

Until April.

Through Babytai Kamble's words I was transported to Veergaon, into the world of the Mahars of Maharashtra. Kamble's historical account is the first Dalit feminist autobiography written in Marathi. Although it is a short read, it carries the weight of a tome and the monumentality of an epic. Her scope is vast as she follows the transformation of a society at the dawn of the Ambedkarite era, and yet attends to each detail in her immediate reality.

Nothing is amiss. Kamble recounts that which only a woman could – the passing of each day in domestic spaces, the festivals, local deities and rituals, the physical toll of violent spiritual possessions and superstitious beliefs.

Kamble's descriptions are vivid and visceral. Through her eyes, we see the lice-infested rags stitched together to cover the women's bodies, we sense the layers of dust and dirt upon our own skin, taste the stew of decaying food and smell the acrid stench of animal carcasses in the waste pits.

Woven in are the most graphic accounts of the lives of the Mahar women. The child brides are battered by floggings, torture and dismemberment at the hands of their in-laws. Kamble details childbirth in abject poverty – the repeated prodding of unlearned midwives, the gnawing hunger in the empty belly of the new mother and the dirty rags used to stop the incessant bleeding. Whilst some women plan a treacherous escape from their marital homes, others are forced into heavy iron stocks that lacerate their feet. Miraculously, the women are not broken by the rage of caste and patriarchy; every morning they sing sweet songs to their children as they grind stones.

Kamble describes these harrowing instances of deprivation without a grain of self-pity or glorification. The emotion she withholds makes the rawness of her writing more palpable and confronting. She speaks as one with her community, in a voice that does not censor the carnage of caste.

The pages that trace Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's arrival in Jejuri radiate with light. A small gathering is planned on an auspicious day for the family deity Kandhoba. As crowds of Mahars gather, there is talk of a man who speaks in the sahib's tongue and has studied beyond the seven seas.

Babasaheb arrives in a vehicle and captivates all. He asks the crowd what Kandhoba has ever done for them and urges them to stop worshipping idols and their own ignorance. In an epoch of neglect and disillusionment, he inspires knowledge and education. He is the light that shines through a millennium of darkness. Kamble describes Babasaheb as the essence of truth grown from the soil upon which many lives have been sacrificed. This truth is met with resistance as some Mahars continue to eat the decaying flesh of dead animals. Yet it is the women who safeguard his vision.

For every Dalit, *The Prisons We Broke* stirs that which cannot be described. It unstitches a century-old wound and awakens remnants of memories that are our birthright. There is an unborn and imperishable cord that connects us to each Dalit life and generation. The impressions and sensations held within us are pre-language, yet are evoked powerfully through Babytai Kamble's words.

For myself, the only way I am able to stand firmly upon this sacred ground is through my art. Everything else seems abstract— to ponder, to write, to intellectualise it. Within the studio I can receive each line and not be swept away by the torrents of this moving text. I am at a knife's edge— held by the ancient history in my cells and abandoned to the spontaneity and newness of creation. Whilst making art, I feel simultaneously closest to the imprint of this historical wound, as well as complete freedom from it.

As I received each word, Babytai Kamble's visual language guided my material expression. I sought to create a work that was as monumental as her writing.

When I closed my eyes, in the darkness I saw centuries of accrual compressed like geological strata. Familiar materials presented themselves: cow dung—used by the Mahars to polish the walls and floors, thick tar in all its tonal ranges, wax as smooth and impressionable as skin, the roughened edges of coir rope, laaldhaga from my travels that had now been worn down to a lifeless red, Indian cotton soaked in black charcoal and oil, vats of human hair, coconut husk, broom sticks from a jhadu and radiant gold leaf.

I set about forming the landscape I saw in *The Prisons*. I was led by intuition through a process that was much like drawing from images in my peripheral vision. Upon



large wooden panels, I assembled my materials layer by layer and melted wax with charcoal, coating the surface with a thick black pitch. Punctuating each line of material was pure gold leaf. I imagine gold to be a metaphor for the Dalit body. As ancient as the Earth itself, its qualities have been managed by an arbitrary value system, yet gold is so luminous, it remains untainted by it.

The lockdown stretched from weeks to months as the piece was composed. Each layer and panel responded to the previous one. My materials are my words and they are not dictated, they come from the same embryonic silence from which the art is born. They are potent and charged with the politics of my body. In the cacophony of these heightened times, it is this silence that I return to, that I know to be true.

I shared my time with Urmila Pawar and her extraordinary writings in *The Weave of My Life*. I was moved by the words of young Muktabai in her essay *The Grief of the Mahars and the Mangs*. I returned to Dr Ambedkar's early anthropological and political writings. As I traced the development of his ideas, I could read the real life implications through the social and domestic lens of Kamble and Pawar. Hindu ritual, wedding songs, and practices were abandoned as there were mass conversions to a new Dalit consciousness.

I continue to survey my history to understand myself as the continuation of this thread. As a beneficiary of Reservation, a first generation migrant and the daughter of this revolution, my freedom is not mine until it can be shared by all.

As I watch the heroes march – my fellow migrants walk hundreds of kilometres, I see the waves of progress ebb away further than ever. As I watch stones being laid for new temples, I see time contract and the structures of ignorance fortified. The light has more layers to penetrate, it will now have to be stronger and brighter than ever.



A critical epoch has come to the fore again. Our work is cut out for us. Yet we are the children who would rest our heads in our mother's laps and hear their sweet songs. We are the children of a father who guided us not to lamps in shrines, but the flame within us.

We create with this light.

Stone Idols will be exhibited in Sydney in January 2021.





South Asians in the United Kingdom during COVID-19: A Realist View

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Introduction

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), more commonly called COVID-19, is exacting much unprecedented toll on the personal, social and economic levels globally, and it is not showing any sign of disappearing from the face of the planet any time soon. Since January 2020, the global community has been desperately trying to find health solutions to inform and act on prevention of transmission and spread of the virus, containing and averting high mortalities across nations (World Health Organisation, 2020). In the discourse about the impact of COVID-19 globally, comparisons have been drawn with the pandemics going back centuries, and in recent times the Spanish Flu (1918-1920), the Asian Flu (1957-1958), 2009 influenza pandemic (Petersen et al., 2020). Furthermore, among the many stark realities of the impact of the virus on humanity, one that has become a source of grave concern is the disproportionality of fatalities associated with COVID-19 among ethnic groups in European and western countries. This paper attempts to explore and report factors associated with ethnicity and its concomitants in the United Kingdom (UK). With daily changes in what is known about the spread of the virus, policies and practices, information and legal measures, the public response to the threats and human cost have been remarkable and courageous. In demographic terms, this paper focuses on the UK South Asian communities, who are often referred to as part of the Black, Asian and

Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups. The purpose is to derive an understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on these groups against the backdrop of shifting evidence and guidance on minimising health and social effects on the population.

Responsiveness

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared a global health emergency on 30 January 2020, followed by declaration of a global pandemic on 11 March 2020 (Cucinotta & Vanelli, 2020). The WHO Director General expressed his organisation's deep concern at 'both the alarming levels of spread and severity and by the alarming levels of inaction', asking countries to take measures to contain the virus and prevent its worldwide spread. The UK Government was preparing for the challenges by creating field hospitals and stockpiling medical supplies and equipment. With increasing numbers of cases being reported, with hospitalisations and deaths, the UK government imposed a lockdown on 23 March 2020. From containment to prevention of spread of the virus, staying at home, advocating hand washing and hand hygiene, self-isolation, these were measures designed to reduce the potential peak that could overwhelm hospitals. A delay phase was observed – containment plus social distancing, social isolation, quarantining; limiting travel and social gatherings; closing businesses and enforcing lockdowns. . With the rise in reported COVID-19 cases and mortality, the UK government imposed a lockdown on 23 March 2020. Many questions were being asked about the supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline National Health Service (NHS) workers. When the extensive health, economic and social effects of the pandemic were felt across the UK, at its height between April and May 2020 in England, questions were being asked about the vulnerability of people across their lifespan and the implications of risk assessment for 'segments' of the population. Reassurance was given to the public about the availability and supplies of PPEs and equipment but public concerns grew with reports from the health and social care sectors about a lack of supplies which was putting staff and patients at increased risk of being infected.

Since early February 2020, the UK government was alert to the threats of the coronavirus, yet not much action was taken, even the scientific advice was, to be cautious about transmission and the precautions needed to be put in place to protect the population. Much noise was made in several administrative quarters, but not reflected on provision of resources and preparedness to deal with the pandemic, giving a clear and worrying series of kneejerk reactions. Stocking up of essential equipment (gloves, masks, sanitisers, respirators), preparing field hospitals to receive patients and protect the NHS, discharge of patients from hospitals to care homes without testing, ensuing lockdown, social distancing and advice about hand washing and hand hygiene, addressing the economical concerns etcetera became points of reference for commentators, on how proactive or reactive the political and healthcare professionals were on a daily basis. What was becoming clear was the lack of personal protective equipment, the strategy of herd immunity, with apparently little concern or respect for the large numbers of people dying in their homes, hospital or care homes as reported in the daily briefings and updates in the media. It can be argued that it was governance by neglect. The consequences of indecisiveness and poorly communicated guidance meant that prevarication cost people their lives, including those of healthcare professionals and public sector workers. The vulnerability of South Asians to COVID-19 became abundantly clear when BAME doctors working with patients at the beginning of the pandemic were the first mortalities reported (BMA, 2020). As the reported deaths were linked to people most vulnerable in society, and the lack of cohesive action and monitoring of what was happening with compliance, the focus was far more on 'led by the science', dismissing any dissenting voices. Many have argued that the steps taken by the government has been slow and not communicated clearly over the course of the pandemic.

Psychological Impact of COVID-19

Fear is a common response when we are faced with uncertainties and threats. The fear of being infected by coronavirus was very real for all, with uncertainties about the early symptoms and the excessive fear experienced, when triggered by

shielding and isolation. With self-isolation being advised, the effects of isolation on mental health and support were not made clear. However, local organisations and communities were mobilised with volunteers supporting the vulnerable. Local governments played their part in information sharing and guidance on mental health (LGA, 2020). Public Health England (2020a) put out guidance on mental health and well being with a range of information about what to do and the services available. However, it is questionable whether the public accessed this guidance and its impact on the mental health of individuals with the existing mental health conditions and those exposed to COVID-19.

Soon after lockdown was imposed, commentators observed how the public had shown restraint with high level of compliance but expressed concerns about risks of isolation, fears about the old and frail, the psychosocial impact on children missing out on schooling, possible rise in domestic abuse and the economy. In time, commentators expressed disappointment at the ambiguities in communication and the continued uncertainties about the implications of the strategies being followed to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on individuals, families and businesses.

Measures taken to reduce risk of infection from coronavirus, such as self-isolation, social distancing and quarantine can trigger psychological distress, and this should be borne in mind when designing psychological interventions. A coordinated and interdisciplinary approach is needed (Hotopf et al., 2020).

