



Reimagining the new pedagogical possibilities for universities post-Covid-19

An EPAT Collective Project

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Introduction

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Our minds are still racing back and forth, longing for a return to ‘normality’, trying to stitch our future to our past and refusing to acknowledge the rupture. But the rupture exists. And in the midst of this terrible despair, it offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves. Nothing could be worse than a return to normality. Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.

Arundhati Roy, Pandemic is a Portal, *The Financial Times*, <https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca>

The economist Robert J. Shiller argues there are two related COVID-19 pandemics – the health pandemic and an associated economic one based on the fears and anxieties of the first.¹ The two are related: business closures, historic levels of unemployment, market volatility and crashes, and financial anxiety based on the *affect heuristic*.² Oil demand is at its lowest for decades and oil producers have curtailed production to stop prices declining further. Those industries based on travel, tourism, hospitality, retail, and international education will continue to experience on-going problems in the foreseeable future.

The issues surrounding COVID-19 and various policy responses to its salience in communities across the world do not however relate to health and economic issues alone. They have also given rise to issues of sociality – how, under the new conditions, might people within and across communities relate to each other, and what new cultural and social formations might emerge in their

aftermath. How might we need to rethink and reimagine issues of global interconnectivity and interdependence? How might they lead to the emergence of a new kind of world society? And for us as educators, how might we rethink the basic purposes of education, and the pedagogic models better suited to the ever-present possibilities of insecurity, risk and relentless change?

In the wake of COVID 19, universities around the world have been closed for instruction on campuses. Most are transitioning to online remote course instruction and learning for the semester. Universities have suspended study abroad programs.³ A number of Australasian universities, dependent on international students, especially Chinese students, have simply closed down for the semester. The loss of international students across Australasian universities could be 40 billion dollars, says QUT Margaret Sheil, leading to the devastation of the IE market.⁴ Around the world, many universities have also closed.

As Steve Elers reports, 'Education institutions around the world are scrambling to prepare for online teaching and learning because of the coronavirus threat'. In the United Kingdom, he notes, 'most universities across the UK have suspended face-to-face teaching and moved to online learning. In the United States, many universities are doing the same by moving all their classes to online mode, including most of their highest-ranked universities, such as MIT, Stanford, Caltech, Chicago, Princeton, Cornell, Pennsylvania, Yale, Columbia, Johns Hopkins and Duke'.⁵

Chinese universities were the first to 'go viral' (an unhappy expression) with their courses moving all of their teaching online, some 30 million students at 3,000 institutions. Little thought, so far, has been given to continuing research online, although it already lends itself to online communication and knowledge sharing. The clear bias against online teaching that would never match the real thing, is destined to become a thing of the past.⁶ It is a forced change that may well break this expectation and become a game changer, if only as a national fail-safe back-up plan. The much-hyped development of MOOCs only a few short years ago was predicted to change the face of the university. It did not. No doubt Chinese students will recalibrate their priorities in face of differential rates of infection and death among US, UK, and Australian universities.

The shift to online classes is not as easy as it sounds with all sorts of problems of delivery, staff expertise, and student engagement.⁷ Given that fact that there is a history of online and open education that extends back before the development of the internet it is surprising, perhaps, that universities – the institution that might have led the way in online teaching and the delivery of online courses – should be so slow to offer such courses and so problematic with digital versions and assistance to international students.

Digital pedagogies are of course not neutral with respect to the kind of sociality they encourage. Since a core function of education has always been social and cultural formation, the question arises as to what kind of sociality is possible when students and their faculty only meet in the digital space. In recent years, universities have promoted the idea of global citizenship. We need to ask what challenges they might now face if pedagogic and cultural exchange is to take place for a growing number of international students in the virtual space only. Also important of course are the issues of inequalities of access and outcomes in the new pedagogic spaces, and how they might be mitigated both within and across nations.

The COVID-19 pandemic offers us the opportunity to rethink not only new digital, online, and pedagogical possibilities but also the basic purposes of education, and how renewed vision of education might be harnessed to develop more democratic and just societies. To that end, we have invited a group of scholars for around the world to reimagine the emerging conditions, based on our capacity for making informed predictions but grounded also in an ethics of possibilities.

In what follows, we reproduce a number of think pieces from scholars whom we invited to participate in this collective writing exercise. Their thoughts represent a diversity of perspectives, opinions and provocations. Collectively, however they indicate their determination to use the COVID-19 crisis to describe their experiences of working through the current conditions, reconsider some of the contradictions that have long existed in the modern systems of higher

education, and imagine new pedagogic possibilities in which we have no other option but to experiment, under the conditions of distress, uncertainty and complexity.

Notes

1. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/pandemics-coronavirus-covid19-economics-finance-stock-market-crisis/>
2. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0377221705003577>
3. <https://www.silive.com/coronavirus/2020/03/coronavirus-cuny-suny-suspend-study-abroad-programs-in-5-countries.html>
4. https://www.theaustralian.com.au/subscribe/news/1/?sourceCode=TAWEB_WRE170_a_GGL&dest=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.theaustralian.com.au%2Fhigher-education%2Finternational-students-need-support-says-qut-leader-margaret-sheil%2Fnews-story%2Fcca8ba572e08e0db2269104cf1a1e826&memtype=anonymous&mode=premium
5. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/coronavirus/120400677/education-institutes-around-the-world-scramble-to-prepare-for-online-teaching>
6. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/will-coronavirus-make-online-education-go-viral>
7. <https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-universities-are-shifting-classes-online-but-its-not-as-easy-as-it-sounds-133030>

Covid-19, education and the new abnormal

Gary McCulloch

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In what sense is the COVID-19 pandemic 'new'? Historically speaking it is a reassertion of the normal, or as the historian William McNeill might well see it, the latest counteroffensive by infectious diseases against the specifically modern growth of human resistance to pestilence and plague. In his classic work *Plagues and Peoples*, McNeill argued that eventually what he saw as the familiar ecological pattern of mutual accommodation between human hosts and parasites was almost sure to prevail. Indeed, he concluded, although it now required imagination to understand what infectious diseases meant to humanity even a few short generations ago, infectious disease would last as long as humanity itself, and would continue to be 'one of the fundamental parameters and determinants of human history'.

So, taking the long view, this contemporary plague is itself the normal, while heightened resistance to such pandemics is a function of modernity, and late modernity at that. What is novel is the particular nature of the collision between a potent strain of disease and human society at a particular stage of globalization. International travel and the digital revolution have transformed global communications. At the same time, at least in the West and in the most privileged social classes, scientific and medical advances have created an illusion that humanity can control or insulate itself from the demands of nature and the limitations of the planet. The combination of these features with the coronavirus creates a shock to the system, a disillusionment leading to profound social, economic and educational consequences: the new abnormal.

When the initial shock has passed, what can we expect for the future? Again, a glance back at our history can provide some clues. The world wars of the twentieth century provided a stimulus to social change, as the leading protagonists resorted to state control and collectivist methods to conduct total war which had lasting social effects. Elites tended to survive even if they had to adapt to new conditions, but significant social reforms including in education were possible. Especially where reformers were able to move quickly before the immediate radicalizing effects of stimulus wore off, and the economic effects of warfare took over, progressive ideas have often become mainstream. Where they hesitated, the opportunity was lost.

It seems likely too that there will be a nostalgic yearning for a golden age, when diseases seemed to be largely eradicated and there appeared to be no social limits on growth. A renewed understanding of world history is of paramount importance as a counter to this. And it may be that neoliberalism, the dominant social and economic influence of the past generation, will now face its greatest test. How can a free market contend with the forces set loose by a pandemic

that respects no private interests? It may indeed be that environmental concerns, living within the resources of the planet and supporting public health, can take center stage, even to help displace the strongest of current orthodoxies. If so, the fresh thinking of the new abnormal may indeed have a chance of challenging the *ancien regime*.

Transdisciplinary possibilities after the pandemic

Paul Gibbs

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The juxtaposition of politics and science (as if they were not intertwined) is a feature highlighted by this pandemic. Scientists provide reified guesses and politicians excuses or at least that is one way of looking at it. More seriously, the hegemony of science replaces one system of control by another, supported by the oversimplified sophism of politicians. It is as if we ought to be in awe of the scientists alongside our political betters, whose fake empathy is evidenced in the translation they offer of what we don't understand in forms of an infantilised discourse more worthy of a scary science fiction novel than our responses to Covid19. Their attempts to draw us closer in our shared plight actually only extends to within their own elite social distancing parameters. Our scientific efforts have seen research money focused and energy directed toward a solution however imperfect that might mean: a quick fix through some systematic process which will give us hope of returning to normality even if such a return is a wasted opportunity for change.

I do recognize the good which science can do, but also recognize its limitations and its dark side. They include letting the scientific, evidenced based, outcome narrative replace totally any other form of judgment in society and of necessity lead to further declines in the humanities within universities. The opportunities this pandemic offers are a chance to ensure our universities are not places for intellectual technicians but for people of thought trained to think essentially, holistically; transdisciplinary.

Our universities need to ensure they reconstruct their curricula recognizing it is the individual will that precedes intellect and in what we teach, or are taught, should embrace a unity, truth and goodness of all being. Such thinking is sustainable, transdisciplinary thinking and should not be an afterthought of metrics, models and experiments but as a feature of these. Universities need to guard their students from the totalizing rhetoric of science and to teach their communities to critically appraise science and contextualize within a discourse of love, empathy and sympathy. We need universities to function as places of compassion, learning and above all wisdom; not as forms of the machinations of government and commercial interests focused on profit and votes.

Universities have the possibility to emerge from this pandemic as places of compassion, of wisdom and worthiness. They were far from that before the pandemic, where neoliberal interests influenced not just the structure of the curriculum, the economics of scale in teaching and in the profitability of its colonized expansion and exploitation, but also in the self-deceit of its academics, their administrators and their marketing professionals. The possibilities are for universities to speak to the truth as they can know it, provide truth based on facts, argument and spirituality. They can become places where prior privilege does not give priority in engagement, where international respect flourishes for their students, not for their bank accounts, where recognition of diversity, equality and inclusion are the premises of formalized education and where humanity can flourish with the transdisciplinary humility the rest of our world is owed. The opportunity is a new educative focus not a new business model.

Course correction: Disciplines in the post-COVID world

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The caption reads *The Long March - 90-year-old Kajodi on her 400-km trek* (Jameel, 2020). The picture shows a frail woman, swaddled in shawls, stick in hand, shuffling down an empty highway that stretches miles on either side. Stranded in Delhi when the Indian Prime Minister mandated a COVID lockdown with four hours' notice late one evening, Kajodi epitomized the plight of migrant daily-wage earners who faced the choice of dying of starvation in the city or chancing a walk of hundreds of kilometers to their villages where their families would feed them. It was a powerful image – and it affected Indian virologist Shahid Jameel profoundly:

Relying on public health principles, I was advocating social distancing and a lockdown But wasn't I being completely blinkered by the science, and not paying attention to the 'public' in public health? Indeed, I was ... and I was angry with myself. (Jameel, 2020)

While pandemics are at once biological and social phenomena, Jameel muses, nothing in their education prepares students of science, engineering and medicine to think about how their work might affect individuals and societies. Nor is that myopia limited to doctors and scientists; Jameel argues that humanities students are often suspicious of technology, and 'can be prone to fake news about technology, disease and health'. Economists appear to be similarly ill trained:

[The mainstream economics taught in universities and business schools over the past 40 years] supported the just-in-time business culture in which redundancy in supply chains was considered a waste of time and money and the free flow of capital across borders to create more economic growth was always a good thing, despite any inequality and financial fragility they might create. (Foroohar, 2020)

Confronted with the complex, exponential systems of the pandemic, Foroohar argues, economists are bringing the same linear logic that have created many of the problems so brutally exposed by COVID-19.

What lessons do these insights hold for higher education? There have long been arguments that global terror, pandemics, climate change and other problems-without-borders required interdisciplinary approaches. Interdisciplinarity became a buzzword in research, but in practice, it has had little influence on research and even less on university curricula and teaching. Research collaborations have mostly been between cognate disciplines – and then largely in the natural sciences. Practices of peer review and evaluation criteria of research grant applications make interdisciplinary research applications somewhat risky. Publishing interdisciplinary work is challenging – reviewers are usually expert in only one field and there are few journals for interdisciplinary papers.

But the argument I want to make here is not for interdisciplinarity per se, though I certainly support it. Rather, I am advocating an expanded notion of the disciplines themselves. Going beyond the 'silos' argument, I want to push for a fundamental shift in how any discipline is defined – what its purposes are said to be, how it 'disciplines' its students to think and what it trains students to do. Universities have warm and fuzzy mission statements about solving global issues, but these ideas disappear from the nitty-gritty of disciplinary curricula. What is required is more than just making ethics and social justice part of every curriculum; we need to sharpen our understanding of how our actions in every field – even our day-to-day lives – affect humankind. 'Impact on the planet' should be an integral part of disciplinary knowledge; not as a six-week course in Semester One or an ungraded hurdle requirement, but fundamentally underpinning the discipline itself. Orienting each discipline toward an understanding of how decisions in that field affect society, with case studies that evaluate past contributions and effects, would ground and render practical the abstract missions and visions that universities espouse. At the school level, some curricula, such as the International Baccalaureate programs, do make a commitment to this kind of thinking, and they may offer some lessons to universities.

Beyond reimagining disciplines, a fundamental redefinition of the university's role in society is urgently called for. A commitment to the health of the planet should extend to research 'impact' analyses too – we are rewarded for larger grants rather than larger benefits to society. We are lauded for making our expertise exclusive, attached to larger consultation fees, rather than inclusive. In a pleasing response to COVID 'lockdowns', many podcasts, articles, museum collections and research papers were freed from behind firewalls. Why are these not always freely available to the public? Universities should seriously consider making all their research open access post COVID – prioritizing society over publishing houses. This is another way for universities to demonstrate their commitment to equity and the health of the planet.