Ethnicity and COVID-19

The point of reference for population data is commonly the 2011 UK census data for England and Wales. Asian ethnic groups made up 7.5% of the UK population (ONS 2011 Census). Self-ascribed as British Asian settled here by migration and by birth in the country, are people of Indian (2.5%), Pakistani (2.0%) and Bangladeshi (0.8%) origin.. The ethnic groups most likely to live in urban areas were Pakistani (99.1%) and Bangladeshi (98.7%). In England in 2013, it was estimated that around 262,247 South Asians lived in London, the largest group, followed by 37,204 in Leicester,

27,206 in Birmingham, 15,190 in Sandwell and 14,955 in Wolverhampton. Other cities which have a sizeable South Asian population include Blackburn 34.3%, Bradford 26.83%, Manchester 15%. The geographical demographics of the South Asian groups and the emerging patterning of COVID-19 cases and mortality can be referenced against this backdrop.

Aldridge et al (2020), showed that Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups were at higher risk of death than their white counterparts. In the data reported in April 2020, (ONS, 2020a), out of the 16,272 deaths, the largest number of deaths in ethnic minority groups were among Indian (492 deaths) and Black Caribbean (460 deaths). The standard mortality rate (SMR) was 3.29 for Pakistanis, 2.41 for Bangladeshis 2.41 and 1.70 for Indians. Similarly, arguing for the disproportionate COVID-19 related deaths among critically ill patients, 34% were among minority ethnic groups, whilst they make up only 14% of the population (Bhala et al., 2020; Kings Fund, 2020). More recent data up to 15 May 2020 (ONS, 2020b) showed that COVID-19 related deaths was 1011 (2.7%) of all deaths, of which 551 (1.5%) were among Pakistanis and 222 (0.6%) among Bangladeshis, with more male deaths than female deaths. By religious group, the figures showed that among males aged 8-64 years, deaths were recorded as follows: 297 Muslim males and 125 females, 90 Hindu males and 43 females, and 42 Sikh males and 20 Sikh females. For recorded deaths for adults aged 65 years and above, the numbers were higher: Muslims, 584 males and 301 females; Hindus, 271 males and 190 females; and 119 Sikh men and 77 Sikh women.

With number of cases and deaths rising during March, April and May 2020, concerns were raised about the likelihood of people from ethnic minority background being exposed to coronavirus and death among health care professionals working in frontline services. A large percentage of doctors and other health care workers are from BAME groups. Reportedly, 21% of all staff are from BAME groups (BMA, 2020), made up of about 20% of nursing staff and 44% of medical staff. There was an outcry about the lack of action, being directed into examining the factors underpinning this emerging pattern in the deaths of frontline health professionals. Questions were raised about the lack of concern about possible contributing factors such as racial discrimination, bullying and lack of risk assessment and testing. In response under pressure to act, Public

Health England (PHE) subsequently launched a review in May and the report was published in June 2020 (PHE, 2020b) but it was disappointing that the report did not make any recommendations on how to reduce disparities (Science Media Centre, 2020), even with questions asked in parliament about the failure to make recommendations.

Underlying health conditions make the South Asian communities more susceptible and vulnerable to COVID-19, consequently requiring hospitalisation and medical interventions, including life-saving artificial ventilation (Pan et al., 2020). It is known that severe cases of COVID-19 were associated with comorbidities such as cardiovascular disease (CVD), hypertension and diabetes. Evidence suggests that having non-communicable diseases such as these increases the risk of hospitalisation. South Asians have high rates of diabetes (GOV.UK, 2016) and cardiovascular diseases which make them more vulnerable to COVID-19. Moreover, help-seeking behaviour and adherence to treatment have been shown to be associated with patients' beliefs about illness, medicines, stigma, and communication barriers (Kumar et al., 2016). Diversity in beliefs about infections and transmission, lack of understanding of the seriousness of COVID-19, working in confined spaces, language and communication barriers need further exploration in future.

Health Inequalities

COVID-19 related health inequalities in UK are not recent phenomena. Health inequalities have been documented for decades. Marmot (2020) deplored the policy of the UK government since 2010, when the publication of 'Fair Society Healthy Lives', the report of an independent review chaired by Marmot, had identified six policy objectives that required action in combating health inequalities (Marmot, Allen, Goldblatt, Boyce, McNeish, Grady & Geddes, 2010). About the response of the UK Government to the health crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, Marmot (2020, p.1414) has argued that the UK Government made a political choice then, and 'one that failed to take seriously a national crisis of a slower more fundamental and enduring kind: health and health inequalities. The government

was prepared to do what it takes to deal with the conflagration of the pandemic but not, a decade ago, with the slow burning injustice of health inequalities.' Referring to the findings of 'Health Equity in England: the Marmot Review 10 years on' (Marmot et al., 2020), Marmot concluded that life expectancy has stalled, inequalities in health have continued to increase and life expectancy for women living in the poorest areas of England outside London has declined. Given the austerity years following the 2008 financial crisis, it is not surprising that generally health disparities and inequalities have widened.

Long-standing structural inequalities, related socio-economic factors such as deprivation and poverty may account for disproportionate effects and poor health outcomes among South Asian groups in England. Previous studies have shown that 11% of South Asian households are overcrowded (more people than bedrooms), the highest among this group were Bangladeshi (30%) and Pakistani (26%) households (English Housing Survey, 2018). Multigenerational living is not uncommon and given that Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are more likely to live in deprived neighbourhoods, social distancing and isolation could be more difficult, thus possibly increasing the vulnerability of older adults and those with comorbidities, to the risk of COVID-19.

Mental Health in the times of COVID-19

Mental health has in the recent past been under sharp focus nationally. Mental health has been associated with underlying long-term conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases (Chaddha et al., 2016).

Depression is prevalent among South Asian individuals and is a comorbidity of diabetes. Anxiety and depression have been found in South Asian patients with diabetes to be higher compared to their white European counterparts (Razieh et al., 2019). The complexities of comorbidities and mental health cannot be underestimated, given that existing mental health problems could be accentuated by the lack of support and health care interventions during isolation and lockdown. Accessing services and help-seeking behaviours among South Asian individuals

have been shown to be predicated by cultural beliefs about mental illness, shame and guilt. Cultural beliefs about causation of diseases and the effectiveness of treatment, the use of alternative interventions are well documented issues in the acceptance of mental illness. However, there is a need to address mental health and illness in the South Asian communities for change and to remove the stigma with approaches that reflect cultural congruity and competence. With COVID-19, the complexities around mental health are compounded because of reactions to unexpected death, inability to mourn loss and grief, no time for customary rituals and absence of physical and psychological support.

Fear of contagion, psychological distress and stressors have hardly been given the attention they should generally have and even less has been observed in relation to South Asian communities. As usual, it would not be inaccurate to surmise that amidst the chaos, psychological health and well being get relegated to the side lines. In contrast, however, optimism in the resilience of common people, hope, support and compassion for each other invariably confounds those who are quick to judge and apportion blame on others. The South Asian communities have had much to bear, living in deprived inner-city areas, actively supporting themselves and, like many, trying to make sense of the contradictions in messages from administrators in the last few months.

Cultural Stigma of Mental Illness

It is known that there are underlying factors such as poor housing, cohabiting and larger families living in poorer parts of cities. Unemployment with disability is likely to be higher among Bangladeshis and Pakistanis (13%) (GOV.UK, 2020). Mental health and well-being among South Asian adults with comorbidities, physical and mental health disorders related to social environment, cultural values and practices are also factors. Notwithstanding the enormity of the task in terms of interventions and community actions, challenges posed by social distancing, isolation and social inequalities have implications for how well COVID-19 can be prevented among overcrowded households in densely populated towns and cities.

Stigmatisation is a pervasive phenomenon, inflicted more on the already harmed and at risk of further psychological distress. Fear of stigmatisation prevents South Asian patients from seeking help and treatment for mental illness. Stigma of mental illness can lead to delay in seeking treatment, breakdown in social relationships and performance in the workplace (Jorm & Reavley, 2013). South Asian individuals do not come forward to access mental health services (Karasz et al., 2019). Stigma as a consequence of having COVID-19, in addition to blame targeted at communities affected by the outbreak, could have long-term detrimental socio-cultural effects and impact on health outcomes. Due care needs to be taken to erase the stigma associated with disease, racism, religious propaganda and psychosocial impact and needs to be implemented by regular discussion with trained and specialist health care personnel by making task force and execution teams who are directly engaged in health care delivery systems without creating any communication gaps between policy makers and ground level workers (Bruns et al., 2020). Furthermore, tailored interventions have been suggested to address the psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on different strata of society, including marginalised communities and psychiatric patients (Dubey et al., 2020).

In pursuance of targeted local lockdown strategy, Leicester became the first city in the UK to remain in lockdown. The reason given was the second spike in COVID-19. A closer look at the 2011 Census households shows Leicester, with 15% overcrowded households, has one of the highest levels of overcrowding outside London (Leicester.gov.uk). According to Nazareth et al. (2020) the new cases in Leicester were concentrated in an area where 72.5% of the population are from BAME backgrounds, mostly South Asian communities. Nazareth et al. (2020) went on to argue that 'the opportunity to escalate interventions locally have been stymied by the inadequacy of information sharing.' (p.e4) Not unlike Marston, Renedo and Miles (2020) who argued that participation of vulnerable and marginalised communities can help identify solutions with possibilities of greater compliance, Nazareth et al. (2020) have called for 'effective community engagement' as a strategy to enhance adherence to measures, which otherwise seem to be imposed and risk being unpopular or misunderstood.

At the end of July 2020, a similar targeted lockdown was imposed on north west counties, cities and towns, with a high percentage of South Asian population. Implicit in the action taken was the notion that people were not adhering to the strict guidance, mixing socially, and therefore, contributing to the spike in cases. Scapegoating and stigmatisation of South Asian communities across the northwest cities and towns could not be dismissed as non-consequential as these communities felt unfairly treated compared to others. It is important that sections of the population are not made to feel ostracised, humiliated, and alienated to compound the concerns about 'othering' in society which can have detrimental effects on the health and wellbeing of everyone concerned. Logie and Turan (2020) have suggested that much has been learned about stigma-reduction through the decades of dealing with and researching HIV/AIDS and suggested that applying an intersectional perspective can enhance our understanding of how COVID-19 stigma intersects with race, housing security and health. Taking the prevention of stigmatisation forward, Bruns and colleagues (2020) have suggested the implementation of timely and culturally appropriate interventions along with proper screening, treatment and follow up of affected individuals. It is expected that evidence of the effectiveness of any psychosocial interventions applied in the management of mental health issues associated with COVID-19 will emerge soon.

Conclusion

COVID-19 is having worldwide devastating effects on nations and South Asian communities in Europe. South Asian communities are just as vulnerable to COVID-19 as others but have a higher rate of infections and related mortality. The underlying comorbidities such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases contribute to the risk of hospitalisation and interventions that include artificial ventilation in intensive care units. Affected South Asian communities live in cities and towns with high levels of deprivation and overcrowding. Strategies adopted and the lack of consistency in communication have placed these communities at further risk from COVID-19 given that comorbidities known to heighten vulnerability are also high among them. Furthermore, the psychosocial impact of COVID-19

could be overwhelming, with increasing experiences and feelings of stigma and exacerbation of crippling mental health problems. To address the already deep impact of COVID-19 amongst South Asian communities there is a profound need to ensure strategies that reflect engagement and support in addition to clear communication of strategies at local level. As COVID-19 is not showing any sign of being driven down any time soon, and with a third wave being expected, the South Asian communities need to play their part in full to mitigate the effects of comorbidities (cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, obesity) and COVID-19 on their physical and psychosocial health outcomes with healthcare and community measures. Social and physical distancing must always be adhered to and messages concerning prevention of COVID-19 should be clear and culturally compatible.

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BOOK REVIEW

*The Age of Surveillance Capitalism:
The Fight for a Human Future at the
New Frontier of Power. Shoshana
Zuboff. Public Affairs. 2019.*

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In the COVID 19 pandemic, economies are experiencing a severe downturn and thousands in the world over have lost their jobs. Big Tech, however is doing even better than before. While aviation, restaurants, many industries and local businesses struggle to stay afloat; Amazon, Apple, Google and Facebook have together earned 240 billion USD in revenue in the last quarter (ending September 2020) and a total of 38 billion USD in profits. Undeterred by pandemic conditions, among its technology releases this September, Apple launched its Watch Series 6 that has the ability to monitor the wearer's blood oxygen levels. Since coronavirus often results in severe respiratory difficulty, this new feature seems to have come at the most opportune time. Apples' app allows users to measure their blood oxygen saturation and takes periodic readings of these levels. With this data in its possession, Apple claims that it will be in a position to help its users monitor their cardiac and respiratory health, asthma symptoms and potential heart problems. What is interesting is that to conduct this research, the company has chosen to partner with the Seattle Flu Study, the University of California at Irvine and Anthem, one of the largest for-profit health insurance companies in the US. What appear to be disparate snatches of tech news in 2020, achieve new levels of significance through the ideas introduced by Shoshanna Zuboff in her book 'The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power'.

Soshanna Zuboff is a social psychologist and a retired Professor of Business Administration at the Harvard Business School, Harvard University. In the book she introduces the concept of Surveillance Capitalism. Surveillance Capitalism, as its name suggests, is the extension of capitalism's profit-making imperative through the collection and commodification of personal data. This includes location, phone contacts, heart-rate and blood oxygen levels etc., that tech companies track and monitor through our devices. Under the guise of personalization, this data is collected and put to use to predict and consequently modify human behaviour to meet the surveillance capitalists' economic imperatives. According to Zuboff, prediction and behaviour modification ultimately robs us of a future tense. In other words, surveillance capitalists learn and can therefore predict our behaviour. What they know and predict, they can consequently manipulate. The fact that our behaviour can be artificially modified and nudged in particular directions shows that our future can be pre-determined. A future in which we have little or no say; all with the aim of furthering capitalist intentions. Consumers of the services that big tech offers thus lose their right of privacy, knowledge and application, to market forces. Their personal human experience and knowledge is used as raw material to generate profit.

Surveillance Capitalism is unprecedented. Much like totalitarianism, it remains unrecognised while it is taking shape. It is different, and yet draws from the forms of capitalism that have come before it. If, she writes, "industrial capitalism depended upon the exploitation and control of nature," then surveillance capitalism "depends instead upon the exploitation and control of human nature." Zuboff's book thus delves into the dark side of the digital dream and is written with the aim of asking what that means for the future generations, for democracies and the possibility of a human future in the digital world.

The Age of Surveillance Capitalism is a path-breaking work. In making the complex connections it does between the systematically planned, usually hidden-to-us workings of the technology industry, and the elephant in the room; its massive profits, we are made aware of how we- our beings and our minds, without our informed consent are being used to financially benefit a small number of people. I also consider the term Surveillance Capitalism a great contribution to discourse on society and technology. It is a powerful concept that can be used in the building

of more complex frameworks required to understand the relationship between tech and the social. While connections between seemingly unconnected events/ideas (at one point, Spanish conquistadors and Surveillance Capitalism) can be refreshing, the same device sometimes lapses into tediousness when overdone. Similarly, while Zuboffs' flair for writing is what makes the book an engaging read, it is the overuse of these very same flourishes that make necessarily long sections, even longer.

To revisit my examples with the knowledge of the concept of Surveillance Capitalism, we begin to see Big Tech's COVID profits for what they are. The only reason that Big Tech can profit in a pandemic is because it uses the 'free' data we provide and deals in what Zuboff calls 'behavioural futures'. Apple's research deal on the other hand, puts what should be private health data from their customers into the hands of Anthem, a private health insurance company known for its unfair practices. Data of this kind can be used to further improve Anthems' prediction abilities (setting insurance premiums etc.) at the cost of their customers, ironically the very same people who provided them with the data.



BOOK REVIEW

*The Force of Nonviolence: An Ethico-
Political Bind* Judith Butler, Verso
2020

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Non-Violence and World Crisis: A Philosophical Exploration

Judith Butler's *The Force of Nonviolence: An Ethico-Political Bind* critically engages with the challenge of denying violence by offering non-violent resistance for countering disorder, injustice and aggression that has become a part of life and foundations of the modern states. The book appears as an elaboration of the promise made in "The Claims of Non Violence" in Butler's book *Frames of War* that theorised non-violence, "... neither as virtue nor a position and certainly not a set of principles that are to be applied universally. It denotes the mired and conflicted position of a subject who is injured, rageful, disposed to violent retribution and nevertheless struggles against that action (often crafting the rage against itself) ..."(171). Further, the book makes a claim for the absurdity of violence that arises from a refusal to grieve for human beings who fall victim to violence. This refusal denies acknowledgement of existence of certain people, thus Butler appeals for a "...new bodily ontology... that implies the rethinking of precariousness, vulnerability, injurability, interdependency..." (Butler 2009, 2). This allows us to understand how our lives are interconnected, they are conditions that make existence possible and hence we have a moral obligation towards all. Butler suggests grieving for lives as a step towards the same (Butler 2020, 38). This project of considering the apparent paradox of subjectivity where the subject must resist violence (though the very

subjectivity is formed on basis of violence) is the subject concern of the book *The Force of Nonviolence*. Interdependence, social equality and an understanding of non-violence that occurs in the midst of political sphere become pre requisites to “...an egalitarian approach to preservation of life (Butler, 2009, 93). Such an approach acknowledges violence as constitutive of psychic constitution of the self and society (Butler “To Preserve the Life of the Other” 2020, 106-159) , it also acknowledges ambivalence as that force that checks the conversion of rage and suffering caused by unequal interdependence (Butler, “Political Philosophy on Freud, War Destruction , Mania and critical Faculty” 2020, 229-276) . Thus, the book *The Force of Nonviolence* presents a profound justification of non-violence as an answer to the world driven by war, inequality and strife. This essay aims to review two central claims of the book, first a claim of radical equality and second, claim of non-violence as a force that subdues aggression.

I

A central concern of the book is to explain the relationship of the ethic of non-violence with the larger political struggle of “...radical equality...” (Butler 2020, 101). Butler explains that the new idea of equality demands an understanding of imagined interdependency that is different from individualist liberal claims of contract based relationships to achieve self-sufficiency and ensure self – preservation. Butler instead argues that this radical equality demands that we assume the embodied subjectivity as a lack of self-sufficiency. It demands that we let go of a notion of body as a single unit, rather we see understand the embodied boundaries as relational and vulnerable (Butler 2020, 76-77). Vulnerability is understood, not as a subjective state but as a shared state or a state of interdependence. Butler explains that one is always vulnerable, since we always rely/are exposed to social structures, other persons or situations (Butler 2020, 77). According to Butler it is most important to acknowledge this state of vulnerability and interdependence, without which cohabitation would be impossible and individualism would lead to constant conflict (Butler 2020, 78). Through the tragedy of Oedipus, the book powerfully explains how the body is that which is always “...given over...to others...in order ...to persist.” (Butler Force

89) The body of an individual (example, a child) is always in other set of hands before it can make use of its own (Butler 2020, 89). Such as understanding of interdependence becomes a pre requisite to radical equality. Radical equality is also understood as an ethic that demands that we regard each life as equally driveable without exception (Butler 2020, 92). Radical equality of the grievable is the demographic pre condition of an ethics of non-violence that governs ways in which living creatures are managed and thus proves to be an integral part of bio politics¹ and ways of thinking about equality among the living (Butler 2020, 93). Grievability is not about those dead but an attribute that is given to living, it marks their value within a system and has a direct bearing on question of who is treated with dignity, equality and in a just way. Thus, the book suggests notions of interdependence, equality, vulnerability and values of grievability as pre requisites to understanding the ethic and politics of non-violence.

This theory appears in stark criticism to theories proposed by neo-liberals like Rawls or communitarians like Walzer, whose propositions of violence for justice shape world politics today. John Rawls' Law of People(s) that strives for world peace prescribes limits of toleration. It prescribes violence in name of self- defence or in defence of the people unjustly attacked and honouring human rights. It prescribes the duty of the democratic societies to come to the assistance of the burdened or other people living under unfavourable conditions that prevent their having a just or decent political and social regime (Rawls 1999, 540).

Similarly, Walzer in his work *Just and Unjust Wars*, explains that aggression is justified on grounds of either self defense or to enforce law by victim or members of international society. He also prescribes use necessary force against the aggressor if it is meant to aid the victim. Walzer admits of wars to prevent future aggression and admits of punishment against the aggressor state. Once the aggressor state has been militarily repulsed, it can also be punished. This is usually the maxim and justification for fighting a just war, the maxim is to punish crime to prevent violence and punish aggression to prevent further war. (Walzer 2006, 61-62).