All this is by no means easy. For example, while nearly half a century of work by scholars in Science and Technology Studies (STS) has set up flourishing STS departments in leading universities, their insights have failed to penetrate science disciplines or become a compulsory part of scientific training. Scientists are not trained to think about the social nature or the social impact of their work. Imagine if engineers at Facebook or Cambridge Analytica had been thoroughly grounded in ethics and deeply aware of the social impact of their work. Trump might not have been President today, and there might have been far fewer dead due to COVID-19.

While the pandemic has brought into sharp relief the ways in which the apparently rational logics of disciplines may singularly fail societies, and the devastating effects such failures can have, the warning signs have been there for decades. A system based on over-consumption has been steadily depleting the planet and deepening inequalities. We have already seen how the poor and those with disabilities have been disproportionately affected, and how the slowing down of trade has resulted in a healthier environment. It is sobering to think that the politicians, scientists, engineers and economists now in critical decision-making positions were once in our universities, fresh-faced and starry-eyed. The cost-benefit analyses and the modeling and the ethical commitments they bring to their task are what they learned (or failed to learn) in our classes. The task ahead of us may not be easy, but can we afford to fail again?

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Re-purposing university teaching-and-research post-C-19: A socio-ethical case

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The Covid-19 pandemic should prompt universities, on socio-ethical grounds, to reverse academic workforce restructurings that reduce the portion who teach-and-research. Yet *governmental* responses are apt to intensify separations of 'teacher' from 'researcher', with fewer doing meaningful research and scholarship. We touch on why this is so after first making our socio-ethical case to expand the teaching-and-research portion.

We see urgent need to *re-purpose* academic labors toward new ways of caring for local and planetary futures. Burgeoning crises of climate, economics, politics, culture – and unjust power relations across these domains – preceded and fueled the pandemic, which accelerates them further. As Berlant (2016) notes, these broadly *structural* crises of 'built and natural worlds' (p. 409) are apprehended by most people as 'glitches' in *infrastructure*, i.e. their 'lifeworld of structure' that provides food, health, transport and 'all systems that link ongoing proximity

to being in a world-sustaining relation' (p. 393). Infrastructures are complex assemblages; their fragilities are not simply resolved; and local communities, in life-sustaining reliance on them, deserve supports from relevantly knowledgeable academics. Yet, more than *visits* of expertise, people need projects that build life sustain-abilities: i.e. *citizen capacities* to collaborate, across diverse community groups, on 'problems that gather them together' (Pignarre & Stengers, 2011, p. 112).

These are socio-ethical capacities to care-take toward more viable and *just* future life with others: a 'care of the possible' (Stengers, 2011, p. 12) that fuels courage and agency to 'stay with the trouble' (Haraway, 2016). Crucial is capacity to pro-act with others *knowledgeably*. Crisis-linked 'problems that matter' (Zipin, 2020) are *emergent*; and so, then, are knowledges useful to address them, including 'funds of knowledge' (Moll, 2014) that emerge among diverse groups who live the problems. Academics who bring disciplinary knowledge to situated problems thus need to learn-and-teach *with* diverse people in those lifeworlds. Such *research* into mattering problems is thus also a *pedagogic* praxis of dialogic democracy in which all participants, in 'apprenticing' to the problem (Pignarre & Stengers, 2011, pp. 76–77), build citizen-capacities to work with *and on* – *to make* – knowledge of emergently richer use-value.

For academics to contribute to what are, *at once*, teaching-and-research capacities of citizens, they need practiced strength in *both* dimensions. This applies to educative work in community and classroom spaces; and it would be good to connect student's classroom-based education to citizenship interaction with mattering problems in life-world spaces of their emerging futures-with-others. *Modest portions* of academics in given universities might *mainly* 'teach' or 'research' (as defined in workload models); but they all should interact within robust teaching-and-research cultures sustained by a *healthy core portion* who combine both.

Along with sizeable numbers, a *healthy* portion means correcting trends to steal research and community-service time via workload models that leave much real work un(der)counted. Yet decades of *governance crisis* here weigh heavily. Governance apparatuses increasingly perform *ideological functions of simplifying the complexities of lived problems* (Zipin, 2019). Thus, federal/state executive bodies apply narrow political-economic logics to reduce university funding and impose market-competition criteria. In turn, university 'leaders' invest in fewer 'high-performer' researchers while milking lower-payroll 'productivity' from overworked teaching-only staff, given the simplistic justification – shared by university and state/federal governance bodies – that students primarily need teaching 'specialists' to train them in 'skills for future work' (amplified in Brennan & Zipin, 2019; Zipin & Brennan, 2019). These trends already accelerate under pandemic-induced budget crunches and 'snap back the economy' logics.

Yet counter-senses of *perilously complex* social futures also abide not just among academics, but, with new emergenc(e)y, among diverse people living the perils, calling for capacities well beyond 'skills for work': at once researchful, pedagogic and proactive. If academics initiate an *ethically-driven politics* of re-purposed university education – mobilized in projects to build citizen-capacities *with* student and community actors, all collaborating on lifeworld problems that matter – then perhaps *together* we might push 'the governors' to rethink social purposes for teaching-and-research.

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Epistemological shifts in higher education post-Covid-19: South Korea’s critical opportunities and challenges for renewing visions of higher education

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Much-hyped discussion regarding Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Korea’s higher education is not new. South Korea adopted distance education as early as 1972 with the establishment of the Korean National Open University, and gradually increased the number of cyber universities until 2004 as a response to the expanding demands for higher education. By leveraging its competitive advantage in the field of Information Technology, Korea enthusiastically launched the Korean Massive Open Online Courses (K-MOOC) in 2015 and actively responded to the discourse of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The ICT discourse in education has been so widespread that many believe it might potentially lead to ‘a fundamental shift’ in the Korean higher education paradigm – the shift from conventional university education to lifelong learning enabling learners to access higher education based on online content regardless of time and place. However, despite the advantages of having ICT friendly infrastructure in all levels of education, the intensity, extensity, and velocity of institutional and pedagogical shifts in higher education practices have been somewhat disappointing.

Surprisingly, it is not the technological applications in higher education, but the world pandemic – COVID 19 – that has pushed higher education institutions and actors to rethink the existing epistemological assumptions of contemporary higher education and learning in Korea. The successes and many challenges amid the pandemic have sparked three sets of multi-layered debates. First, the pandemic provided ironic opportunities to push forward the adaptation of some of the existing technologies in higher educational practices. Most of the Korean universities have speedily adopted the Cisco Webex, Zoom, Google Classroom to name a few. The 2020 Spring Semester is a testing-ground for the adaptability and flexibility of the higher education community in their day-to-day online teaching and learning – from online-based interaction with students, preparing online class materials, presenting immediate feedback for assignments, new ways of evaluation of the class, providing timely notice about the class schedule or plans through Social Network Services and different websites. A few research and development (R&D) geared and technologically friendly universities and higher institutions have shown that accumulated skills and know-how among researchers can be promptly utilized in these situations. However, the quick response of faculty and staff in providing online classes is not necessarily equal to institutional level readiness, capacity, and financial mobilization in all higher education institutions. This paper will examine such vastly different emerging conditions in terms of quality of teaching and learning between publicly funded national universities, a few well-funded private universities, and the majority number of struggling private universities and institutions.

Second, the uneasy question of the values of mass higher education is now more publicly debated, sparked by the COVID-19 crisis. The three decades-long logic behind the expansion of private higher education (86% of Korean higher education institutions are currently private) and constant emphasis on service provider-client relationships between higher education and students may undermine the very existence of higher education itself. Whilst students or clients are

increasingly comparing universities to private sector content-providers, at the same time, they are questioning the quality of the online classes compared to the comprehensive university education they would be receiving under normal conditions. In particular, emerging conditions of university online learning indicates that many universities are still struggling to provide simultaneous online classes, appropriate pedagogical skills and clear guidelines, as well as spatial and technical assistance to students. In addition, long overdue discussion of issues affecting Korean higher education such as declining student enrollment, skyrocketing tuition, and the heavy reliance on Chinese international students is being much more publicly aired.

Third, the Korean higher education community has been inadvertently given opportunities to rethink the epistemological underpinning of Korea's engagement with the rest of the globe and to define its national and intellectual positioning in relation to the so-called West. In a broader society, this is shown in the fact that many Koreans have regained trust in Korea's democratic system as a result of the relatively effective risk management by the government, the professional responses of the public health community and the maturity of civic participation since the COVID 19 outbreaks in late January 2020. In higher education, in particular, these doubts on the 'Western system', raised by the 'semi-peripheral Korean higher education elite' are particularly important since the Korean approach to higher education has known to be dependent on US intellectual hegemony – philosophically, theoretically, technologically. Utilizing technology in higher education system would gradually blur the boundaries between countries and facilitate to build Korea's own higher education model which could be competitive enough to the other western countries/the U.S. By reducing the necessity to physically cross the border for receiving quality higher education, students will be more freely choosing the education as a smart consumer and it may give Korean higher education community opportunities to develop more independent, but commercially driven education system. The long stubborn epistemological dependency on the United States is slowly declining in Korean higher education and these changes of cultural imperatives would create opportunities for the community to reimagine the fundamentals of relationships within Asia and with the world.

The post-COVID 19 era will require more dramatic change in Korea's higher education to ensure not only its survival, but also its transformation. Changes should not only be narrowed down to setting up technology-friendly teaching and learning environment, but also require institutional and educational reforms, questioning and challenging the epistemological foundations of who we are, what we teach and learn, and how we engage with the rest of the world. In this regard, Korea's technological advancement will be a most important partner in resetting the new visions of higher education and learning in the next generations.

University life in Cambridge in the two meter society

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Walk around Cambridge these days, and it is as if life in this university city has almost melted away. Streets once thronged with wandering tourists, biking students and touting puntsters are. Cafes are closed, colleges are empty, and the traffic-clogged arteries into and out of the center give way to an eerie quietness. Birds sing, whilst the glorious show of spring's cherry blossoms, magnolias, daffodils and irises – display their beauty to this empty theater. This is university life in Cambridge in the 2 Meter Society.

Two months ago, I was dashing from a 'teach-in' at Emmanuel College to a two day meeting in the Old Schools, the affectionate term for the building that houses the senior administration of the university. I had spent the early part of the day on the picket line outside my Faculty building in a delicate dance as Head between managing the faculty and honoring my politics. Now at the Old Schools we wound our way up a narrow staircase to our meeting

room. Some meeting members had traveled up from London joining the many workers who daily sprinted to secure a seat on an over-crowded line. We joked about alternative forms of greetings, foot tapping and elbow knocking to avoid hand to hand contact. Life then still had not yet heard of social distancing. No chance of social distancing in these quaint Cambridge turrets and tunnels.

Lockdown came fast. Two days for colleagues to sort out working remotely, and the doors were locked. Our IT team have been nothing short of brilliant. In this I recognize that we are some of the lucky ones. Many universities centralized this function and in doing so, cut back capacity. We'd been building our IT team as we had been exploring digital learning as a way of pushing climate change higher up our agenda. Next term all lecturing will be on-line, and this from a standing start.

I have also acquired a new status as 'critical worker'. I carry a signed letter from the Vice Chancellor's Office to show the police in case I am questioned about being on the street. This is not because I am researching Covid-19 as some of my colleagues are. Rather there are some things that are critical to doing business that mean I need access to the building. Digital stamps simply don't cut it for some of our partners abroad. On the journey to work I pass the odd worker here and there, always at a respectful two-meter distance.

Each day is busy as we sort out new ways of working. What platform does what with whom. We're worked out how to recruit and induct on-line, and how to run classes big and small. This week the whole faculty will be engaged in strategic planning on-line, and we'll of course be working on a learning and working digital strategy. Our undergraduate students are downloading their exams on Mondays and uploading them Friday. This is a long way from the handwritten essays written in the huge auditoriums that dot themselves around Cambridge.

What does the future hold? We know there are no certainties, only contingency planning. And as head of a Faculty of Education in a collegiate university the challenges are huge. Student have small classes, and one-one supervisions. We're determined, however, to use the crisis well. As Phillip Mirowski once said; never let a good crisis go to waste. What can we do better when using digital technologies, mindful of also generating benefits like lowering our carbon footprint? What do we still need to do in-person, but in ways that are respectful of our right to social distance? And how can we hold on to the social, so that it finds expression not in the idea of distancing, but in creative ways of being together?

Education and the certainty of uncertainty

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Catastrophic events involve sudden significant disruption. The COVID-19 pandemic has required vast numbers of people to change their lives, with the likely possibility of ongoing uncertainty.

Uncertainty is not something we humans generally seek out. Indeed Dewey (1929) observed 'the quest for certitude' as having 'determined our basic metaphysics' (p. 22). Yet such a 'quest for complete certainty' comes with a caveat: it can only be fulfilled 'in pure knowing' (p. 8); complete certainty 'cannot be found by practical doing or making' (p. 21).

Dewey highlighted how this basic metaphysical distinction between knowing and doing, characterizes a longstanding view of education: education, at its roots, works with knowing. Education thrives on certainty, which is recorded via facts, catalogued in curriculum.

Yet it is not curriculum which the pandemic has thrown into confusion. Those facts remain secure in their isolation. Instead it is the practices of education, those of schools and universities especially, which have suddenly and significantly been disrupted.

However Dewey's questioning of the distinction between knowing and doing upsets this way of comprehending the situation. He argued cogently that 'knowing is itself a mode of practical action' (1929, p. 107): knowing and doing cannot be separated. So those certainties catalogued as curriculum may not, in practice, be secure: for they are impacted by the ways of doing through which they are encountered.