According to Butler, such theories are not only limited but also exclusionary as violence in name of self defense is ambiguous and markers of self and non

self become arbitrarily drawn. Butler explains that militaristic modes of foreign policy that justify every attack as self-defence, and contemporary US law that makes provisions for pre-emptive killing are evidence of the same (Butler 2020, 85). Butler would suggest that these theories remain committed to inequality and thus cannot prevent future conflict and violence. Butler notes that theories towards peace and countering violence do not need another formulation of state of nature², rather it involves opening a horizon where destruction and strife is countered without a duplication of the same (Butler 2020, 104). Thus, Butler makes a case for non-violence, she explains it as an active force that aims to subdue destruction. She explains non-violence alone as an affirmation of lives interlinked with each other, "...an affirmation caught up with a potential for destruction and its countervailing force." (Butler 2020, 105)

II

Butler's central claim in the text is that violence cannot be a means to a non-violent end as violence renews itself in directions that exceed intention as well as its instrumental schemes (Butler 2020, 41). As mentioned in the "Introduction", the text aims at challenging some major presuppositions regarding non-violence. Firstly, nonviolence is to be understood not merely as a moral position, rather as a social and political practice of resistance to systemic violence that works towards ideals of freedom and equality. Secondly, the text aims to deflate the claim that non-violence arises out of the passive or calm part of soul, rather non-violence is an expression of rage, suffering and aggressiveness, it is exercising adamant and embodied form of political agency. Gandhi and his notion of soul force is evoked to explain the same. Third, non-violence acts a force that checks/obstructs aggression and lastly, it is a negotiation of fundamental ethical and political ambiguities (Butler 2020, 42-45). The text acknowledges the challenge that there exists no consensus on what constitutes violence and non-violence, "...violence is always interpreted ..." (Butler 2020, 33). At most times, political efforts of dissent are labelled as violence. This explains the state's monopoly over definitions that Butler recommends can be subverted by tracing the ways violence is reproduced at the level of a defensive rationale, filled with paranoia and hatred (Butler 2020,

46). Thus, along with a critique of liberal individualism (presented earlier), Butler engages in psychological dimensions of violence. Butler draws upon thinkers like Fanon, Foucault, Freud, Benjamin to consider how resistance to violence does not include lives that are considered unworthy of being grieved. Taking reference of racial discrimination, the book explains how violence is often attributed to those who have been endangered to its most fatal effects (186). The book makes a case that the struggle for non-violence is found in movements that strive for social transformation. They propose radical equality and grievability of all lives (without exception), such a claim is made on basis of an ethic that claims interdependency of life as basis of social and political equality (Butler 2020, 224-226).

Further, in embracing uncertainty (in meanings violence and non-violence), aggressive form of non-violence accepts hostility as a part of its character and values ambivalence as a way of checking aggression. Butler considers Freud, Einstein's pacifism as well as Gandhi's philosophy, as a paradigm of the same. The book quotes Gandhi's acknowledgment of force of destruction and the law of love being higher than destruction. He calls it the petition to avert destruction and a demand that is natural, organic, political and ethical that compels us in the direction of non-violence just when violence is registered in excess (Butler 2020, 276). Yet, while Butler does quote Gandhi and follows his understanding of non-violence as a struggle (not mere passivity), Butler would differ from Gandhi in his understanding of suggested nature of struggle of non-violence. Butler shares Gandhi's views that non-violence is not merely absence of justice but a demand that is made by people who suffer injustice, thus non-violence for Gandhi is not merely ahimsa, which is absence of violence, but satyagraha, that is truth/soul force. Truth for Gandhi was absolute and equivalent to God (Gandhi "Truth and God" 1968, 81). Gandhi explains Satyagraha as holding on to truth, truth force synonymous with soul force. A satyagrahi is a person who is in relentless pursuit of truth and holds a determination to reach it. The goal of satyagraha is to realize oneness with the universe, inspired by the Advaitin metaphysical principle oneness, establish "...friendship with the world and combine greatest love with greatest opposition to wrong..." (Gandhi 1968, 153). Thus, satyagraha does not permit the use of violence, since absolute truth is not known, Gandhi would believe that one is not competent in punishing or inflicting violence (Gandhi 1968, 154-

155). Ahimsa, non-violence, understood as love for all, thus, forms the core value of the pursuit of truth (Gandhi 1968, 152)³.

This category of truth, does not hold the same meaning for Butler, truth for Butler is based on contingent social relations, on power and on language. She appeals to the realisation of interdependency and vulnerability that demands that the other is not violated. Appealing to Levinas' ethics she explains that an encounter with the other who can be violated, the demand that the "face" of the other makes is that of resisting the temptation to violate. Thus Butler comes close to Levinas' articulation of ethical ambiguity where the desire to violate, brings about an encounter that necessitates that the other is not violated (Butler 2009, 172-173). This may not necessarily purify the soul, as Gandhi would believe but does acknowledge a social bond. Thus, what Butler would believe as non-violence would be more elementary than truth, it would be those associations through which truths come to exist and be known.

Further, Butler departs from Gandhi in his advocacy of self-sacrifice. Butler claims that where the injured subject invites more violence and turns this endurance as a kind of virtue, it is a form of "...moral sadism..." (Butler 2009, 172). Rather, Butler chooses "...responsibility..." that aims to keep the self intact (rather than destroyed), the aim being to not dissolve the ambivalence but rather through the ambivalence creating an ethical practice that seeks to preserve life better than it destroys it (Butler 2009, 177). Yet, Butler's position is in keeping with Gandhi's formulation of embodied soul force that persists under conditions that attack its persistence, example a hunger strike may seem like an action but it is not merely that, it is the withdrawal of labour that is essential to capitalist form of labour (Butler 2020, 301-302).

The book provides a powerful and exhaustive account of non-violence as an alternative to instrumentalist versions of violence and nonviolence. It also stands true to its promise of offering a new possibility for ethical and political critical thought as it proposes an "...egalitarian approach to the preservation of life that imports a perspective of radical democracy into the ethical consideration of how best to practice nonviolence...(Butler 2020,93)". Butler also suggests embracing of ambivalence (counter realism) as way of transformative politics that can arrest all

violence. Such an inquiry would be most urgent, in times of racial, sexual, religious, class and caste based phantasmagoria (as Butler calls it), a socially shared and communicable consciousness born of hatred and paranoia and violence affirming principles. In times where the world braves the crisis of pandemic as well as an epidemic of authoritarianism, inequalities in understanding dependencies and resulting injustice has emerged stronger than before, hence this book is a timely intervention towards hope of a more positive non-violent world.

Notes

¹ In the final chapter of his 1976 lecture course "Society Must Be Defended," Foucault elaborates on the emergence of the biopolitical field in the nineteenth century. He describes the bio political as the operation of power over humans as living beings. Distinct from sovereign power, biopolitics, or biopower, appears to be a distinctively European formation. It operates through various technologies and methods for managing both life and death. Foucault describes the biopolitical as a regulatory power that regulates, among other things, the very livability of life, determining the relative life potentials of populations (Butler 2020, 168-169).

² State of nature is a hypothetical condition of human beings prior to political associations. Liberal thinkers like Hobbes in their *Leviathan*, Locke in his work *Two Treatises of Government*, Rousseau's *Social Contract* and John Rawls' *Theory of Justice* discussed the state of nature to explain the limits of political authority.

³ Closely connected to notion of non-violence and satyagraha was the notion of Swaraj. For Gandhi, *swaraj* also referred to a state of affairs in which individuals were morally in control of themselves. They did what was right, resolved their differences and conflicts and dispensed with external coercion. For Gandhi *swaraj* thus presupposed self-discipline, self-restraint, a sense of mutual responsibility, the disposition neither to dominate nor be dominated by others and a sense of *dharma* (Parekh 2001, 93) Gandhi regarded truth, non-violence, brahmacharya, non-possession, non-stealing, fearlessness, removal of untouchability, commitment to bread labour, faith in equality of religions and practice of *swadeshi* as pillars autonomy/ *swaraj*.

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Coronavirus: retrospect 2040

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It's twenty years ago and more
 Coronavirus hit.
 It hit the sick, it hit the poor,
 And shares went crashing through the floor,
 But we said 'wait a bit, you lot,
 Stay calm and wait a bit'.

For we saw how it just might go,
 This re-run of old scenes
 That pitched the high against the low,
 The boss-class guy with loads of dough
 Against us might-have-beens, us lot
 Of low-class might-have-beens.

We saw it coming, just the same
 As when Titanic sank,
 A life-boat place booked in their name
 But nary a space for us to claim:
 We've their class-law to thank, you lot,
 Their boss-class law to thank.

The virus had a tale to tell,
 A most instructive tale.
 It said: I'm here on time to spell
 It loud and clear, the future hell
 You face if they prevail and plot,
 Your fate if they prevail!

A virus is a curious beast,
 It's neither live nor dead,
 A hybrid thing that, once released,
 Has death to bring from 'the Far East',
 For that's the fear they spread, that's what
 The racist papers spread.

But we got wind of how things stood,
 Of what they had in mind,
 Those swine who thought 'the common good'
 Meant 'you go short, as your sort should;
 You're just the common kind, you lot,
 You're just the common kind'.

Oh yes, we clocked the message then,
 We commoners got the gist:
 'They're at their tricks and games again,
 Their schemes to fix just where and when
 To brandish the iron fist they've got,
 That thinly gloved iron fist'.

It's capital that ran the show,
 That told us 'listen up:
 You paupers may, with luck, pull through
 If you'll just pay and join the queue',
 But we were sold a pup, that's what –
 Us lot were sold a pup.

So listening up taught us to trust
 Our wits, not boss-class lies.
 It told us how the doubters must
 Cease doubting now and deem it just,
 The rage that bid us rise, you lot,
 The rage that bid us rise!

We knew all crises had a close,
 However long they took,
 And so it went, as anger rose
 And all you spent-out paupers chose
 To bring their crimes to book, that lot,
 To bring their crimes to book.

First it was 'put all plans on hold
 And let the virus run',
 Until a graph too plainly told
 It might kill half the sick and old:
 Who'll hold the smoking gun, big shot,
 Who'll hold the smoking gun?

Then they got panicky and tried
 To bolt the stable door
 With new rules each time someone died,
 Though rules whose reach they strove to hide:
 They knew the insurance score, that lot,
 They knew the pay-off score.

We've kicked them out with all their rules,
 We've kicked them good and hard.
 We cleared the land of public schools,
 And took in hand the flannelled fools,
 And flashed them our red card, you lot,
 Just flashed them our red card.

Coronavirus showed the way
To cast their idols down.
It showed how crass the part that they,
The governing class, had come to play –
The role of licensed clown and sot,
Of corporate-licensed clown.

For there were viruses out there
Ten times more virulent
Since spread abroad by those who'd dare
Have lies and fraud supplant all care
For those they represent – you lot
They claim to represent.

Let's not thank god the virus struck:
It brought us death and grief.
But let's concede that we were stuck,
In desperate need of devil's luck
To turn a greener leaf, that's what:
To turn a greener leaf!

They'd screw things up for good and all,
Those tools of corporate greed.
They'd foul our nest and have a ball
At power's behest or fortune's call
And pay the rest no heed, that lot,
And pay the rest no heed.

Act now, strike back, don't blow your chance!
That's what the virus taught.
Else who knows when they'll next advance,
Through pathogen or high finance,
And bring your lives to naught, you lot,
And bring your lives to naught.