The pedagogical changes wrought via the pandemic have positioned facts differently; their certainty is clothed in various forms of practice which alter their meaning; how they are known. And these forms of practice can themselves be positioned through the dissolution of another distinction: between doing and being.

This broad simpatico – being-doing-knowing – is observable in the educational changes driven by the pandemic, where engaging in school or university from home has become a prevalent practice. Pedagogies change significantly in such circumstances, altering ways of knowing. Digital pedagogies come to the fore. But engagement with these ways of doing when at home requires a more vital transition between ways of being: perhaps from being a family member to being an online student. Yet for many, especially children, this presents a pronounced engagement challenge, an ontological challenge.

Ways of being are ways of doing are ways of knowing (Quay, 2013). This understanding flips the quest for certainty on its head. No longer is pure knowing at the heart of educational endeavor. Instead, ways of being are primary; knowing serves being.

This understanding points the way to a different quest; a quest marked by questioning instead of answering. Ways of being are always temporal and temporary responses to what Heidegger (2009) called the who-question: 'Who are we ourselves?' (p. 33). Heidegger perceived that asking questions about human being always envelops the human questioner in the questioning.

If this human question is positioned at the heart of education, it highlights being as the driving force. There are many possible responses to the who-question, a never ending variety of ways to be a human being; and education can offer these ways in the democratic fashion that Dewey inspired (Quay, 2016).

Could this pandemic be disruptive enough to shift modern education's embrace of the quest for certainty? It is unlikely. Even in a pandemic the quest for certainty, expressed as a wish to return to normalcy, dominates. There may be acceptance of new practices that shift ways of being; but being itself is not revealed as the main educational concern.

Founding this inertia is another version of the quest for certainty, focused on answering (not questioning) the who-question. While certainty in curriculum is expressed via knowing, certainty in existential terms is expressed via being. Who are we ourselves? Is an uncomfortable question many want to answer finally, with security.

Yet the who-question must always be a living question. To support this, education must be premised on exploring ways of being, appropriately. This reflects the ever-changing landscape of ways of being – a strength of humanity – that makes it impossible to finally answer the who-question. A pandemic might raise this awareness for some, but for most the uncertainty strengthens the quest for definitive answers.

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The intimacy of distance

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As the reader arrives at the closing chapters of Jane Austin's *Persuasion*, she is aware that Anne had broken off her betrothal to Wentworth some years before. Anne enters a room in a hotel where she sees Wentworth in conversation with his friend Harville. Wentworth then goes to a table and becomes engrossed in writing. After a time, he approaches her and hands her the letter he had just written. In it he says:

I can listen no longer in silence. I must speak to you by such means as are within my reach. You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope. Tell me not that I am too late, that such precious feelings are gone for ever. I offer myself to you again with a heart even more your own than when you almost broke it, eight years and a half ago...

Writing on parchment or paper is a technology that has been used for centuries to overcome the barriers of time and distance. Through this medium we can hear Plato, Shakespeare or the Marquis de Sade. With this technology letters, directives and orders could be communicated over vast distances.

What is interesting about Wentworth's letter is he was hindered by neither time nor distance in communicating with Anne that evening. Rather, writing the letter afforded him a way of communicating his deepest and most vulnerable feelings in ways that speaking face to face did not. This reminds us that in our human interactions the shared physical space (SPS) is not necessarily a privileged or superior space.

This most recent pandemic is compelling 'social distancing' and, more often, physical isolation. Teachers are compelled to use online technologies because the SPS is barred. The pandemic is putting up barriers – walls, so to speak. This in many instances is compelling the involuntary use of communications technologies. For many students and teachers, the all-encompassing use of online technologies is seen as a necessary, but second-best and inferior means for learning and teaching. That framing can distract, however, from realizing the technologies' superior possibilities. The pandemic offers an opportunity to creatively and imaginatively explore better ways of passing on knowledge, experience and wisdom than simply deploying the SPS. We should be looking for ways the technologies offer a superior, rather than a substitute, way of interacting, relative to the SPS.

I'll mention one way, in my experience, an interactive online class can be superior to SPS. I taught a subject for a decade, which in part involved breaking the class into small groups to work on a problem. I moved from group to group offering guidance and direction in solving the class problem. I then shifted the subject online and used zoom breakout groups in which I again moved from group to group. As a result, I can compare the pre- and post-online learning and teaching experiences. Admittedly, my assessment is subjective. I found the quality of the students' output was more or less the same. However, I noticed the online sessions substantially lessened the invisible (intimidatory) barrier that existed in the SPS between my students and me. I found online students are more likely to engage with the teacher on a more even footing. Online, I am more likely to be seen as a participant in the shared task of resolving the class problem than a dominating presence, which in the SPS led to a level of deference and passivity on the part of the students. Although I did not notice a great difference in the assessment output of students in the two environments, my intuition is the proportion of students who actively engaged with the class problems was greater online, and the depth of their explorations was better. These things are difficult, if not impossible, to 'objectively' measure.

Some teachers may be put off by the mandates of teaching technology 'experts' who with breathtaking knowledgeable ignorance insist the science establishes that online videos cannot exceed 7 minutes (apparently comprehension shrinks online), or there must be an endless array

of online quizzes and other blandishments. Ignore them all; don't let them encumber your own explorations and experiences.

The new technologies offer an array of possibilities, many of which are yet to be explored. One advantage they offer is the intimacy of distance.

Schizophrenize education through remote teaching: An experimenting reflection for a revolutionary libidinal investment of the post-pandemic capitalist digital education

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COVID-19, a strange assemblage among an aggressive virus, global lockdown policies and a viral informational (Peters et al., 2020) flux of fearful affects, is producing its effects on the Capitalist social machine all over the world. Educational dispositifs are perhaps the most effected: the sudden closure of schools' and universities' physical spaces and the forced digitalization of lessons and academic courses has conducted to a situation of metastable equilibrium (Simondon, 1958): an event from which an unlimited number of directions is viable and that could function as a window of chances. Some scholars and politicians claim the potentials of completely virtualizing learning, opening toward reactionary proposals for individualized and privatized/platformized home-schooling; while others underline the incomparableness between digitally mediated schooling and the 'true' educational practice in physical co-presence granted by public institutions.

Trying to slip out from this pendulum, which dialectically defines a progressist position by the negation of a reactionary one, we mobilize the schizoanalytic (Deleuze & Guattari, 1978) approach to identify a possible line of flight and deterritorialization that could depart from the COVID-19 singularity and trouble the Capitalist machine. In this way, we can escape from the unending ideal movement among digital, physical or blended learning, and focus on the productive assemblage of actual pandemic digital education: its politics and the possibility for its libidinal functioning.

Remote teaching is the core solution arranged all over the world to face the pandemic. From our perspective, remote teaching involves a very different way of flowing of the desiring-production. While traditional teaching implies children taken out from their families and placed in institutional buildings where teachers are expected to teach them in order to make families bring in more educated/disciplined children; remote teaching requires families to bring in, through digital technical machines, teachers and learning for their children. 'A breath of fresh air, a relationship with the outside world' (Ivi, p. 9). Family is produced by Capitalism as a microcosm: it has been detached from the social production – of which it was instead invested in the Primitive and Barbarian machines – and has become the surface of application for the oedipalization of the desiring-production. It produces docile and resigned subjects: "'Mister Capital, Madame Earth" and their child the Worker' (Ivi, p. 264). But could it be a 'breakthrough' of the limit, 'the schiz, which [maintain] the production of desire always at the margins of social production' (Ivi, p. 131)?

Let's schizophrenize education through remote teaching. This could be an unprecedented chance. The digital language, with which remote teaching actualizes, is by itself a decoding of the signifying language and produces 'dividuals' rather than individuals (Deleuze, 1992): 'the task of schizoanalysis is that of tirelessly taking apart egos and their presuppositions; liberating the prepersonal singularities they enclose and repress' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1978, p. 362). But this is not enough: pandemic remote teaching actual functioning is still paranoiac. The implication of digital language is only a revolutionary possibility for the partial and nonspecific use of the connective synthesis of production, instead of its oedipal global and specific use.

We need to promote its functioning together with an inclusive and nonrestrictive use of the disjunctive synthesis of recording and with a nomadic and polyvocal conjunctive synthesis of consumption. Also with regard to the former, remote teaching is an unprecedented chance: it could permit to

shift from the 'either/or' alternative – 'there's mommy, [there's teacher, and] there you are' (Ivi, p. 125) – to the intensive designation of the states through which a subject passes on the body without organs: 'I'm either a teacher or a mommy or a child'; and this for all the 'global persons' involved in the remote teaching assemblage. Then, regarding the latter, the relationship of the family with the outside could be maximized recognizing, through the educational molecular practice, all the extrafamilial breaks 'by means of which the libido is engulfed in order to sexually invest the nonfamilial, [...] the other class as determined under the empirical rubrics of the "richest and the poorest"' (Ivi, p. 354). Education could promote the family as stimulus 'having an indifferent value' (Ivi, p. 355) where the parents could be reinjected in the social production.

Could this be revolutionary? We don't know. What we just know is that it would be an experimentation: not 'an act to be later judged in terms of success and failure, but simply [...] an act the outcome of which is unknown' (Cage, 1961, p. 13).

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The risk of digital reason: Fearing interactive technologies in higher education

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The COVID-19 pandemic is heightening practices that have already begun to emerge worldwide in higher education, in the use of digital technologies. The changes afoot, however, may produce an understandable fear. They certainly carry with them new kinds of risk.

I start with two illustrations of the possibilities inherent in the new higher education order. I am especially struck with the happenings that Michael Sandel, a prominent USA political philosopher, has been orchestrating under the title of 'The Global Philosopher'. Sandel stands in a studio surrounded by banks of monitors, perhaps upwards of fifty, with each one showing the face of a student *anywhere in the world*. He poses an awkward issue to the students, of the moment, and where philosophical arguments can be brought to bear; and not only invites views from the students but invites, say, Mary, to respond to what James has just said. Sandel takes the discussion forward, moving deftly from one sub-topic to another. He then spends a few minutes at the end, drawing the threads together and placing the different views in the context of the relevant philosophical debate.

In this one pedagogical instance, we have disciplined critical debate, students being brought together in a digital space and from cultures and societies right across the world. It may be responded that this would be impracticable for most university pedagogical settings. But a slimmed-down version is readily available. A course, say in civil engineering, could be put into contact with a corresponding course in a quite different country, the students being asked to work together not only on engineering problems but on wider issues, for instance exploring the role of the engineer in society. This could bring epistemologies and cultures of the West into a lively dialogue with those of non-Western nations.

My other example: I have just participated in a global academic webinar, which took the form of a mini-conference. It had a chair who orchestrated proceedings, two plenary speakers, break-out tasks with the participants being divided into groups, a plenary session, and a discussant (myself) who brought the threads of the event together and offered some concluding thoughts. The participants

were drawn from all over the world, each of the main speakers was in a different continent, and all participants were able to make a contribution to the event in some way. A feature of the event's success, as it seemed to me, lay in the democratizing effect that resulted from the digital presentation of the event. Under each participant's face appeared just her or his name. There were no cues as to title or position and there seemed to be a generally relaxed tone to proceedings.

These two examples suggest that digital modes of communication have much to offer both pedagogy and scholarship. They call for new skills, not least of speaking directly to a camera, knowing that there are multiple viewers situated in quite different places. And they call for exemplary skills of moderation and attentiveness, and also for a humor and graciousness, since visual clues of posture and body language are weaker. They call, too, for a willingness – digitally speaking – to embrace the other, to have an empathy across cultures, and to listen with rare attentiveness. And they call, too, for pedagogical spaces that are open and dialogical, and that offer new forms of enculturation. *Bildung* can be reborn!

Digital pedagogies, then, can help to realize higher education as an entry into new spaces and cultures of reasoning and understanding. They call, though, not just for a rare imagination on the part of the teacher but a preparedness to recede into the background and to tolerate a heightened level of pedagogical risk. It would not be surprising, therefore, if the possible benefits of the interactive technologies are going to be seized only rarely. They may even produce an understandable fear: status, self-perception, control and authority are all at risk.

Distance learning and the real philosophy class

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For myself, teaching philosophy during the COVID-19 epidemic is an experiment in distance learning in the digital era. 'Distance-learning' strictly refers to the distance between teachers and students in cyberspace. Much like in-class learning, distance-learning courses require strict teaching plans, rather than lectures and reports in the general sense, in order to make the teaching of philosophy worthy of its name. It should also be noted that these distance learning courses are supervised and inspected by the authorities of the school in charge of teaching management.

As an expedient measure during this emergency period, the online teaching of philosophy, if performed according to standard, is largely sufficient for fulfilling the teaching duties and responsibilities required in both undergraduate and postgraduate programs. Nonetheless, I remain persuaded that distance-learning ought not to take the place of on-campus and in-class philosophy courses, regardless of present or future circumstances, although we do not deny that digital resources (including lecture videos of colleagues at home and abroad, videos of philosophy conferences, and e-books, to name only a few) offer auxiliary means for supplementing the in-class teaching of philosophy.

Fundamentally speaking, teaching philosophy (especially the branch of metaphysics) is an academic exercise in the practice of thoughtful dialogue in virtual space. Students, teachers, and even for amateur laypersons, doing philosophy means to engage in dialogues in virtual space with the great philosophers who are no longer in the world, because this is one primary way in which ideas are circulated and exchanged. Today, we still engage with Confucius, Laozi, Zhuangzi, Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Berkeley, Nietzsche and Foucault in precisely this way, in the sense of thinking. In other words, authentic philosophical engagement and philosophical contemplation are ideological activities that are performed in the virtual space of the mind, representing a real-time thought experiment in operation.

However, no matter the degree of actuality, rapidity, and intelligence currently attained by contemporary digital technology, it still cannot enact, in terms of materialization or visualization, the philosophical thinking that has been on-going in virtual space since the birth of philosophy thousands of years ago. The online teaching of philosophy in the digital age is not conducive for allowing teachers and students to engage and contemplate complex and significant philosophical issues in the virtual space of the mind. The thoughtful teaching of philosophy depends on reflective dialogue and interactive discussion in the context of real time and space. In addition, distance learning in the digital age does not allow for the dialogical mode of teaching philosophy, which, for the narratives and presentations of philosophy, demands face to face discussion, questioning, and critique, which themselves become meaningful through living speech by way of tone, gesture, and expression. In sum, cyberspace communication without personal meeting cannot provide a reliable place for the teaching of philosophy. Online philosophy courses as they are often done today have become a stage for the monologues of philosophy teachers mostly talking to themselves. They are distanced from their students who are severely hampered in their desire to receive timely, effective, and real-time feedback from their teachers as well as their cohorts, let alone in-depth discussion.

Therefore, the teaching of philosophy in the university should be returned to the campus classroom at the earliest possible opportunity.

Reimagining the new pedagogical possibilities for universities post-Covid-19

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Of times and shadows

In critical, pandemic (pan = all + demos = people) times, medical and spatial metaphors remain resilient: not only bodies, but also spaces and their corresponding body-politic are pronounced sick.⁸ For, collectivities are also spatiotemporal 'bodies'. We employ such metaphors especially when, in facing bodily challenges, we try to re-imagine and transform the universality that we have created. The motto of the CfPapers metaphorizes the pandemic as a 'portal, a gateway between one world and the next',⁹ namely, the earthly utopia that the pandemic may enable by mobilizing imagination. By disrupting time the pandemic becomes an 'opportunity'¹⁰ for movement to another, better place. Modern utopian metaphoricity involves the journey, the passage to another space or time, and the question is how we cross the border, what we carry along: ideally, 'we can walk through lightly, with little luggage',¹¹ shedding our old and new plagues as we go. But, I think, if our being spatiotemporal is no biased self-/human-description, another question about our luggage is: what light would dispel our shadow? And should it? For, bodies moving in relative light/darkness have shadows that move along, even when diverse technologies of the self paradoxically render them invisible.

Etymologically, 'pandemic'¹² also involves journeys and visitations. Universities, in Greek *pan-epistimia* (literally: all sciences), and *pandemics* share the prefix 'pan-' (all). The universality of a pandemic and of science echoes the 'global interconnectivity' that is to be re-imagined and hopefully turned into a new reality, if its aspirational thought becomes pandemic. For, we, academics/the academic body, share with viruses the global spread (another spatial metaphor); their biology of contagiousness is, for us, the politics of the sublimated desire for the viral, for leaving our mark in the body-politic, for installing our thought in others and for controlling the direction of thought, even the thought about the virus.¹³ The speedy recovery of our time-honored pedagogies from experiencing suspended time (now a risk, instead of opportunity) enabled

academic thought to continue visiting students by turning 'viral'. The virus reminds the demos of its body, its being inexorably biological, but also of its body-politic and its socio-political ills, precisely through the paradox of having to resort to the 'viral', to forget about the body for the sake of maintaining the body's health.

Re-imagining reflects 'our capacity for making informed predictions' and 'an ethics of possibilities'.¹⁴ Pre-dictions of the visitable *avenir*, this temporality of speaking in advance, this pre- of -diction,¹⁵ sometimes rushed to become viral,¹⁶ may meet prejudice, another pre-, that of 'judicium' (judgment).¹⁷ The risk of dragging 'the carcasses of our prejudice'¹⁸ along, giving them citizenship in the new, the renewed and the re-imagined, is like the shadow of one's body, of an embodied existence that wants the viral, the contaminating, universalizing force, the continuity and speed of mobile thought. For, pre-judice, judging in advance, before *krinein*, before crisis, unmasks one's being prepared for the advent of a crisis to interpret its cast shadow in the way that the 'pre-' determines.

Expectations for "new digital, online, and pedagogical possibilities" and "new cultural and social formations" may reflect a biased, modern valorization of the "new". The view that the view that "online teaching would never match the real thing"¹⁹ is biased is itself biased, biased against embodied existence. What is the "real thing"? The "real thing" about bodies is, I think, their occasional awareness of their shadow, contra all blithe and hubristic modernisms of unlimited possibility, of renewals which exacerbated the plagues and ills that we desperately need to shed behind. One border that separates the self-understandings of the analogue and the digital (the most modernist of all modernisms in its aspiration to the borderless and limitless) is that bodies regain a sense of limit, especially in times of pandemics. In the space of digital pedagogy that educational technology makes ever tidier, more neat and expansive, what escapes the eye is the body's shadow as a non-nostalgic, deliberate and liberating obsolescence. The modernist bias beneath linear succession, crossed spatialities and surpassed stages (where the place allocated to the new ostensibly presupposes evacuation) paradoxically promises continuities and transference of the internal borders of our body-politic to the new, re-imagined world. One way to mitigate it may be to re-view the proximity and distance of so-called "traditional" and new, digital pedagogies in their struggle for political and pedagogical space, for points of entry, in the post-covid-19 utopia.

Notes

8. For more elaboration on such connections, see Papastephanou, M. (2019). Political education in times of political apathy and extreme political pathos as global ways of life. *Educational Studies in Japan*, 13, 81–95.
9. Roy, A. Pandemic is a portal. *The Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fefcd274e920ca> quoted in the Call for Papers to which this commentary of mine responds.
10. In the Call for Papers: 'The COVID-19 pandemic offers us the opportunity to rethink not only new digital, online, and pedagogical possibilities but also the basic purposes of education'.
11. Roy, A. Pandemic is a portal.
12. Although a pandemic cancels journeys and visitations, the very term evokes them. Pandemic originates from the Greek pandemic, from pan + demos (in Greek 'all people') and denotes an epidemic (coming to [epi] a people [demos], a visitation) that crosses all borders, travels everywhere, shrinking space and time.
13. Self-reflectively, this could also, and arguably, be the shadow of this brief commentary too, despite its style going against any possibility of viral influence and despite its effort and intention to unmask the 'we' as 'masked philosophers' being inclusive, universal and aware of the shadow enough to stave off any charge of self-exemption. Still, it is a shadow that causes me unease as to the Sartrean counter-finalities of commentaries on the epi-kaira (kairos = lived time), as topical, public, academic interventions in what, say, an epi-demic has, timely and, ironically, made more visible behind the protective masks than ever. I develop this point elsewhere.
14. Call for Papers.
15. Etymologically, from the Latin prae (in advance, before) + dicere (to say). <https://www.etymonline.com/word/predict>

16. See, for instance, Giorgio Agamben's <https://www.quodlibet.it/giorgio-agamben-l-invenzione-di-un-epidemia> [I am indebted to Prof Ronald Sultana for drawing my attention to it]. I consider Agamben's initial reaction to corona virus measures rushed, and his applying to them his notion of the state of exception infelicitous. Agamben's intervention, in my view, utterly modern in its tailoring reality to a (meta-)narrative masked as post-, operates as a subtext concerning some critical points that I raise in this commentary.
17. Prejudice comes from the Latin *prae* (in advance, before) and *judicium* (judgment).
18. Roy, A. Pandemic is a portal.
19. The Call for Papers reads: 'The clear bias against online teaching that would never match the real thing, is destined to become a thing of the past' [The CfP refers this idea to this source: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/will-coronavirus-make-online-education-go-viral>]. I have added the emphasis on the 'real thing' in my main text.

Making education great again through dehumanization

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Once during an undergraduate class in Middle English, held in a musty old room in Victoria College, an 1836 masterpiece of Neo-Gothic architecture complete with turrets, gargoyles, and battlements, my Chaucer professor began weeping as she read excerpts from the *Canterbury Tales*. Tears dropped from her cheeks onto my shoulder. I could not have felt more sublime had my father confessor sprayed me with holy water. As she walked past my desk (perhaps a seat that was warmed by Margaret Atwood's genius a decade earlier) I could smell the perfumed odor of her academic gown. At the end of class she clasped my arm gently and told me that she would bring a bottle of vitamins to the next class as I looked pale and undernourished. I had spent the night sleeping in a graveyard, physically spent from an LSD experiment that kept me running from gravesite to gravesite, hiding as best I could from massive stone angels that had suddenly sprung to life.

Massey College was another refuge, a gorgeous building that combined Dutch *de Stijl* modernism and touches of Frank Lloyd Wright with an infusion of Gothic grammar. Nothing could compare to the dining room, Ondaatje Hall, where all Junior Fellows like myself were required to wear gowns and say prayers in Latin, and sit at tables where only French or German were spoken, depending upon the day. The high table dinners were exquisite and the sherry and cigars afterwards were more so. Later I was to abandon the prurient class elitism of it all, bathed as it was in the succulent side of capitalism, but unlike the Red Guards of the same generation far away in China, I did retain a tactile appreciation for the artistic achievements of Western civilization.

It was an experience to hear lectures in Convocation Hall, built in 1907 in Edwardian Baroque revival style, with a domed rotunda, or attend social events at Hart House, established in 1919 (where my mother, a clothing model, and housewife, and later a telephone switchboard operator, used to perform small roles in plays prior to WWII). My 1965 fountain pen served more as a calligraphy brush in my hands. I loved making sketches of professors, classmates, and friends in the margins of my notebooks. My daily planner was bound in leather which I would dutifully polish with Neatfoots oil, made from cattle shin and foot bones. Later, I began to appreciate as much the classrooms in the dusty barrios of Venezuela, held in structures made of tin and constructed over mushy dirty roads, where teenagers and old men sat together in rickety old desks scratched to oblivion by idle pen knives, and scribbled the alphabet into their notebooks with tooth-sharpened pencils. The books displayed on the teacher's desk were treasures to behold.

Today I enter homes in California with no books, only memories of books. But there are secondhand computers, sometimes more than one. Only the wealthy vipers own brand new, up-to-date computers, those slick metal monstrosities that are destroying the environment. Yes, I'm using one now! Well over a billion people worldwide owns a PC. Imagine the strain that puts

on the electrical grid, and on power plants throughout the world – not to mention the pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that result from mass-producing them.

The average PC requires more power than a refrigerator. Computers add to the strain on power plants to produce enough energy to supply the world. The production of energy creates pollution and emissions. The amount of electricity needed to keep our computers running contributes to the millions of tons of greenhouse gases that are emitted into the atmosphere each year. And did you know that ‘computers still require 10 times their weight in chemicals and pollutants during manufacturing’ (<https://sciencing.com/how-do-computers-pollute-the-environment-13660586.html>)?

But the advantages of computers outweigh the dangers, correct? Yes, but tell that to the spindle-shanked youth in Africa, China, India, Vietnam and the Philippines, who spend their days picking through the landfill waste depots for useful scraps and who come into life-threatening contact with heavy metals. Or tell that to their family members whose drinking water is contaminating by runoff from the landfills. But hats off to Alphabet, Microsoft, IBM and Adobe engineers! They make our world function. And we owe a debt of gratitude to massive open online courses (MOOCs), such as Khan Academy, Coursera, Udacity and edX – because they are going to save education in the era of the coronavirus. Who needs a four-year residential experience anyway?

Students don’t really talk to each other anymore, do they? Look at the cafeterias today and you will see people eating around the same table, all of them glued to their cellphones. And going on a date today means going out with someone of your choice, and their cellphone! And we can always communicate with each other across the restaurant table with our cellphones – using emojis! And in college we can get by on much less F2F engagements, right? Think about all the resources that can be freed up! Students can take courses at their leisure in grubby, roach infested rooms that they share with a handful of other students trying to survive an economy gone bust as a result of the coronavirus (actually, as a result of capitalism). That macaroni and cheese and spam sure tastes good! Open up those sardine cans! Better than living in dorm rooms and eating at the student cafeteria. Well, it is certainly cheaper. Professors unfamiliar or hostile to online courses can benefit from anonymized discussions with their students about what’s going wrong in their classes. This could really help the professors, or drive them crazy.

I am all for developing a human rights commission on the digital divide, on digital inequalities, if that means the poor getting improved bandwidths and more stable wifi connections, and better audio-visual applications. Computers are a part of our lives now. Ask a professor and you will learn just how difficult it is to ask students to put away their cell phones and computers during a class. Not so easy in this era of multi-tasking and Internet addiction. So should we future-proof education by embracing online classes as the future of higher education? Not if that means throwing out our dusty copies of Dostoyevsky and watching lectures by Steve Jobs.

Online teaching the gendered realities of higher education

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With increasing numbers of universities employing online learning in a COVID-19 world, we must consider how such a universe will alter our notions of educational practice. A future of online instruction raises a host of possibilities for establishing more democratic educational fora. It also presents the possibility of inadvertently or consciously recapitulating the inequities of the current system. Such a future is not simply a matter of transposing face-to-face instruction onto the screen. We must consider other salient elements. For example, the composition of the instructional staff.

A striking characteristic of the contemporary university structure is the gender stratification of the instructional staff. In institution after institution, in country after country, fewer and fewer women appear in the higher echelons of academia. If we are entering a new environment of on-screen university education, we must ask who will the teachers be? Will we continue to relegate women to the teaching of introductory courses with large enrollments and little teacher-student interaction, with little opportunity for the sociality so important for building a democratic model? To be the assistants in tutorials rather than course developers who provide role models for all students? Will we leave the more 'prestigious' courses to the highly ranked professorate dominated by men? Will prepackaged curriculum become the standard, following the norm of teaching by a gendered proletarianized group of teachers and further reducing the creative role of women in research and educational developments?