OBITUARY

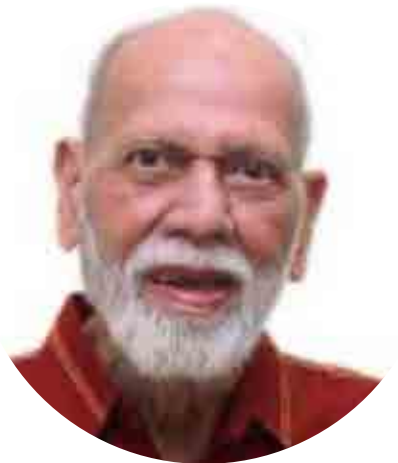
A Tribute to **Dr. L. K. Deshpande**

(1/04/1933- 12/09/2020)

Director of the Department of Economics, Mumbai
University, (Now MSEPP)

Suchita Krishnaprasad

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“We are all bargainers...!” he said and this was followed by a near meditative pause. As if he wanted us to let the statement fully sink in the minds of his students. Later, talking about the tactics in collective bargaining, he asked, what would we do if while driving the car in the correct lane, we found another car racing towards us from the ‘wrong’ side? Would we continue to ‘follow the lane’, because after all we were not in the wrong, or would we dodge the collision by ‘violating the lane’? What followed was yet another statement worth a pause.. “What everyone does, is fair!” It was the era of independent unions in and around Mumbai and the practitioners in industrial relations were trying to understand the aggressive leadership of the

belligerent Dr. Datta Samant, who had by then captured the industrial belt of Thane–Belapur region as the loudest voice of the workers, and this professor in M.A. class had summed up the topic of ‘Tactics in Collective Bargaining’ by drawing our attention to the phenomenon closer home!

It was the beginning of academic year 1979–80. And in the process of selecting my two electives, as a student of M.A. (part I), I had been attending classes of several optional papers. And when I attended that class on Collective Bargaining I just mentioned, I decided that labour economics would certainly be one of my options, and that I was never going to miss any lecture by Dr. L. K. Deshpande, or LK as he was

mentioned, the tall, lanky and well-dressed gentleman who continued to inspire his students in his unique style.

What followed was a bond of respect, affection, concern and guidance that only evolved over the past four decades, not just with LK, but with his entire family in varying degrees. And it is a rich personal experience for me, like many of his students.

As an astute academician who always struck a balance between abstraction and empiricism as well as the Right and the Left, he had some path-breaking contributions to his credit. This includes the study of Mumbai Labour Market (1972-76) based on a huge sample of 6,000 workers, formal and informal sectors included, wherein he allowed the data to speak of how the phenomenon of segmentation in the labour market could be attributed to the very source of labour supply itself. Much later as globalisation had begun to set in, there was another pioneering study covering several Indian States assessing labour market flexibility in India. It was based on a humongous data, anyone else could have perhaps

messed it up. It took the meticulous attention and untiring efforts of the Deshpandes (L.K. & Sudha) to put it in perspective and understand how, “too much labour flexibility may be as bad as too little!”.. a statement which is illusive in its simplicity but sums up succinctly the natural proclivities of LK towards avoiding any rhetoric and extreme ideological positions.

The Deshpandes were also involved in several studies related to Mumbai. LK played a key role in initiating “Bombay First”, a think tank of Brihanmumbai Mahanagar Palika (BMC), for which he was honoured by the BMC. Often these meetings brought him to south Mumbai. And whenever he had some time to chat there was Fish n Chips or roti kebab rolls at Samovar, which was bang opposite Elphinstone College where I worked.

Elphinstone College was yet another context for my bond with the Deshpandes. As the esteemed alumni of the college, they always honoured any invitation I was privileged to send them as a coordinator of NAAC or Secretary of The Elphinstonian Society.

The Deshpandes made a stunning couple. I still recall the images of LK lingering in the lecture complex at Vidyanagari, waiting for Sudha to finish her class after which they would head together for a cup of tea. LK was fond of reading, music and good food and he found a perfect companion in Sudha. I have enjoyed their hospitality like many other students of his... Meals cooked with heart and served with love along with innumerable anecdotes from their valuable experiences. The couple must have certainly been the life of several heart-warming get-togethers across the globe, the joy and comradeship of which must have been lifted to new heights with Sudha, an acknowledged AIR vocalist, rendering songs on requests! She once gifted me with recordings of these songs captured in an audio CD, and it remains my treasure.

LK was truly magnanimous. I quote two instances from a piece recently published in the EPW authored by my guru-bandhu, Prof. K. R. Shyam Sundar. LK shared his wealth of data gathered during the Bombay Labour Markets study with Mark Holmstrom who acknowledged this very rare

act of generosity in academia in his book *Industry and Inequality: The Social Anthropology of Indian Labour* (1985). In another instance he encouraged Dilip Nachane to apply for the post of professor in the department of economics, for which he himself was a contender! It was not at all surprising that the duo, that often reminded my friend Shyam Sundar of the Webbs, worked tirelessly in the formative years of the IHD, with absolutely no pecuniary expectations.

He was utterly democratic at heart. His ease and disarming sense of humour peeping through the twinkle in his eyes made him a delightful practitioner of democracy. He never imposed his opinion on the work of his students. He functioned as a catalyst allowing them to discover and explore on their own. My first published paper was in fact an extended version of a response I had written and shared with Sir, after I had read a piece by Gurcharan Das in a newspaper justifying large scale VRS and the responsibility of the State to retrain the workers. He saw a seed of a research paper in it, and asked me to work. That presentation

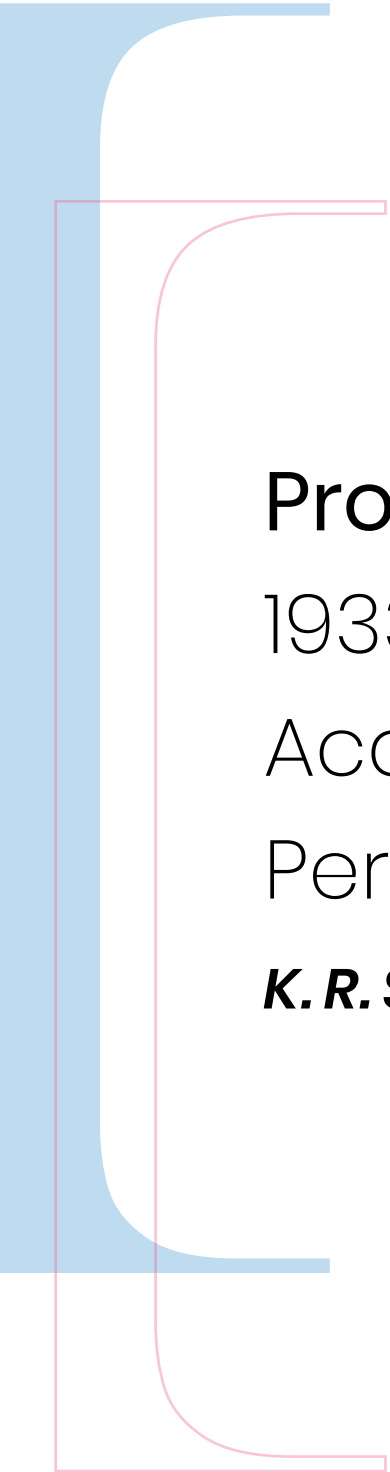
led to a few more invitations for me in the immediate future.

Free thinking was the only precondition if you were to work with him, which meant freedom from any dogma and freedom to be passionate about the work. He was himself free from need for approval or recounting the accolades which naturally flowed from his sincere efforts. It was his innate self-assurance that made him generous with everyone round. Such persons are not just individuals. They are institutions themselves. They are givers and supporters who never overshadow those under their care.

It is moment of reckoning when the students carry your mantle ahead. And that happened when his assiduous disciple K. R. Shyam Sundar brought out three solid edited volumes relating to contemporary issues in the field of labour, in his honour. Shyam has become the most sought after researcher and has arrived at stature where he readily answers FAQs in the media, and has entered the realm of policy advocacy.

Sir had seen a few important threads for further research in my Ph.D. dissertation, and had expressed his desire that I pursued those. It remains my regret that I could not devote the kind of undivided attention such work needed, due to constraints on my personal time. I hope I do my best to work on those areas, without seeking an escape through caveats such as rebirth! That alone would be a befitting tribute to his noble soul!

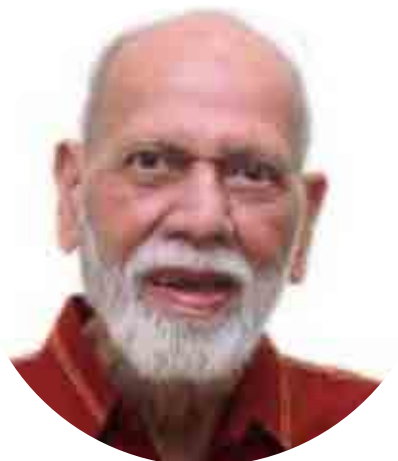




Prof. Lalit K Deshpande: 1933–2020: A Towering Academic and A Good Person!

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I cherish perhaps among few others long and close association with Prof. Lalit Deshpande (I shall call him as LK) spanning around three decades. I had the honour of editing three books in his honour (Shyam Sundar 2018, 2019,a, 2019,b). I take immense pleasure and even pride in writing this tribute of LK.

What strikes me as particularly significant is the collaborative research that LK and Dr Sudha Deshpande (the Deshpandes) carried out in the fields of Labour Economics, Industrial Relations, Urbanization, etc. I am tempted to recall the “Partnership” between the Webbs, Beatrice and Sydney who were engaged in almost all the academic areas that

the Deshpandes were! Sudha Deshpande’s role in and contribution to LK’s life is inestimable.

Academic Contributions

The competitive labour market (CLM) theory has been the dominant orthodoxy all along and it has taken new ‘avatars’ (versions/ manifestations/embodiments) over the years. Empirical works have challenged the dominant paradigms of CLM and led to alternative theories. Segmented labour market (SLM) an umbrella term for diverse theories was one of them. LK’s study on Bombay Labour Market (1972-76) based on a massive sample of 6,000 workers belonging to the organized, the unorganized

and casual workforce brought out the segmented nature of the labour market in Bombay and showed that segmentation originated from the original source of labour supply. It was a pioneering study and is still regarded as a landmark study.

His studies in collaboration with other academics on “Labour Flexibility” (Deshpande et al 1998; 2004) like his earlier Bombay Labour Market study are pioneering. In a fundamental sense, these studies also challenge the CLM paradigm by bringing out segmented nature of labour market on the one hand and the role of labour institutions in the labour market and in the large Society. The basic conclusion of the two studies is that labour institutions have not restricted the freedom of employers in their employment decisions despite the existence of the so-called restrictive regulatory framework governing the industrial relations system.

It is a matter of inexplicable tragedy that the respective global agencies did not publish his studies on Bombay Labour Market (funded by the World Bank) and Bombay Labour Flexibility (funded by ILO). Thankfully,

Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics published the former in 1983 (Deshpande 1983) and the latter due to the intervention of Guy Standing and the initiative of Prof. Alakh Sharma by a Delhi-based publisher in 1998 (Deshpande et al. 1998).

I must dwell a little on his intellectual and other belief systems. He had what I call a ‘Bloomsburian’ outlook and pursuit, i.e. to be open to a wide range of perspectives and allow the data to speak for itself. He accommodated all kinds of perspectives and schools of thought, as each has its uniqueness and contribute to our collective understanding. But it important to be wary of the downsides of each of the perspectives. While he greatly admired Bagaram Tulpule, a tall union leader belonging to Hind Mazdoor Sabha among others, he once wondered what would the Webbs (who wrote the history of trade unions in Great Britain and on industrial democracy among others and who held high standards in judging people in public life) think of the current (1990s) trade union leaders in India! He was aware of the fall in the standards of leaders

and critical of various aspects of the working-class movement in India. But his sympathies were clearly on the side of workers and those living on and beyond the margins of the Society and he considered trade unions as “Swords of Justice”.

To me, the most distinctive contribution of LK is his argument that labour institutions perform positive social and economic functions. They discourage the employment of flexi-labour in firms where they are present in a definite sense and elsewhere too through their struggles for decent work and adopt redistributive institutional practices. He recognized at once the Market and State Failures. For example, he criticized the functioning of the command economy – he would often cite the complete lack of choice for consumers and the high rent-seeking behaviour generated by the License-Raj and the near-monopoly enjoyed by many firms. I distinctly remember an incidence in which he refused to pay “gratis” to the telephone linesman who looked eagerly for it even during the liberalized times! He argued that reckless determination of minimum wages will jeopardize micro and

small industries. At the same he was quite concerned by the aggressive labour market strategies used by the industries to deprive workers of their labour even human rights. He recognized the inevitability of unequal distribution of income and wealth in a capitalistic economy. At the same time, he argued that the Soviet-style economy collapsed under its own weight of “inherent rigidities”. While he appreciated Chinese growth like many he was aware of its acute shortcomings. So he did not veer towards either extremes, viz. neo-classical or Marxist and treaded the “Middle Path”. Hence he would prescribe a Golden Balance between the two institutions as he does not see either on its own delivering social and economic progress. He envisaged a greater and stronger role for ILO in steering the World of Work to achieve at once Efficiency and Equity, which is the crux of ILO’s Decent Work Program.

LK and Mumbai

LK and Sudha Deshpande undertook several studies concerning Maharashtra in general and Mumbai in particular. The Deshpandes’

research inputs formed the basis for Brihan Mumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to make its submissions to the Finance Commission in the early-1990s. The Deshpandes also conducted a massive study for ILO, "Problems of Urbanization and Growth of Large Cities in Developing Countries: A Case Study of Bombay" during 1989-1991. The BMC honoured him with a Medal for his contribution to the development of Mumbai. Noting their significant contributions on urban development issues concerning Mumbai, Centre for Urban Studies at Amsterdam University invited them as visiting scholars to Amsterdam to make a comparative assessment of the two cities. Their report was curiously titled as "Amsterdam through the Gateway of India"!

A Kind and Generous Person

His life was a celebration of a profound sense of humanism, a warm sense of serenity and abiding respect for diversity. In one of his explorations in Bombay (now Mumbai), he interacted with the police personnel, took photographs with them and thoughtfully sent them copies of them featuring them,

a courtesy they were unused to. Needless to say, the police officials were greatly touched by this gesture.

He was magnanimous as the following two instances would bear out. Mark Holmstrom acknowledged in his Book, *Industry and Inequality: The Social Anthropology of Indian Labour* (1985): "My closest collaborator, and the one to whom I owe most of all, Lalit Deshpande...He showed me what to look for in my own fieldwork, criticized and discussed my ideas, and most generously allowed me not only to draw on his Bombay labour market study....but also to make my own tables, using the filled-in questionnaires for that study. This book, and especially the chapter on labour markets, could not have been written without him." (emphasis added) On another occasion, LK urged Prof. Dilip Nachane to apply for the post of Professor in the Department of Economics even as LK had applied for Professorship around the same time! Generosity can only flow only from security and goodness.

He was a profoundly moral and a kind person. He abhorred narrow outlooks and dogmatism. I know that he and

Sudha Deshpande were critical of any form ideology (regional/linguistic/religious/ideological) that denies even challenges personal freedoms. I sensed in him a Lincolnian philosophy of religion and character. He was a giant in the field of Labour Economics but had the rare virtue of being innocent of his stature and he to my best of knowledge did not abuse it, nor he chased positions, money, wealth, fame, etc. We can easily detect broader connections between his world-views and his perception of the labour market and the economy. In a fundamental sense, Pluralism, Justice, Freedom, and Excellence (Efficiency) pervade his entire academic and belief systems.

My Association With LK

His contribution to my academic development is immense. I worked for my PhD under his supervision, but my association continued even after my PhD tenure. LK has been a “father figure” in my intellectual life – I borrow the term from the title of an autobiographical work by Kingsley Martin, ex-editor of *New Statesman*. During the years when turmoil, frustrations, humiliations,

and all other complementary (even complimentary, to wit!) adverse aspects crowded my intellectual, spiritual and even personal life, he was a huge support to me. I am sure I could not have swum through the marshland of adversities and accomplished some decent academic work without his love for me. He stood by me during bad times in my academic and professional life and reposed trust in my research abilities. On January 14, 1998, he gifted me his book *Labour Flexibility in a Third World Metropolis* with an inscription: “With great expectations of real outstanding work from you in the future” – as typical of them, signed as Sudha & Lalit! This inspired me in my academic pursuits. He always urged me to “continue writing research papers”. I am happy that I wrote and evolved as he desired. His support and kindness to me are inestimable.

I must relate here a couple of personal instances of him lest this tribute will be incomplete. LK was a passionate foodie and we were partners in quest though I could not match his variety for I am a vegetarian (by practice and not by conviction) and could not eat street side food

due to my chronic gastronomic disabilities. The ISLE conferences provide not only food for thought but also access to diverse food – in fact, we always discussed both papers presented and the food! He enjoyed with child-like delight street food (the oil-dripping “vazhakai (raw banana) and “milagai (chilli) bhajias” (in Trichy)) and that served in high-end restaurants. My wife, Dr. Rama Kiran loved often sending boxes containing south Indian delicacies like Bisi Bela Bath, Rasam Vada, Idlis drenched in Small-Onion Sambar, etc.) when I visited him. These are probably a few but concrete occasions wherein he must have affected the unfair distribution of them with a rent-seeking behaviour to get a larger share of them! Many spoke of a “glint” in his eyes in their reminiscences and the same appeared when he saw and ate good food and listened to a good seminar presentation! By the way I must mention that he was unsparing in critiquing academic papers though packaged often in his characteristic wry wit! He was almost ready to slip into a chuckle if not a laughter which sometimes would take time to subside!

I must say he was inclined to treat Tamilians favourably. He loved Tamilian food, Carnatic music [violin by Lalgudi Jayaraman (LJ)] and C. Rajagopalachari (fondly known as Rajaji). In fact, he like many thought that the Indian economy would have taken a different course, for the better if Rajaji became the Prime Minister instead of Jawaharlal Nehru (some would substitute Sardar Patel for Rajaji, I am sure)!

I must relate a couple of personal instances here. I must have spent indeed the highest number of person-days (in place of the sexist term, ‘man-days’) with LK during the three decades – to be sure, quality times. We discussed not only issues concerning labour but also a variety of subjects like literature, political science, labour history (his favourite), even films and heroines. Indeed, we once debated on the ethicality of “curated beauty” (Sri Devi, his favourite) vis-à-vis “natural beauty” (e.g. Jayapradha, my favourite). He argued that there was nothing unethical in Sridevi using technological aid even to alter the physical dimensions of parts of the body. I submitted that the artificially enhanced beauty is different from

“artistically enhanced beauty” of Jayapradha and technological aids remove the “level playing field” for judging “aesthetic aspects”. His stance shows his perspective that other things being equal the Society should modernize – well, this offers potential discussion on “New Technology and the World of Work”!

He and his family members have helped me a great deal to me. He provided financial support on a few occasions during my PhD tenure and generously paid me for my work relating to the Labour Flexibility Project despite, to wit, my weak protestations(!). Sudha Deshpande has been kind to me in many ways. His son, Dr. Ashish Deshpande and his daughter-in-law and Ashish’s wife, Dr. Aparna Deshpande often kindly extended invaluable medical assistance to me – readers will appreciate their kindness if only they know that I excelled in suffering from various ailments and almost on a continuous basis!

I must relate an incident to demonstrate LK’s generosity. During the late 1980s, when he learnt from me that my mother badly desired my presence with our family for some

emotional reasons for Diwali just a couple of days before its incidence, he immediately gave me a aid of ₹20,000 to fly (as train reservations by then were full) saying that mother’s desire must be honoured unflinchingly! It’s another story that I could not get a seat in the limited flights run by Indian Airlines and returned the amount. I am eternally grateful to their entire family for their collective concern for my health, their love and affection for me and their unstinting support and generous appreciation. I must be having some credit score in my Karmic balance sheet to have known LK and his loving family.

LK was gracious to write a preface to one of my books which comprised my-already-published research articles. I must mention here that one of his major works proved to be a foundation of lasting good innings in my life. I published two articles in the Economic and Political Weekly, which concerned his works on Labour Flexibility (Shyam Sundar 2004, 2005). The latter perhaps remains a most cited article of mine and significantly aided my progress in my career. I am happy I edited three books in his honour, a humble gesture to a Great Teacher. He

graced my book launch programs (in 2018, 2019) by his presence. I must record here that he displayed his characteristic grit and admirable stamina by staying throughout the programme, especially the latter, despite his illness. His kind gesture touched us. I am privileged to have met with him and been close to him in my otherwise uneventful life.

To be sure, it's possible even probable that we have not seen the last of the writings of the Deshpandes in Economics as his grandson Arnav Deshpande (currently pursuing his PG in the Delhi School of Economics) who as Prof. Nachane observes has been "badly struck and struck badly" by the Economics Virus, a Benevolent One indeed (unlike the current Virus shaking the Earth)! I have already mentioned of his younger son, Ashish. I must mention here that his elder son, Prof. Abhay Deshpande is a distinguished Physicist and enjoys global reputation and has won accolades for his high-quality research work. Ashish has been decorated with awards for his Social Work and Aparna for her excellent medical work. It is rare if not improbable that a family comprises a galaxy of high performing and

good individuals. LK is truly a Blessed Soul to have had such a family!

I end this Tribute with a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson in his Essay, Uses of Great Men: "The World is upheld by the veracity of good men: they make the earth wholesome. Those who lived with them found life glad...". How eminently this describes LK and his Life!

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Shyam Sundar, K.R. (2019,b), Globalization, Labour Market Institutions, Processes and Policies in India: Essays in Honour of Lalit K. Deshpande, Palgrave Macmillan.