Historically, gender has been a critical element in higher education. Take, for example, medical education. For centuries, medical schools refused to accept women as students. Schools for women to study medicine were founded in the 19th century. But, as male medical schools slowly began to accept female applicants in the 20th century, most of these women's medical colleges closed. As a result, the number of women graduating medical school remained extremely low until the last half of the twentieth century. An even more striking example of the gendered nature of medical education is Alice Hamilton. Her exemplary career in public health and industrial medicine led to her appointment as an assistant professor in the new Department of Industrial Medicine in 1919 at Harvard Medical School. Despite her international reputation in occupational health and her acclaimed pioneer work in industrial toxicology, she remained an assistant professor until her retirement in 1935. Food science presents a similar narrative. In the 19th century and through at least the first half of the 20th century, women interested in studying nutrition were directed into schools of home economics, single-sex units with significantly less prestige and resources than university departments of chemistry and biochemistry. Some managed to gain doctorates in their chosen field but found few professorial positions there. Most often they were directed back into home economics, a field with less status and fewer opportunities.

Re-envisioning of the university educational system presents us with the chance to rethink and reorganize its many and varied parts. One of the most significant is the possibility of fostering and promoting a diverse instructional staff that is representative of a democratic society. But, this will not happen automatically. We need to take account of this institutional history in order to be fully aware of how the gendered structures in higher education may have substantive effects on the ways in which new digitalized media will in fact be used.

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Lessons from the coronavirus: What we are learning about online learning

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At my university, we are careful to distinguish 'online education' from 'remote teaching'. The emergency adaptation to providing some kind of access to courses for students who cannot come to campus because of the coronavirus outbreak, mostly offered by faculty who have never taught online (and in some cases had no desire to) is not the same as a thoughtful, intentional redesign of courses to alternative modalities.

And a temporary, hopefully one-time accommodation to an extraordinary situation is not the same as a permanent restructuring of the curriculum – or as Clayton Christensen calls it, a 'disruptive innovation'. In cases like this, we get the disruption but not always the innovation.

These distinctions are important if we are to appreciate the longer-term implications of this current crisis. I see the following trends:

1. The legitimacy of alternative pedagogical modalities is being changed for people who previously viewed them with suspicion, as they now gain some experience with them. While not exposed to an online modality in its fullest sense, perhaps, they are seeing that online or blended is not the same as in-class instruction, and is not simply porting over in-class instruction to a different 'delivery system'. Seeing that online or blended instruction is not the same as emergency remote instruction may help develop a deeper appreciation for the complexities of true online course design. Online has its own distinct affordances, its own advantages and disadvantages, just as the conventional classroom does – and part of this insight is learning to weigh the advantages and disadvantages on both sides, not comparing in-class instruction as the ideal model with online as a pale imitation of the 'real' thing.
2. While online is normally presented as a way of expanding access to learning opportunities, both in terms of avoiding the costs of mobility or relocation, and allowing people to pursue full-time employment while also pursuing degrees, the current experiment in non-voluntary transposition into virtual classes is highlighting other dimensions of unequal access: regions with poor or non-existent wifi; learners with lower quality equipment, or none; and differential levels of comfort and experience with applications like Moodle or Zoom. If we are not careful, what we gain in expanding access to learning opportunities for some will be counterbalanced by a loss of opportunities for others. Not every reform is a 'win/win'.
3. As noted, a process of thoughtful, intentional online redesign involves more than adopting an alternative delivery system. It changes content as well as form; it entails rethinking and sometimes abandoning familiar elements of classroom instruction with which we might be comfortable; it involves new perspectives on, for example, what 'communication' means in the classroom and what it is for. Done well, it takes time, technical support, and additional development costs (e.g. high-quality video). The quick and non-voluntary experiment in emergency remote teaching we are going through now is, I think, alerting people to the ways in which online redesign – done well – requires additional time and resources.

There will come a time when the coronavirus will be a memory, like SARS or H1N1. But these lessons, if we are open to them and reflect upon them, provide a chance to reexamine our assumptions about online and blended modalities – and how to implement them more intelligently. The quality and fairness of these sorts of innovations depend upon asking better questions about why (and for whom) we are adopting them.

University education in the post-Covid world

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Covid-19 forced many universities across the world to shift from being fully f2f (face-to-face) class to fully online classes. For going online, a variety of tools like Zoom or Adobe connect were used to deliver lectures which students can attend from anywhere. In India, this did not happen widely as even the top institutes like IITs found that many of their students do not have access to laptops or good internet in their homes, and as movement was disallowed in lockdown, access to an internet café was also not an option.

It is, however, clear that (undergraduate) students do not like the online education as compared to f2f, campus-based education. There had been some evidence of this even earlier, but

this forced online lecturing has resulted in many students complaining 'why they had to pay so much if education had to be online'. Indeed a class action suit has been launched in the US against many universities, asking for refunds. In India also the general feedback is that students do not perceive online education highly.

Hence, the question going forward for universities is not just how to make online teaching more effective for learning (the question that was most asked when online was launched), but also about the perception of online learning in terms of value.

Students benefit from a university education in two main dimensions – self growth and professional development. For the first, the on-campus experience is the key – in fact a good deal of the self-growth happens outside of the formal curriculum through the social and other engagements in an on-campus model. Any good university provides a rich campus environment for such a growth. Professional development is the focus of the formal curriculum. Here, online mode is useful for some types of learning. But even for professional development, online mode is of limited value in developing graduate attributes like team work, communication ability, consensus building, etc. So we can say that f2f, campus-based education has a role in the overall education of the student which cannot be replaced by online teaching, though online models can indeed be useful for some aspects of the learning a university provides.

Given the experience during covid lockdowns, Post-covid, universities will want to be prepared for online delivery of courses. However, given the limitations of online approaches, universities are likely to opt for blended approach for education, keeping in mind the learning goals as well as value perceptions. The blending will happen in a few ways:

- Students will still be enrolled in a brick and mortar university, but some of the courses they take in a semester may be offered online, while the others will remain f2f.
- Even with online courses, a blended model is likely to be used – some MOOC style asynchronous lecturing, complemented with some weekly synchronous interaction (f2f or online) – this maybe discussion like in a flipped classroom, or may be summarizing the lectures for the week, etc. Some aspects of assessment will also be f2f, like projects, major exams, etc.
- For courses being offered in classroom mode, some students may be allowed to attend them online (i.e. the lecture and presentation will be streamed live)

This means that universities have to gear up to provide, in addition to regular education, online education also – MOOC-style lectures, synchronous online teaching, and streaming of live lectures. We view the third option as straightforward use of technology to have a distributed class, which reduces the need for classroom infrastructure, and do not discuss it further.

Once universities adopt a blended model where some courses may be offered online, then the entire repository of online courses available becomes a resource – the university does not have to necessarily create its own courses. Using externally created courses may not be used by the top universities of the world who may want to offer their own courses to their students, they will be useful for many universities, particularly those which have limited faculty resources. How the openly available online courses are used is where universities in India, particularly those who are currently not able to offer good quality courses due to lack of faculty, will differ from those in developed countries. Most Indian universities are likely to be more of a consumer of online courses at least in the near term.

So far the use of externally developed courses for credit has been limited in India – despite them being available for quite some time now. The covid crisis may provide the impetus to use them, as online teaching and learning becomes more widely accepted, and as regulations for their use become more flexible. How this use will pan out actually will depend on other forces as well.

However, for using externally created courses, the issue of student motivation and assessment has to be addressed, if academic credits are to be given. There are various ways to address this.

For example, having a doubt clearing synchronous session every week by the local instructor, some separate assignments based on the online material that are submitted to the local instructor, some proctored exams, etc.

If the university using an externally created course does not have suitable local instructors for the course, which is likely to be the case for many universities in India, then the approaches mentioned above may not be feasible. In such a situation, innovative approaches will have to be used, for example, using peers for doubt clearing, peer grading, perhaps taking help from external faculty (maybe the creator of the course) for doubt clearing sessions, assigning TAs who are required to have done the online course earlier and then have them coordinate peer-discussions, assessments, checking if the students have submitted online assignments, etc.

Interestingly, few studies have been done on how to effectively and efficiently consume externally created courses such that learning outcomes are achieved. There is a need to experiment more with it and develop suitable approaches. If many universities in India and other countries move toward consuming externally created online courses for providing academic credit, we may see some innovative approaches emerging to address the issues in such a use, which may provide further boost to online course consumption and improve the quality of education in universities that have a shortage of qualified faculty.

Reforming online education

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After the great experiment of moving traditional education online across much of the world, there can be no doubt that online education works differently from brick-and-mortar schooling. This raises many positive possibilities: Access to quality education can be increased, and with it a global sense of citizenship and sociality. More generally, there are calls for societal leaders to not revert backwards after such experiments, to the 'old normal', described by Roy (2020) as a world of prejudice, hate and avarice.

Yet at the same time, educators experience new ethical challenges moving online. A first challenge relates to access. In many elite educational institutions, computer labs (and in some cases, office spaces) have been shrinking over time, while students and instructors are presumed to be online elsewhere, on personal laptops, phones, and other devices. Yet for ordinary people, private spaces and high-tech devices are costly resources. Personal access to fast data is also not a right to take for granted. Even in China and Hong Kong, relatively well-equipped to move online, technical challenges remain (Lau et al., 2020). So as the world goes online, many get left behind. This raises serious ethical concerns for assessing students, particularly in this academic year, as many students have lost access to institutional resources which were necessary to their success.

Additionally, technologies are not neutral. Many embraced Zoom before thinking through its privacy and security policies (Paul, 2020). Zoom users' personal data gets sent to Facebook, even if they are not Facebook users. In some cases, classes have been hacked by trolls posting offensive and hateful content. These realities signal that greater caution is needed in light of the ethical dimensions of selecting and using online meeting tools, especially in educational contexts, where students cannot normally decline professors and institutions' choices.

Finally, there are challenges that might be categorized as 'existential'. When everyone stays at home, this increases risks of domestic violence, mental illness, and other emotional distress (Vutsinas, 2020). Educators who are parents of young children have their work cut out for them, to teach classes at home near their children, who do not understand the situation. After just a few months, people are coming to terms with online fatigue (Sklar, 2020). Trying to do what they did in the past is exhausting, given challenges related to maintaining interpersonal connections through flickering videos, with each person's face taking up one surreal square on a screen.

This reflection does not mean to condemn going online, in favor of the 'old normal'. Life and education were hardly perfect in 2019. Yet as educators embrace the new, it is vital to critically reflect on ethical challenges related to transforming practices, so that the new norms do not merely shuffle old problems. As a more equitable and just future is sought, educators must continue to respond to the realities faced, which provide new challenges along with new possibilities. While it is normalized, online education must also be reformed, for it to play a positive social and educational role, in these times marked by new, incredible challenges.

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After the COVID-19 crisis: Why higher education may (and perhaps should) never be the same

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Traditional residential universities have dragged their feet making the move to online teaching and learning. Commuter colleges, too, have kept lecture theaters, classrooms and textbooks as core tools of their trade. The core business of traditional teaching and its auxiliary place-bound services have put a brake on the innovation needed to build innovative and engaging online learning infrastructures and approaches.

Suddenly, with this COVID-19 crisis, everyone must be online. Few universities or colleges are prepared for such a rapid shift.

Meanwhile, the conventional wisdom remains, the gold-standard for learning is traditional face-to-face, while online is second-best. Often reluctantly and in a piecemeal fashion, many colleges have tried to migrate their traditional practices online. They have made awkward attempts to replicate the traditional classroom with video lectures, e-textbooks, online tests and learning management systems that look like old-fashioned syllabi. The result is often a step back into all that was wrong with didactic modes of teaching.

But perhaps, even without COVID-19, higher education might have been on the verge of a deep structural crisis. One dimension of the looming crisis has been ballooning student debt. The fancy lecture theaters and the manicured lawns are ridiculously expensive. The students have been asked to pay more and more, and increasingly they can't.

Another crisis is what we call 'attentional'. Sitting in classes and listening to lectures is an absurdly sub-optimal cognitive load for today's students who on their personal devices have become habituated to designing their own information feeds then skipping through their messages.

So, even if we didn't expect to have to move online as precipitously as since COVID-19, at the very least, in-person learning was ripe for radical transformation.

At the University of Illinois, we've been researching this transformation, and developing and testing online learning solutions. As senior professors in a historically residential university, already we only teach online.

Here are five reasons why, and why we would never choose to teach in-person again.

Simply put, online can be completely different, and with the right tools, potentially much superior to in-person teaching. These are also the very reasons we must discard the back-to-the-future learning management systems. To reap the benefits of online learning, we need to abandon the current generation educational technologies – systems and processes that mostly do little more than reverse-engineer traditional classrooms.

Scale up higher education and scale down its costs

In-person education does not scale. To achieve universal college education – and this surely, is what we need for all citizens to face their personal as well as collective futures – we need to reduce the costs of teaching and learning.

It's not just a matter of reducing the need for expensive physical plant. It is also a matter of making it possible for all workers and all those with domestic caring responsibilities to access higher education without having to leave their communities and homes.

This can only be achieved with online education as a thoroughly renovated version of distance learning. Today, to those taking online courses we only offer a small discount. To achieve access for all, the sticker prices for online learning can and must be vastly reduced.

Unless of course, post-secondary education becomes a publicly supported right in the same way as K-12 education. But even in that scenario, it would have to become cheaper for government and its taxpayers.

Develop pedagogies of social knowledge and collaborative intelligence

It's the human interaction that makes in-person learning so valuable, say its supporters. Yet in the lecture theater, all the students have to sit silently while the instructor speaks. In the classroom discussion, only one person can speak at a time. In these respects, the lecture theater and the classroom are hardly social, except when it comes to communicating pathogens. Not only are these suboptimal forms of communication in the era of social media. Paradoxically, their communications architectures are systems of social isolation.

Here is the difference with online learning: the educator might create videos, not like the lectures of old, but in short and digestible chunks. These are not simply to 'tell', but always prompt discussion and elicit contributions from students in the feed below the video. (The lecture of the truly 'flipped classroom' certainly should not be a recording of old-style in-person lectures.) The student can stop and start, review or skip, slow down or double the speed. Learning analytics will credit students for their engagement.

Then classroom discussions: instead of one person speaking at a time, everyone can comment in a social media-like feed, at the same time or at their convenience. These discussions can be synchronous or asynchronous. Engagement does not have to be locked into the four walls of the classroom and the cells of the timetable.

Here, students earn none of the conventional rewards for arrogance, nor are they penalized by social inhibitions or reticence – dynamics that create imbalances of participation in traditional classrooms. Indeed, everyone can be required to respond, and to measurably equivalent degrees. Learning analytics can track every learner's engagement. This is simply a far superior communication and pedagogical architecture.

Create pedagogies of intense engagement

In the traditional model, learners are positioned as knowledge consumers – of lecture or textbook content, for instance – eventually demonstrating their absorption of acquired knowledge in end-of-course, summative assessments.

Lecture and textbooks may have been a matter of logistical necessity in heritage educational architectures. Rather than just put these online in recorded lectures and e-textbooks, e-learning ecologies open new possibilities.

In online learning architectures it is possible to position learners as knowledge producers and co-contributors to knowledge communities. One way to do this is to have students research and make posts into the class activity stream that exemplify themes prompted by instructors. Another is to create peer-reviewed projects, where interim feedback in the knowledge production process comes from multiple perspectives: peer, instructor and machine feedback. Then projects can be published and shared by the instructor to the community as collective knowledge.

The role of the instructor is to design e-learning ecologies, leveraging the social-collaborative complexity enabled by social knowledge technologies. (We use the phrase ‘social knowledge’ because the mainstream social media are completely inappropriate for learning, given the size of their communicative chunks and way their algorithms prioritize posts.)

Embedded, on-the-fly formative assessments can track community engagement and personal progress. An example: in one of our recent 8-week courses with 54 students, using our CGScholar platform there were 14,500 pieces of actionable feedback on 3.3 m datapoints, giving students and instructors a far richer and more reliable picture of learning than ever possible with a traditional test.

Focus on higher order thinking

Traditional instruction and assessment measures long-term memory of fact and the correct application of procedure. (Definition of long-term: until the day of the test.)

Today, the devices that we keep close to our bodies serve us as cognitive prostheses. They remember things for us. We can look up far more knowledge than we could ever remember. Our apps execute procedures for us.

So, the foundational objectives of education change. Learning is about careful navigation of at-hand knowledge resources. It is about appropriate application of machine-supported procedures. More important than long-memory is higher order thinking, including critical, creative and design thinking.

The core capacities required by graduates are changing rapidly. These reduce the importance of long-term domain memory. Today’s graduate capabilities include evidence-based reasoning, argumentation in support of verifiable claims, and testable judgment-calls.

Online environments can uniquely achieve this, by leveraging collaborative knowledge processes. Instead of individual minds, the social mind is acknowledged in the provenance of knowledge and the collaborative contributions of peers in the learning process.

Artificial intelligence can track and offer suggestions on the basis of what we term ‘complex epistemic performance’. Machine learning works synergistically with human learning.

Lifelong and lifewide learning

University and college education has been for the past several centuries a time of life. It has also required that the student is for a time taken out of life. This institutional form can be traced back to the monastic origins of universities in the early modern west and east.

Online learning, by contrast, can be embedded in the real world. It can be continuous, lasting for as long as life and stretching as wide as social and personal needs. What we love about the students in our online courses is that, by day, they are in the world. They bring knowledge and experience that we instructors could never have imagined, contributing this as partners in our

knowledge communities. They can also test, live in real-world contexts, the new things they have learned in our classes.

But now the problem: none of the main commercial or open source learning management systems can do what we have just promised. The potential is there, but all rely on 1990s teacher-centered, hub-and-spoke, file-upload/download architectures. None are instrumented adequately for social knowledge, collaborative learning, or artificial intelligence. All try ponderously, painfully, to replicate the traditional classroom, perhaps with a few clumsy patches to mimic social networking.

In this time of crisis, we must seize the day. We must imagine a different future for higher education. If we are to adopt a stance of strategic optimism, we may be on the cusp of the biggest change since the invention of the social processes and artifacts of higher education in early modern times.

The danger is that, as people are thrown abruptly into online learning, they will be compelled to use flawed systems with limited training, confirming their worst fears about the quality of the online teaching and learning experience. Focused investment needs to be made in people and technology to renew and revitalize our pedagogical and social values. If nothing else, this crisis should lead to that.

Educational transmogrification and exigent pedagogical imaginaries in pandemic times

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The Covid-19 pandemic simultaneously engages, intensifies and subverts existing educational inequity and iniquity. This begs the question of whether pedagogical imaginaries can emerge in pandemic times that gesture toward significant educational equity, virtue and dignity. Gesture is important. It is a sign that insists on, yet, resists the deadness of our time. It signifies life left in the educational body, the body hoping to be educated, always available for educational resurrection.

As the coronavirus pathogen spreads roughshod across the world, it affects our 'right to breathe', causing us finally to account for our own death (Mbembe, 2020). Yet, pandemic times, on our death bed, allow us to fantasize, nay imagine, the rebirthing of life, a life yet denuded and repressed, squeezed of its last breath by the suffocation and destruction wrought by decades of neoliberal education reform, now corralled and transmogrified under pandemic conditions.

Transmogrification in South Africa has become manifest in the emergence of a pandemic pedagogy based on the rapid move to online education. This is a country where the right to breathe is vastly unequally distributed. Online education has rapidly come to authorize visions of a default educational life under the pandemic. However, only 20% of the country's educational institutions have managed to move their curricula online, with varying levels of efficiency. The most efficient institutions grafted their online offerings onto colonially and apartheid acquired privilege.

A deracialised and now middle-classed student body, the 20% elite surfaced by contemporary market-based assimilationism, is finally fulfilling the neoliberal dream of isolation from the barbarians. Locked down behind the barriers of pandemic isolation, these students are self-educating, staring into screens in a state of anguished comfort. What has emerged is a pandemic pedagogy accomplished through the modality of the machine and accompanying online learning platforms. The triumph of techne and instrumental reason has emerged as the victor in the early life of the pandemic. A maladapted vision of doing the new educational normal has been installed, circulating tropes of older knowledge exclusion, seamlessly, unquestioningly.

Despite its prominence in the curriculum imagination under the pandemic, online education is a minority experience. The majority of the country's students, black and poor, are experiencing pandemic lockdown without any meaningful education. Their schools, colleges and universities have been shut to prevent viral spread in decrepit and packed living quarters that make physical distancing unlikely.

Their educational institutions are unable to leverage robust online platforms for learning. These students are bereft of machines for learning and data for connectivity. Positioned in spaces of intense squalor, they exercise their desperate bodies as a type of soft infrastructure, plugging welfare gaps, looking after siblings and parents with co-morbidities such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

They engage in a 'pedagogy of care' to develop practices of survival. They invent ways of assuaging their family's food hunger that increased manifold under pandemic lockdown, securing clean water and obtaining medicines, masks and sanitizing equipment.

Instead of isolation, the majority student experience is one of intense engagement with the existing resources and infrastructures of their environments. They are engaged in informalised, context-mitigating, and socially engaged processes of learning to survive, and to keep body, mind and soul together. They acquire contextually engaged critical literacies that are vital for their survival and adaptation. Their intellectual engagement and practices of mitigation have foregrounded intensified relational pedagogical engagement. Such a perspective holds lessons for resuscitating pedagogical imaginaries in pandemic times.

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Higher education after the virus

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Once asked asked in an interview what he thought was likely to happen down the line, the distinguished Scottish historian, Tom Devine, laconically observed that 'The future is not my period! I rather think this about university education in a post-covid age in so far as whatever predictions one might make they are likely to be confounded. Covid has certainly put the cat amongst the pigeons but does it presage an interruption or a revolution? I suspect it's a bit of both. Its certainly true that the conservatism and legendary reluctance of Senates/Academic Boards to compromise on their 'gate-keeper' birthright disappeared in an Alladin-like puff of smoke as academics, globally put their teaching material, lectures and resources on-line. Together with the rapid and almost universal adoption of communication technologies this shift no doubt herald's the consolidation of a move that was already in motion. The penchant for rhetoricising educational innovation in the University has grown apace over the last decade and no doubt will continue to do so. The current obsession with the empty phraseology of the 'flipped classroom', coined by people who obviously weren't teaching high school in the 1970s and 80s will no doubt morph into the wonders of augmented reality and haptics. Liked 'flipped classrooms', who can be against these material developments – after all universities have played key roles in their development.

But, as to substance, when you look closely at some of the most heralded innovations such as the Rain classroom in Tsinghua the substance remains remarkably familiar. And while no doubt we will be able to create a wide range of augmented resources we will still need to educate students to think though even now that represents a variable geometry! The technology

will no doubt change the HE experience for some though they are likely to be those who already have diminished access to cultural capital.

So, what are some of the structural challenges we face? – The last decade and a half have witnessed an extraordinary wave of student mobility from East to West. However, in parallel, substantial infrastructure development has been taking place in China/East Asia. Ostentatious buildings and well-equipped laboratories and libraries sprang up everywhere and as the ripple effects of Covid-19 continue across economies, student mobility is likely to be a casualty. You might be forgiven for thinking that the myriad surveys on student intentions (see e.g. QS survey report at <https://www.qs.com/how-international-students-are-responding-to-covid-19/>) tell a different story; one where deferral rather than decline is the order of the day but I would suggest that other forces will be accelerated by this crisis. There will be a short to medium term bounce back and then, for universities in the largely receiving economies, a slow decline.

The economic damage of the lockdown will have long reaching effects in university education and while neither futurology or economics is my field there is likely to be a medium-term chain reaction that will shift the balance of educational power away from Europe, in particular, the UK, N. America and Australia. Despite the initial bounce back, the Covid pandemic has exposed the extraordinary reliance of global supply chains on China (938/1000 Fortune 100 companies have tier1/2 suppliers in the Wuhan region alone). This reliance affects not just material goods but services, including and most especially University provision in the UK, US and Australia in particular but, also, in more recent years, with a significant impact on the countries of the EU. Over the last two decades the cross subsidies offered by flows of international students have not only seen transfers from teaching income to research activity but also the propping up of the anglo-phone research infrastructure. Unless and until governments in places like Australia, the UK, Ireland and the US are prepared to take responsibility for funding their own university infrastructure it is likely that we will see a significant decline in their output and global performance. Given that the economic conditions in some G20 countries are likely to be difficult if not tortured it is unlikely that most governments will see shoring up the funding of universities as a priority. This, in turn, is likely to lead to diminished reputations and a consequent slow-down in student transfers. In the particular case of the UK, the conditions of Brexit will substantially exacerbate the economic difficulties posed by Covid-19. Where governments do offer support packages for universities these are likely to be accompanied by substantial conditions driving universities to accelerate the extant trend to down grade or dissolve much of the humanities and social sciences and, where they remain, increasingly tailor them to the cultural economy.

The alacrity with which global tech companies have engaged with global organizations (see Williamson's excellent mapping of this relationship at <https://codeactsineducation.wordpress.com/2020/04/01/new-pandemic-edtech-power-networks/>) has been eye-watering if not entirely surprising. In a world of crisis capitalism 'every challenge is an opportunity'. And, of course, while the rhetoric is suffused with perfunctory nods to altruism the real goal is market position, most especially but not exclusively with respect to developing economies. The heady admixture of hardware, software platforms and pseudo pedagogies will be seductive and no doubt governments keen to break the apparent monopoly of traditional universities will embrace much of this. The market-place will become crowded and some traditional universities in those economies where public services are often subject to market impulses will struggle with likely mergers and closures. In the short term the large research universities will take the major hit but this is likely to change over time.

None of this will have a long-term impact on the collegial and social nature of education in the large research institutions despite many experiencing a slow relative decline in global prestige. These institutions will embrace a more market-focused world, their academics will have diminished control over the intellectual direction of their institution, having already ceded administrative control; they will embrace and have the resources to embrace augmented and virtual realities, haptics and blended learning; they will indeed move from the rather sterile

uploading of their slides and lectures to more sophisticated pedagogies in a loose blended learning environment. But that environment will continue to be shaped by the materiality of the physical university with its cues and clues, its advanced technology buildings and 'learning centres' (i.e. that which we used to call a library), its tutorials and seminars and 'the university experience'. Arising from the already existing and pressing need to address the spiraling cost but insufficient revenues of a full university education (see the work of Sarah Goldrick-Rabb and her team at the Hope Center at Temple University), we will see the further solidification of differential class access to HE with those from first generation and economically challenged backgrounds having diminished opportunities to attend the most elite institutions. None of this is inevitable but resisting some of the logic would require governments in places like Australia, the US and the UK to re-discover levels of magnanimity and trust that have, for some time, been absent.

Back to school! A future for the university post-Covid-19

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There is much to be said about the past, present and future of the university, and even more so at this critical moment in time – a time of 'crisis', which should not be understood as chaos, but, going back to the Greek word 'krinein', as a turning point that calls for judgment. Less than the modern optimism of 'What shall we do?' or, in more shallow form, 'What do we fancy?', we are faced with a different question: 'What is this asking from us?' This question asks for a response, not a reflex, but of course many of the responses that are emerging – and there is certainly no lack of them – are not much more than reflexes, formed in a different time and under different conditions.