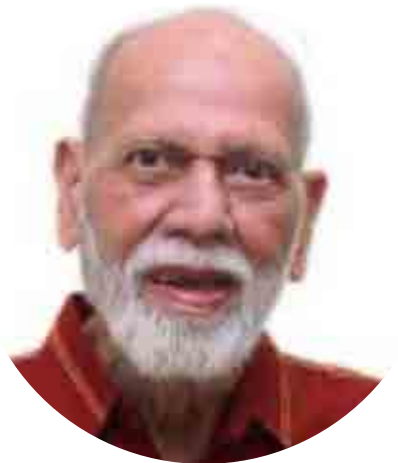




A Personal Note on Dr. L.K. Deshpande

K.L.N. Sastry

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This is in the first place, a purely personal note on one of my greatest teachers. It is more an attempt to share with others what I gained at the feet of Dr. L.K. Deshpande. On the very first day of my M.A. Part I, a tall, bearded gentleman with a yogic smile on his radiant face and an understanding, mischievous glint in his eyes was explaining the intricacies of 'the Say's Law'. In those days I was a 'strong Keynesian'. I started to confront this smiling giant (at least physically, as I thought at that time), much to the shock of my many classmates. He very patiently heard all my arguments, then peered into my eyes, with a smile, as was his habit. He observed, 'then I shall be your first target'. In my own impertinent style, I retorted, "No, it is

Dr. Brahmanada"! He made me read Rostow, Lewis and most importantly Vakil and Brahmanada. The result is some of my contemporaries fondly call me 'Junior Brahmanada'. He always took interest in what I was doing, though, I could not spend much time with him after his retirement. He is one of those silent creators and the void shall never be filled.

CONTRIBUTORS' BIONOTES

Contributors

[English]

İclal Eskiöğlü Aydın is a clinical psychologist and supervisor at Ibn Haldun University Center for Psychotherapy Research and insula Psychotherapy Center. She graduated from the Psychology department; and she received her Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology. Currently, she is a Ph.D. student of Clinical Psychology at Ibn Haldun University in Istanbul Turkey. She has been a narrative practitioner for four years. She is working with young people, adults, couples and groups.

Elena Baskina is the co-founder of Reconnect, a global movement and course encouraging authentic connections. She has focused her career on shifting culture through the playful solutions of narrative and other post-modern approaches in education, therapy and community work. She was educated as a lawyer, after which she pursued her post-graduate education at Dartmouth MALS program. Later on she obtained a degree in Psychology from Moscow State University. Then she got trained in narrative approach through a variety of international programs including those by: Nkazelo Nkube (South Africa), Ana Dumitrascu (Spain), Maggie Carey (US) and Hugh Fox (UK). She also got certified as an EMDR therapist by EMDR Russia association and received mindfulness training from Harvard CE program. She started the "You Are Not Alone" program addressing infertility issues in Russia, challenging societal stereotypes and giving women with fertility difficulties support and choice. She has also launched the "Future is Now" foundation that trained psychology students into fast and effective approaches in therapy, giving hope to people in most difficult situations in life. She is a member of Faculty of Re-authoring teaching non-profit (US) together with the colleagues from all over the world.

Sara Dang as Save the Children's Advisor for Early Childhood Development for Asia, Sara Dang offers technical support to ensure the creation and delivery of quality early childhood education

curricula and programs. She focuses on designing, implementing and advocating for innovative and affordable ECCD programs that allow the most vulnerable children to reach their full potential in safe and sustainable environments. At the regional level, she chairs the Asia Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood steering committee, where she provides strategic guidance in the network's vision, actions and strategy. She has over 15 years of professional experience, including eight years of experience with Save the Children, and has worked in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific

Basantsingh Deerpaul has completed a Masters' Degree in Psychology from University of Mumbai and currently works as a Psychologist at the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development. Besides his full time employment, he also lectures part time at the University of Technology, Mauritius and is an independent researcher in the field of applied spirituality and positive psychology. While being involved with institutions engaged in promoting alternative and complementary therapies, he is an authorised Instructor of Pranic Healing® and runs a wellness centre.

Rhea D'Silva has a Master of Philosophy degree from the Department of Sociology, University of Mumbai. Her dissertation is titled 'Cyberhate on Twitter: Perspectives from Feminist Digital Sociologies'. She also has a degree in law. Rhea is interested in research at the intersection of science and technology and social science. She is Visiting Faculty in Sociology at the Jyoti Dalal School of Liberal Arts, NMIMS, Mumbai.

Kirtika Kain is a Delhi-born artist based in Sydney, Australia. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2016 for which she was awarded the Bird Holcomb MFA Scholarship. Upon completing her Masters of Fine Arts in 2018, she received the University Medal at the National Art School, Sydney. In 2019, Kain completed two consecutive artist's residencies in New Delhi, India and at the prestigious British School at Rome NAS International Residency, Italy followed by her first solo exhibition *Corpus* in Sydney. She is presently a recipient of the Parramatta Artist Studios program and a finalist in the 2020 Create NSW Emerging Artist Fellowship, in partnership with Artspace. Kain is represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.

Ada Kot was born and grew up in Hong Kong. She demonstrates strong commitment in working with disadvantaged groups since her university life through conducting assessment and supporting students for primary education in rural China. Upon graduation from the University of Hong Kong, she joined different local and international non-governmental organizations, working with the most vulnerable groups, including people suffering from natural disasters in China and ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. She further studied counseling in 2014 and is now certified counselor under Hong Kong Professional Counseling Association and Level 2 professional member under Australian Counseling Association. She is a narrative practitioner, her counseling and co-research interest is on areas of intercultural identity, intergeneration relationships, gender and sexuality, as well as people with mental health problems and special education needs. At present, she is conducting research, as well as teaching mental health and narrative therapy course at universities. She is also privately practicing narrative therapy in Hong Kong. She is dedicated to promote narrative practices among Chinese communities on social media platforms by producing podcasts, video and writing blogs.

Suchitra Krishnaprasad served as a faculty at the Department of Economics, Elphinstone College from 1984 to 2019 till she retired from service. She has also worked at S.P. Jain Institute of Management, Mumbai for a brief period. Her areas of interest are labour, development economics and industrial relations. She is a life member of Indian Society of Labour Economics, and has presented and published several research papers at various annual national conferences held by the Society, besides similarly contributing to various international conferences. Papers written by her have been published in edited volumes dedicated to themes like globalisation and industrial relations. She is closely associated with Ambedkar Institute of Labour Studies (AILS) and has consistently worked as a resource person for the training programs jointly organized by AILS and FES to empower trade union leaders with ideas for strategies in future. Besides contributing as a chairperson for several University Grant Commission sponsored workshops, she has worked as a consultant and an external collaborator to two projects by International Labour Organization (ILO) in the past. Presently she is working on another project for ILO.

Vinay Lal is Professor of History and Asian American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He writes widely on Indian history, historiography, the Indian diaspora, colonialism, the architecture of nonviolence, Gandhi, American politics, contemporary culture, and the global politics of knowledge systems. His 18 books include the two-volume Oxford Anthology of the Modern Indian City (2013); *The Future of Knowledge and Culture: A Dictionary for the Twenty-first Century*, co-edited with Ashis Nandy (Viking Penguin, 2005); *Of Cricket, Guinness and Gandhi: Essays on Indian History and Culture* (Penguin, 2005); *The History of History: Politics and Scholarship in Modern India* (Oxford, 2003); *Empire of Knowledge: Culture and Plurality in the Global Economy* (Pluto Press, 2002); and, most recently, *India and Civilizational Futures: Backwaters Collective on Metaphysics and Politics II* (Oxford, 2019) and (co-edited) *A Passionate Life: Writings by and on Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay* (Zubaan Books, 2017). *The Fury of Covid-19: The Passions, Histories, and Unrequited Love of the Coronavirus* is published by Pan Macmillan in October 2020. He blogs at vinaylal.wordpress.com and maintains an academic YouTube channel at youtube.com/user/dillichalo which has two million views. He also blogs at abplive.in.

Christopher Norris is Emeritus Professor in Philosophy at Cardiff University. In his early career he taught English Literature, then moved to Philosophy via literary theory, and has now moved back toward creative writing. He has published widely on the topic of deconstruction and is the author of more than thirty books on aspects of philosophy, literature, politics, the history of ideas, and music. More recently he has turned to writing poetry in various genres, among them – unusually – that of the philosophical verse-essay. His collections include *The Cardinal's Dog* (2014), *The Winnowing Fan* (2015), *For the Tempus-Fugitives* (2017), *The Matter of Rhyme* (2018), *A Partial Truth* (2019), and *Socrates at Verse* (2020). He has also published two collections of political-satirical verse, *The Trouble with Monsters* (2018) and *The Folded Lie* (2019).

Raji Manjari Pokhrel grew up in Kathmandu, Nepal. Her specialisation lies in labour and community organizing and mental

health and her passion is to integrate the two at the intersection of gender. She has a therapy practice and she loves to do collaborative work using narrative practices and somatic awareness to envision queer ways of being. She is forever grateful for her education and know-how of the world to the Nepali speaking domestic and elder care workers' community in Queens, New York, who taught her to see emotional labour otherwise rendered invisible in everyday life. She has a Master's degree in Social Work from Columbia University School of Social Work, New York (2013).

Prathama Raghavan is from Hyderabad, India. She currently works as a school counsellor and mental health and disability support worker and facilitator in Kathmandu, Nepal. She has been working in child, young person, adult and family wellbeing through therapeutic conversations using the narrative approaches. She has worked in the humanitarian mental health sector in conflict, refugee crisis and post disaster environments in South Asia doing mental health coordination work. Her work and life are informed by narrative approaches, principles of disability justice, neurodiversity and transformative justice and poetry. She has recently become interested in working towards building 'imperfect solidarities' through group conversations in a far from perfect world. Prathama has a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from Université Paul-Valéry, France (2012)

Aarti Ramaswami is the Deputy Dean of ESSEC Business School, Asia-Pacific, and Professor in the Department of Management. Her specialities are transformational leadership and education. She co-creates and drives strategy implementation for academic/corporate initiatives in line with group strategy. Her research work focuses on systems used to identify, select, and develop managerial and executive talent, with a particular interest in career success, diversity and inclusion, expatriation, and cross-cultural management. Her research has appeared in top international peer-reviewed journals. She teaches various leadership and management topics to MBA, Executive Education, and Doctoral program participants. She graduated with a Ph.D. in Organizational Behaviour and Human Resource Management from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University Bloomington. She has a highly international profile, having lived and worked in India, USA, France, UAE, and now in Singapore.

Biraj Mehta Rathi is Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Wilson College, Mumbai. She has pursued her post doctoral research on “Martha Nussbaum’s Cosmopolitanism: A Critique” from Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi and Department of Philosophy, University of Mumbai. Her doctoral work examined the various philosophical understandings of cosmopolitanism. Her areas of research include Greek philosophy, aesthetics, political philosophy and contemporary Western philosophy. She is especially interested in examining comparative perspectives on philosophical themes.

Yvonne Sandoval is a mother, poet, artist, farmer living in the borderlands in New Mexico in the U.S. She is an executive at the El Valle Women's Collaborative and a therapist in private practice. She is committed to dismantling oppressive systems that keep us separated from land and food. Her experience as a community organizer has helped connect young people to the natural world and see themselves as positive agents for change. Ms. Sandoval works in collaboration with neighbours and friends to run Bueno Para Todos (Good for all) Farm in northern New Mexico. In recent months they have increased their efforts to create a local food hub to provide aid while inspiring others to rematriate land. As part of the process Ms Sandoval is actively seeking to liberate land and create a land trust so that others may be in reciprocity with the plants and water. She is working on her studies in curanderismo and becoming a permaculture consultant. She graduated with her BSW and a minor in Chicana Studies; she earned her Master’s Degree at the University of Denver in 2001.