Some of these reflexes are clearly opportunistic in that they seize an opportunity that was previously more difficult to achieve, or even impossible or unthinkable. While the commercial interest in education is no secret (see first of all Stephen Ball's ground-breaking analyses; Ball, 2007, 2012), it is telling, but not remarkable, how swiftly Google has been offering its 'help', which, of course, it is offering 'for free',²⁰ just as Pearson is 'accelerating its move to be a more digitally focused company', expecting 'interest in its digital products to pick up as it makes some products free to use'.²¹ If the future is about competition in the global market for 'online learning', there is little hope for the university, other than as a local delivery point for two or three global providers – the Starbucks model of higher education.

The German educationalist Klaus Prange helpfully reminds us that the word 'school' goes back to the Greek word for 'leisure' (σχολή), not to be understood as time to relax, but as time that has been 'freed up' – we might also say: time that has been emancipated – first and foremost from the economic demands of production (see Prange, 2012, p. 120). In a world that is under pressure – social pressure, economic pressure and even the very basic pressure for survival – freeing up time may sound like the very luxury we can no longer afford. But such a populist critique of the university and education more generally, would be a serious mistake (see also Biesta, 2011, 2019a, 2019b). After all, the very thing we need when under pressure is time to come to judgment, rather than relying on our quick reflexes. This is one reason why in this time the university literally needs to go back to school.

Prange emphasizes, however, that the word 'school' also goes back to the Greek word 'scholazein' (σχολάζειν), which is about showing, presenting, representing and thus about teaching (see ibid.). This is not about teaching as a form of control – the travesty of education that has given teaching such a bad name (see Biesta, 2017) – but about teaching as an act of (re)p-presenting the world and inviting and encouraging students to pay attention, individually and

collectively, to what is 'out there'. This is the school, not as a place for learning or a learning community, online or otherwise, but as a place where you are giving what you were not looking for, first of all because you may not even be aware that you could be looking for it. Not looking for the obvious, but helping each other to look elsewhere, is the other reason why in this time the university needs to go back to school (see also Biesta, 2013).

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20. See, for example, <https://teachercenter.withgoogle.com/> [accessed 25 April 2020].

21. *The I*, 25 April 2020, p. 76.

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COVID-19 foreshadowing Earth's environmental tipping point: Education's transformation needed to avoid the ledge

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The devastating COVID-19 pandemic has provided windows to view needed transformation to help end devastation emergent from outside our subjective, political 'world' (anthropocentric sphere), including environmental unsustainability. Pedagogically, these views help to recognize the needed changes, challenges, and possibilities of environmental teaching (in/non/formal). In my ecopedagogical work (ecopedagogies as critical, Freirean-based environmental pedagogies and research), I have utilized the term *distancing* in teaching that falsely separates: environmental and social violence, 'their' socio-environmental oppressions from 'ours' (e.g. non/citizen, (neo)-colonized(er), and the world as *within* Earth (planetary sphere) (Misiaszek, 2018, 2020b).

Distancing can take on many forms including, geographically, timewise, reproducing othering from socio-historical oppressions (e.g. racism, patriarchy, xenophobia, coloniality), epistemologically, and intersectionalities between these and other forms. Global turmoil caused by COVID-19 illuminates that the world's subjective essence and polity cannot alter objective, apolitical Nature outside of the world (i.e. laws of Nature), no matter how intense post-truthism becomes or the amount of bullshit, as defined by Frankfurt (2005), is shoveled. In Illich's (1983) terminology, degendered here slightly, who is often viewed as founding ecopedagogy, the pandemic has shown 'modern [wo]man' that s/he does not control Nature without impunity to satisfy their all wants/needs constructed by 'scientists, engineers, and planners', but rather recognizing that 'primitive [wo]man' had better self-positionality *within* Earth.

We must utilize the ongoing, diverse experiences from COVID-19 to dissolve non-critical education, including shallow environmental pedagogies, for teaching for critically

literacy (e.g. *ecopedagogical literacy*) – reading that de-distances socio-environmental violence and counter epistemological foundations that justify world-Earth violence. As the metaphorical ‘frog’ in water slowly coming to a boil, such reading should have the goal of jumping out.

I argue this not naively, as I problematize why, with the most information ever available at our fingertips, people believe they can ‘will’ COVID-19 away without decisive, collective action; ‘understand’ Nature through false-truths based on propagandized opinions (see Misiaszek, 2020a); and rely on neoliberal ideologies that have the Self’s private sphere solely valued by devaluing public spheres (see Postma, 2006), including ‘others’ unhealthiness. Banking education, including banking environmental pedagogies, systematically obstructs students’ ability to critically read the world-Earth holistically (Freire, 2004), but rather helps entrench understandings that lead toward planetary devastation (although Earth will continue with/out humans) – denial of COVID-19 illustrates this. These and other factors coincide with environmental false understandings, for example, ~39% of the U.S. believe climate change is little to no threat.

Finally, how can education provide the tools to critically read neoliberalism? (as neoliberalism only works if normalized without recognizing possible alternatives and if its essence of sustaining/intensifying hegemony is veiled). The lack of ethics and morality of neoliberalism has emerged from the pandemic, as questions of ‘opening up economies’ are prioritized over humanism and local-to-global collectivism needed to stop COVID-19. For example, discussions on U.S. healthcare too often return to healthcare cost calculations as dominating factors, as justified by neoliberalism. Teaching to read and then act to disrupt such dehumanizing calculations (*praxis*) should be lessons from COVID-19, as well as countering deplanetarizing calculations through ecopedagogical literacy.

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The significance of border ethics in a time of pandemic

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When WHO pronounced Covid-19 as a pandemic in March 2020, countries started closing their national borders. The closing of physical borders, however, should not correspond with the walling of one’s heart and mind. More than ever, there should be a concerted effort to deterritorialize claims to power and knowledge through a foregrounding of border ethics in education.

The closure of universities and schools coupled with the shift to online learning has centered much attention on innovative digital tools and pedagogies. Less discussion has been paid to the connection between values and pedagogy. In other words, the spotlight on *episteme* (knowledge) and *techne* (craft or practice) has marginalized *phronesis* (commonly translated as practical

wisdom as determined by virtues of character). The interconnections among these ideas are rooted in the Aristotelian end of human flourishing and the intellectual and moral virtues tied to this. Similarly, for Confucius, the cultivation of *ren*, denoting humaneness or cosmopolitan love, is the lifelong pursuit of the exemplary man who trains himself to be morally responsive to others in the world. The acquisition of knowledge and skills are subjugated to this virtue.

In this time of global crisis, the relationship between knowledge and pedagogy be grounded on border ethics, even when teaching and learning takes place in the virtual space. Notions of border thinking and border pedagogy were conceptualized at least two decades ago. For example, Mignolo (2000) had argued that border thinking was a necessary intervention to de-center hermeneutical and epistemological discourses perpetuated by Western colonialism and neoliberal imperialism. Such border thinking needed to occur, he had argued, from the perspective of the subaltern and is reflective of 'other thinking'. Border ethics involved an inquiry into the world through the eyes of the other in which one learns to to be 'epistemically disobedient' by critically reframing the geopolitical situatedness of knowledge (Mignolo, 2013, p. 137). Similarly, Giroux's (1988) notion of border pedagogy envisioned students engaging as border crossers to counter texts and memory constructed around coordinates of difference and power.

In the current context, border consciousness remains as relevant as ever and there may even be a greater need to resuscitate it as a fundamental lens to interpreting the Covid crisis, and the future that lies ahead. The permeation of global risks into everyday realities has led to the erection of physical, political and cultural walls that have become the zeitgeist of our century (Brown, 2010). Walls define territorial spaces; they provide an image of security in containing and defending those on the inside from foreign intrusion. Yet, the fundamental effect of walling is in normalizing othering. This trend needs to be resisted.

I propose border ethics as a course of study as well as an ethical lens applied to readings of contemporary culture. The latter could encompass three key questions as a launch-pad for discussions.

First, where are the borders and how do they demarcate the 'us' versus 'them'? The aim is to sensitize students to spatial, political, and discursive boundaries and those with the power to mark them. This involves examining how physical boundaries function as roadblocks for marginalized groups and how the construction of discursive markers (e.g. 'China virus') has xenophobic effects.

Second, how have boundaries shifted and what values have changed as a result? In reflecting on the collapse of morality in Nazi Germany, Arendt (2003) observes the reversion of morality to its etymological roots denoting custom or manners. She observes how easily a set of moral values may be exchanged for another, like how table manners can be quickly substituted. This fluidity of moral values is observed in how, in times of crisis, cosmopolitan and humanist values are easily discarded in favor of tribal and fundamentalist beliefs. Our critical analysis should identify instances when institutional and symbolic forms of violence become normalized for the preservation of the non-other.

And finally, in what ways can we unbound the imagination and re-envision cosmopolitan possibilities? Imagination is an expandable faculty of mind that is also bounded by prejudices formed by historical and media stereotypes. In moments of crisis, curriculum time should be intentionally reserved for engagements with 'othered' groups (migrants, poor, mentally ill etc.) through the inclusion of memoirs, literature, and other arts that disrupt fossilized beliefs and provoke greater 'investedness' into securing their dignity and flourishing. Even as the current pandemic fuels anti-globalization sentiments, education should reiterate the cosmopolitan possibilities of living with others especially those on the margins.

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What kind of university do we deserve?

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In 1860, the French philosopher Joseph De Maistre wrote: ‘Every nation gets the government it deserves’ (Da Maistre & Blanc, 1860). While there is no doubt that any group of people is indeed *collectively* responsible for its own government, it would be cynical and unfair to say that Helga from Hamburg, or Luigi from Torino, are *personally* responsible for crimes of the Third Reich. This popular adage cuts straight into the heart of the relationship between individual and social responsibility.

We are all responsible for our individual actions, from our voting choices to recycling, yet none of us, regular citizens, can make a significant impact on electing the ‘best’ government or on reducing global warming. Periodically, leaders such as Stalin, Tito, Malcolm X, Adolf Hitler, Mao Zedong, Mahatma Gandhi, Donald Trump and many others, will stand up and take the lead. Depending on historical conjecture and their personal inclinations, some of these people will become heroes and others will become villains. But millions of people who died under the Nazi regime did not die of Hitler’s hand, and the US anti-racist legislation was not written by Malcolm X. It is within the curious combination of the individual and the collective, that historical events slowly and often unpredictably unfold into being.

In the second part of the 20th century, the university has reached one of its most advanced historical formations. From Europe to the US, through Eastern Bloc to Asia, universities have opened their doors to post-WW2 first-generation students who could study for little or no money and who knew that their degrees would lead to life prospects better than their parents’. Hello boomers! The world is yours to explore, exploit, and pollute! Yet the boomers’ world was short-lived, and today’s generations are faced with expensive studies in their youth followed up by many years of insecure work and huge student debt. Add a spoon of global warming, and just a pinch of the coronavirus ... and this generation’s sardonic response to their parents’ generation’s critiques, ‘OK boomer!’, is just a weak bite by an old dog trying to prove she still has sharp teeth.

In our liquid modernity no-one is personally responsible for the advent of the managerialist university – most people and institutions are just trying to survive the general trend. Surely, we do have university chancellors who make more \$1 million per year,²² roaring precarization of teachers, and all other evils described in numerous writings against the managerialist university. However, the existence of individual villains does not relieve us from our collective responsibility: echoing De Maistre, our generation has the university it deserves. The Covid-19 pandemic – which is an interesting case of individual vs. collective responsibility in its own right (see Jandrić, 2020) – provides us with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reexamine the fragile, ever-changing balance between our individual and collective interests.

While we ponder on the changing nature of individuality and sociality, while we develop new concepts and ideas such as knowledge socialism (Peters et al., 2021, forthcoming), while we cry over the boomers’ university which is no more and struggle against the managerialist university which is at its historical peak – we need to sit back and admit to ourselves that the struggle for the future of the university starts from within. Instead of asking, *What kind of university do we*

want?, or *What kind of University do we need?*, let us, for once, try and ask a more down to earth question which implies a mix of individual and collective responsibility: *What kind of university do we deserve?*

Note

22. See <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/slideshows/10-public-universities-run-by-highest-paid-presidents> and <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/feb/12/vice-chancellors-pay-universities-england-2017-18>.

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Universities' futures post-pandemic

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At the conclusion of their intriguing invitation to comment on universities' futures post-pandemic, Peters and Rizvi turned to a possible re-visioning for more democratic and just societies. My remarks arise in the context of the United States, philosophical work dedicated to democratic reform, and recent teaching of university undergraduates. I begin by acknowledging that in the fall 2020 semester my university as others will be emphasizing new practices of digital and online teaching. My sense, moreover, is that students already are familiar with advances in technology and will adapt readily. Their professors may be the ones challenged.

My interest is less about this welcome technological inevitability than with dangers to democracy. Impacting this concern, in the US in for many decades now colleges and universities have 'educated' students in narrow occupational and professional preparation. This aim is embraced by students in spite of academicians teaching undergraduates who value their disciplinary focus in the two-year general curriculum requirements and even though two years of a major. Professional schools add to this endeavor.

Tackling basic democratic purposes—these are multiple and not just in education—and their structural elements in the US requires a bit of context. First a premise: the present historic moment actually offers an opportunity for democracy in America. Second the educational scope: unlike many much smaller nations, post-secondary education in the US is vast. There are over 5000 institutions, with 1600 each public and private four-year schools. Available public sources document that nearly 20 million students attend with three times as many in public schools as in private. There is so much more to American higher education than the 'famous' colleges cited in a Peters and Rizvi source. Third economic conditions: college tuition and especially residential life are very expensive. Students survive on scholarships, loans, parent contributions, and their own work. Virtually everyone has a college job. And, despite these complexities, there is opportunity.