K.L.N. Sastry is the Head of the Department of Business Economics at Chetna Hazarimal Somani College Bandra East. He has done his Ph.D in Economics from B.R, Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad. He has published one book, study material for B.A and M.A for Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL), Mumbai. He has published 16 articles.

Peggy Sax, is the founder and Executive Director of Reauthoring Teaching – a global learning community of narrative therapy practitioners, teachers and enthusiasts. Having apprenticed herself to narrative therapy since the early 1990s, she also works in independent practice as a licensed psychologist, consultant, international teacher

and trainer. During the last decade, she has visited India several times, and is proud of her association with The Ummeed Mental Health Team. She is an author of several publications. Whether online, on-the-road (pre-Covid-19) or within her beautiful home state of Vermont, it gives her great joy to bring together favorite people, ideas and practices – to learn, engage, play and replenish together.

Arundhati Sharma is an international educator with over eight years of teaching experience. She is currently based in Guangzhou, China and is teaching at the Cambridge International AS and A level Psychology Curriculum at Ulink College, Guangzhou. She has experience of teaching the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program, Cambridge IGCSE program, College Board Advanced Placement program, and has also taught various humanities subjects such as Psychology, Geography and Sociology. She has an MA in Psychology from University of Mumbai, MSc in International Employment Relations and Human Resource Management from London School of Economics. She is currently pursuing her Post Graduate Certificate in Education from University of Sunderland. Her interest lies in developing metacognition skills and the use of questioning to develop critical thinking. She is also an amateur writer and enjoys travelling.

Dave Sookhoo is a nurse educator and researcher with considerable experience in health and social care. He is a peer reviewer for journals and the Joanna Briggs Institute, teaches research methods. He fervently collaborates with colleagues in conducting primary research and systematic reviews across disciplines. His areas of interest span health and cross-cultural psychology, education and long-term conditions and their impact on health outcomes.

K.R. Shyam Sundar is a Professor in Human Resource Management Area in XLRI, Xavier School of Management in Jamshedpur. He has so far published over 60 articles in well-known professional outlets and in edited books, 17 books of which five are edited, and 80 articles in e-outlets and newspapers in the field of Industrial Relations and Labour Economics. He has conducted several research projects for ILO, European Union, ICSSR over the years. He is widely quoted on contemporary issues pertaining Labour. He is on the editorial board of the Indian Journal of Labour Economics, New

Delhi, Amity Journal of Economics, New Delhi. He is a peer reviewer for several Journals in India and abroad.

Masha Tiunova is the co-founder of Reconnect, a global movement towards authentic connections. While studying Sociology at Dartmouth College through post-graduate leadership program, she volunteered at Women's Resource Center developing campaigns connecting alum female leaders with newer generations of students. As a Head of People and Culture for CEE Leo Burnett global ad agency, she was a part of global team developing Humankind Culture that was focused on creating safe, enjoyable and empowering professional environments. Having become fascinated by the playfulness and depth of narrative approach, she founded Communa, helping companies and communities to connect through their values. She connects narrative approach with vocational counseling and critical education to develop leadership, soft skills and relationships courses for the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology. She has also created courses for the MADS creative school in Moscow and the Teen Power project that took place at World Skills 2019.

Slavoj Žižek is a Professor of Philosophy at The European Graduate School, a senior researcher at the Institute for Sociology and Philosophy at the University of Ljubljana, Global Distinguished Professor of German at New York University, International Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, and founder and president of the Society for Theoretical Psychoanalysis, Ljubljana. His works address psychoanalytical, political and cultural issues, while articulating the relevance of Western philosophical texts such as Hegel's to contemporary contexts.

Style Guide

Citation Style: Author-Date Referencing System of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Chapter 15, 17th edition)

Authors should adopt the in-text parenthetical Author-Date citation system from Chapter 15 of the *Chicago Manual of Style* (17th edition).

Some examples are listed below

1) BOOKS

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

Book references should be listed at the end of the paper as “Works Cited” in alphabetical order.

Single Author

Carson, Rachel. 2002. *Silent Spring*. New York: HMH Books.

Dual Authors

Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer. 1997. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. London: Verso.

Multiple Authors

Berkman, Alexander, Henry Bauer, and Carl Nold. 2011. *Prison Blossoms: Anarchist Voices from the American Past*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Anthologies

Petra Ramet, Sabrina, ed. 1993. *Religious Policy in the Soviet Union*. New York: Cambridge University Press

IN-TEXT CITATION:

References to the specific pages of the books should be made in parenthesis within the text as follows:

(Carson 2002, 15)

(Adorno and Horkheimer 1997, 23)

(Berkman, Bauer, and Nold 2011, 100-102)

(Sabrina 1993, 122-135)

Please refer to 15.40–45 of *The Chicago Manual of Style* for further details.

2) CHAPTERS FROM ANTHOLOGIES

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

Chapters should be listed in “Works Cited” in alphabetical order as follows:

Single Author

Dunstan, John. 1993. “Soviet schools, atheism and religion.” In *Religious Policy in the Soviet Union*, edited by Sabrina Petra Ramet, 158–86. New York: Cambridge University Press

Multiple Authors

Kinlger, Samuel A., and Paul H. De Vries. 1993. “The Ten Commandments as values in Soviet people’s consciousness.” In *Religious Policy in the Soviet Union*, edited by Sabrina Petra Ramet, 187–205. New York: Cambridge University Press

IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Dunstan 1993, 158–86)

(Kingler and De Vries 1993, 190)

Please see 15.36 and 15.42 of *The Chicago Manual of Style* for further details.

3) E-BOOK

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

List should follow alphabetical order. The URL or the name of the database should be included in the reference list. Titles of chapters can be used instead of page numbers.

Borel, Brooke. 2016. *The Chicago Guide to Fact-Checking*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ProQuest Ebrary.

Hodgkin, Thomas. 1897. *Theodoric the Goth: The Barbarian Champion of Civilisation*. New York: Knickerbocker Press. Project Gutenberg.
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20063/20063-h/20063-h.htm>

Maalouf, Amin. 1991. *The Gardens of Light*. Hachette Digital. Kindle.

IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Borel 2016, 92)

(Hodgkin 1897, chap. 7)

(Maalouf 1991, chap. 3)

4) JOURNAL ARTICLE**REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:**

List should follow alphabetical order and mention the page range of the published article. The URL or name of the database should be included for online articles referenced.

Anheier, Helmut K., Jurgen Gerhards, and Frank P. Romo. 1995. "Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu's Social Topography."

American Journal of Sociology 100, no. 4 (January): 859–903.

Ayers, Lewis. 2000. "John Caputo and the 'Faith' of Soft-Postmodernism." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (March): 13–31.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/002114000006500102>

Dawson, Doyne. 2002. "The Marriage of Marx and Darwin?" *History and Theory* 41, no. 1 (February): 43–59.

IN-TEXT CITATION:

Specific page numbers must be included for the parenthetical references within texts (Anheier, Gerhards, and Romo 1995, 864)

(Ayers 2000, 25-31)

(Dawson 2002, 47-57)

For further details please see 15.46–49 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

5) NEWS OR MAGAZINE ARTICLE**REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:**

List should follow alphabetical order and need not mention the page numbers or range. The URL or name of the database should be included for online articles referenced.

Hitchens, Christopher. 1996. "Steal This Article." *Vanity Fair*, May 13, 1996

<https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/1996/05/christopher-hitchens-plagiarism-musings>

Khan, Saeed. 2020. "1918 Spanish Flu cure ordered by doctors was contraindicated in Gandhiji's Principles". *Times of India*, April 14, 2020.

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/75130706.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Klein, Ezra. 2020. "Elizabeth Warren has a plan for this too." *Vox*, April 6, 2020.

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/4/6/21207338/elizabeth-warren-coronavirus-covid-19-recession-depression-presidency-trump>.

IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Hitchens 1996)

(Khan 2020)

(Klein 2020)

See 15.49 (newspapers and magazines) and 15.51 (blogs) in *The Chicago Manual of Style* for further details

6) BOOK REVIEW

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

Methven, Steven. 2019. "Parricide: On Irad Kimhi's Thinking and Being." Review of *Thinking and Being*, by Irad Kimhi. *The Point Magazine*, October 8, 2019

IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Methven 2019)

7) INTERVIEW

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

West, Cornel. 2019. "Cornel West on Bernie, Trump, and Racism." Interview by Mehdi Hassan. *Deconstructed*, The Intercept, March 7, 2019.
<https://theintercept.com/2019/03/07/cornel-west-on-bernie-trump-and-racism/>

IN-TEXT CITATION:

(West 2019)

8) THESIS AND DISSERTATION

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

Rustom, Mohammed. 2009. "Quranic Exegesis in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mulla Sadra's *Tafsir Surat al-Fatiha*." PhD diss., University of Toronto.

IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Rustom 2009, 68-85)

9) WEBSITE CONTENT

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

Website content can be restricted to in-text citation as follows: “As of May 1, 2017, Yale’s home page listed . . .”. But it can also be listed in the reference list alphabetically as follows. The date of access can be mentioned if the date of publication is not available.

Anthony Appiah, Kwame. 2014. “Is Religion Good or Bad?” Filmed May 2014 at TEDSalon, New York.

https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a_trick_question

Yale University. n.d. “About Yale: Yale Facts.” Accessed May 1, 2017.

<https://www.yale.edu/about-yale/yale-facts>.

IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Anthony Appiah 2014)

(Yale University, n.d.)

For more examples, see 15.50–52 in *The Chicago Manual of Style*. For multimedia, including live performances, see 15.57.

9) SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

Social media content can be restricted to in-text citation without being mentioned in the reference list as follows:

Conan O’Brien’s tweet was characteristically deadpan: “In honor of Earth Day, I’m recycling my tweets” (@ConanOBrien, April 22, 2015).

It could also be cited formally by being included in the reference list as follows:

Chicago Manual of Style. 2015. “Is the world ready for singular they? We thought so back in 1993.” Facebook, April 17, 2015.

<https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoManual/posts/10152906193679151>.

Souza, Pete (@petesouza). 2016. “President Obama bids farewell to President Xi of China at the conclusion of the Nuclear Security Summit.” Instagram photo, April 1, 2016.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BDrmfXTtNCt/>.

IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Chicago Manual of Style 2015)

(Souza 2016)

9) PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

The expression “personal communication” covers email, phone text messages and social media (such as Facebook and WhatsApp) messages. These are typically cited in parenthetical in-text citation and are not mentioned in the reference list.

IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Sam Gomez, Facebook message to author, August 1, 2017)

Notes should preferably be listed as endnotes, followed by a works cited/references column.

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