To move toward a more democratic future for the US requires a cultural marriage, a common aim of institutions, of societal 'classes', of individual families and persons, who currently attend college at all levels. All who go and have gone to college for social mobility and for social maintenance must see a larger world both in the US and elsewhere. The college family must join to make a better world for all others who for many reasons of inequality do not share their

'privilege.' Forward from today, gratitude for all who have, indeed, given their health and their lives for others to survive the current health/ economic crisis is not enough. The aim must be to educate college students about a shared world, to contribute to viable standards of living from dignified work, universal health care, decent housing, improved transportation, all forms of infra-structural renewal. This democratic collegiate purpose will not be easily accomplished. That the present context not be forgotten can be a start.

Digital media, sociality and history

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It is crucial to recognize that large scale progressive transformations of education are generated out of social movements. Thus, given the growing emphasis on digitally mediated education, questions surrounding 'What kind of sociality?' Will digital media produce are central to the larger project of the role of education in social transformation. Can the individuating experiences that now dominate the uses of digital media in education be interrupted? Can they assist in the formation of socially transformation movements?

This is all part of a larger question. Can these media be used to revitalize the public sphere? In asking this, we must not romanticize the public sphere. As Nancy Fraser reminds us, it has always been a contested site in which certain groups' voices and bodies are privileged.

With that caution in mind, we cannot begin to answer these questions without better understanding the larger social/ideological context in which education operates. A key concept here is 'democracy'. Democracy is a sliding signifier, always contested, always a site of struggle. But in general, it is being redefined in neoliberal ways: from 'thick' to 'thin', as individual choice on a market. In the process identities are also being transformed.

Thus, while it is important to recognize that new forms of sociality can emerge from changes in communicative forms, the social meanings and identities produced under these conditions are not preordained. This is not a vacuum. We are not the only groups who are working on this terrain. This requires an honest and detailed analysis of the power of current hegemonic alliances, their strategies, and their own uses of digital media.

While post-structural insights have been very productive, in order to do this we must relearn how to think structurally about the political economy of higher education. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an immense fiscal crisis for universities. This will place increasing pressure on universities to place economic rationality and economic goals first, with a priority being given to what is seen as economically useful knowledge. If past history offers insight, it will also mean that universities and all of education will increasingly be seen as sites of increased pressure for the commodification of knowledge and generation of profit as state resources are not made available. This is the context we are and will be facing.

Yet such structural accounts always risk falling into economic reductionism. There is a long history of the uses of new technologies enabling the development of enhanced forms of collective constructions of counter-hegemonic material. We are already seeing this at the level of elementary and secondary schools, where groups of critically democratic teachers have formed networks of digitally shared practices and critically engaged dialog around curricula, teaching, and assessment that are expressly aimed at interrupting dominant policies and practices.

Such interruptive practices provide resources and cautions, ones that also have a varied history. Thus, one of our first tasks in thinking more cogently about these questions should be to critically examine the historical specificities of previous iterations of these attempts. The Open University in England would be a good place to start. It was a site for some of the most creative and critically

democratic uses of distance education. The material it produced in sociology, class analysis, cultural studies, people's history, gender studies, and critical education are still among the best available. The combination of mediated teaching and learning, dialogic groups, and teams of critically oriented faculty working together provided a rich social and intellectual environment.

Yet, the Open University has not consistently maintained a good deal of its critical edge. It too has been subjected to the rationalizing logics that are so pervasive. What specific structures and dynamics and their intersections created the conditions for this more neoliberal set of educational policies and practices? But spaces for counter-hegemonic work and the realities of a counter-public still remain there. What processes worked to defend these more critical impulses and practices? What lessons can be learned from this that are relevant for the current social and ideological conjuncture? These historical insights can be a beginning for us to take the questions 'sociality' and social transformation seriously.

Universities on their back foot—the Covid 19 interruption (review)

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Universities were not protected from the virus, they became pressing candidates for containment and mediation. Indeed, universities took on a character similar to a triage operation as students were displaced from campus, courses were placed on hold and a myriad of issues tied to student, faculty and institutional needs were problem-solved. Most faculty found themselves having to make rapid responses campuses needed to close including evacuating classrooms, laboratories, offices and student housing. And, there were no assurances of when or if a return to the status quo was viable.

Around the world, as the various authors in this collection of think pieces point out, very quickly, on-line distance education solutions became the band-aid solutions and then the mainstay for conducting university business and course delivery. Faculty (and students) were flooded with mandates and guidelines for shifting to operate virtually. Without time to contemplate fully, regulations were compiled and forms of compliance directed at units and faculty along with offers of some technical support and professional training. The concerns of faculty seemed over-ridden by the imposition of and perceived necessity for doing so. Since the majority of courses at most universities were not on-line and many faculty were unprepared, an expedient default for on-line sometimes became a search for prepackages digital coursework or replacement of face to face lectures with the use of 'zoom', etc. along with on-line assignments tied to studying pdf versions of lecture notes presented on the university's on-line templates.

The rush to these on-line comprises may be less than desirable. As Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope rightly observe, the approach that has been pursued ignores the possibilities of the digital text and media world within which students already live and has not provided the time for faculty to create digital learning space that avail themselves their benefits. Quickly displaced has been the peer culture and supports that students know, the loss of animated face to face engagements including research spaces, library and studio venues. The post-hoc decision-making and this form of triage has seemed more remedial than preventative as most universities scrambled and compromised rather than ensure value-added.

Responses in many universities seem to have exposed a lack of nimbleness and financial shortfalls. In Canada, the government and many universities are providing some financial support but are struggling with the transition on a number of fronts ranging from a shortfall in on-line course to legal issues around affording on-line access across borders. In Singapore there is recognition of the important role universities play in social and economic development and significant bridging funding to support students ongoing education and employment needs

despite a recent history that is in need of realignment. In Africa concerns are very high and fear that major cuts will be made including some university closures.

Perhaps most vexing, universities seem both prepared and unprepared to respond to calls for the scientific leadership to guide the response to the Covid-19 epidemic. Instead of multi-perspectival explorations that are transdisciplinary, they seem to default initially to a health science approach tied to mathematical modeling and a reverence only to traditional randomized trials as guides. There is a sense of hesitancy to admit to uncertainty and what some refer to as the abnormal of a new normal. As Gary McCulloch as well as Lauren Misiaszek note there is a pressing need to accept the 'mutual accommodation' of humanity with nature and animals including their parasites. It is as Mark Lilly (2020), has suggested.

The pandemic has brought home just how great a responsibility we bear toward the future, and also how inadequate our knowledge is for making wise decisions and anticipating consequences. ... At some level, people must be thinking that the more they learn about what is predetermined, the more control they will have. ... A dose of humility would do us good in the present moment. It might also help reconcile us to the radical uncertainty in which we are always living. Let us retire our prophets and augurs. And let us stop asking health specialists and public officials for confident projections they are in no position to make – and stop being disappointed when the ones we force out of them turn out to be wrong.

The pandemic could but does not seem to have offered universities a chance to move from their back foot to front foot and be places not just for intellectual technicians but for people of thought trained to think essentially, holistically and in a fashion that is transdisciplinary. As Lew Zipin and Marie Brennan have stated: '... mobilized in projects to build citizen-capacities with student and community actors, all collaborating on lifeworld problems that matter'. Whether we might be able to build these capacities once the crisis is over remains to be seen. In place of piecemeal reforms that have characterized the current responses to the crisis, more radical thinking may be more desirable toward the renewal of higher education.

To summarize: This is full of gems. Each piece is somewhat unique in the perspectives, challenges and possibilities that are explored. They are conversational starters that moves us away from: (1) old politics based on economics and security, (2) technical science in a state of uncertainty with models that falter in making predictions unless humanized in an ongoing fashion, and (3) contemplating different assumptions/tenets and frames for what could be. The papers are immensely provocative in different ways although spurred by a shared sense of our worlds and need for new positionality especially related to the role of humanity and community as they embrace a rethinking of our universities and learning.

References

Selected citations represent volume author contributions such as Mary kalantzis and bill cope, gary McCulloch, marianna papastephanou as well as lauren misiaszek.
Lilly, M. (2020). No one knows what's going to happen, offered similar sentiments, *New York Times*. May 22, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/opinion/coronavirus-prediction-future.html?action=click&module=Opinion&pgtype=Homepage>

Post-Covid-19: Questioning the new pedagogical possibilities (review)

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Post-Covid-19. What does the term 'post-Covid-19' mean, and to what does the prefix 'post' refer? 'Post' does not often mean linear progression. Rather it means a long, messy transformation. For years, we've been reading post- scholarship of academic thinkers writing the histories and futures of educational thought; and in the same vein these excellent pieces portray the

genealogy of the virus. There is no doubt that we are currently living in a precarious time. The language of 'new normality' has started to emerge. University life as we know has ceased to exist. The demise of the academic gossip; no 'real' structures; no longer vanity projects of Vice-Chancellors. The lights are turned off, the beating heart of the University as we know it has slowed down, the virus has taken over. But has it, really?

These collective pieces, this long read – that together work methodologically in line with Peters et al. (2016) vision for openness and collectivity – is not necessarily a 'project for the future', despite it may seem so on the surface. Readers get a distant feeling that the virus has been, albeit in different shapes and forms, already present within our University campuses and spaces. These pieces could claim that the virus has changed everything, and they do outline possibilities for future encounters with some distinct, very adventurous genealogy of the problem, in their own right.

In the online teaching and learning space we have already experienced the death of the vitality and vibrancy of the teacher's body and students' laughter; no longer shall a transgression happen between two students while the professor lectures. International education experts argue on social media that online learning and digital pedagogies are a 'new normality', that we have let the genie out of the bottle with online learning, with webinars, with everyone being 'zoomed in' and 'zoomed out'. While the virus has become the mundane, the everyday, so have we all become barricading ourselves at homes, and not at the universities as the resistance used to.

The University has created these amazing structures, the maze of ideas that we cannot fully individually comprehend. The thought leadership that traditionally was at the core of our universities has been transformed into a world of managers and 'owners' of 'business processes'. It seems that it is rare to find a member of the senior leadership at universities who genuinely like academics or value the depth of the potential, the possibilities and the role of the academe. Instead, it seems, that that we really do portray and play a game of how to survive rounds of academic redundancies and restructures.

There is no way a review can do justice to this collective of thinkers and their thought-pieces. As a fellow thinker, I will return the ideas back, and finish this open review with a selection of questions, that the authors of this paper have asked of us:

- How might we need to rethink and reimagine issues of global interconnectivity and interdependence?
- In what sense is the COVID-19 pandemic 'new'?
- When the initial shock has passed, what can we expect for the future?
- How can a free market contend with the forces set loose by a pandemic that respects no private interests?
- What lessons do these insights hold for higher education?
- The task ahead of us may not be easy, but can we afford to fail again?
- What does the future hold?
- How can we hold on to the social, so that it finds expression not in the idea of distancing, but in creative ways of being together?
- Could this pandemic be disruptive enough to shift modern education's embrace of the quest for certainty?
- Could this be revolutionary?
- What is the 'real thing'?
- Students don't really talk to each other anymore, do they?
- Will we leave the more 'prestigious' courses to the highly ranked professoriate dominated by men?
- What are some of the structural challenges we face?
- How can education provide the tools to critically read neoliberalism?
- In what ways can we unbound the imagination and re-envision cosmopolitan possibilities?
- What kind of university do we deserve?

- What lessons can be learned from this that are relevant for the current social and ideological conjuncture?
- What is this asking from us?

Upon re-reading this paper, and the questions, I thought of the universities that these scholars represent, and I thought of a Māori proverb: He aha te mea nui o te ao. He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata. What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people.

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The crisis of neoliberal university international education

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First, I want to comment on the *form* of the article that allows within the space of one article – albeit it a long article of about 25,000 words – to incorporate the comments of thirty-three world scholars in condensed form as a rapid response to a crisis. There is a clear need for this kind of article that brings together the expert opinion of scholars in response to an event like the pandemic. The 500 words are somewhat larger than an abstract but nonetheless enough space within which to develop an argument or lay out in schematic form a response in outline. The form is a form of democratizing the standard article that often takes too long to write and publish – sometimes over a year or even longer – in order to respond to events long past. While this form of collective writing is a kind of serialization listing content the editors can frame the theme, sequence contributions and provide a postscript. My first response then is a response about the appropriateness and innovation of the academic form of the article.

Second, a brief comment of the content of the contributions which vary from a direct response to the question about new pedagogical possibilities for universities post-COVID-19 and discussion of the prospects of online education and distance learning to more philosophical or political accounts. There is a wide variety of responses to the question with those choosing to take a personal and autobiographical approach to COVID-19 effects to those who warn against the dangers of ‘digital reason’ (Ron Barnett), see the opportunity for humanization (Peter McLaren), discuss the gendered nature of online teaching (Rima Apple), or directly address problems of online teaching and learning (Mary Kalantzis & Bill Cope, Nick Burbules, Liz Jackson). Others have usefully commented on how big tech companies have engaged with global organizations (Jim Conroy, Gert Biesta), a prescient reminder of how elite universities are teaming up with Google and Facebook to provide a response to COVID-19 that will dwarf the scale on any global education programs to date and set up a new raft of truly global neoliberal market arrangements. Others have talked of ‘border ethics’ (Suzanne S. Choo) or the larger connections of COVID-19 with the environment (Greg Misiaszek). Michael Apple focuses on the need ‘to recognize that large scale progressive transformations of education are generated out of social movements’ and the notion that ‘new forms of sociality’ will only grow out of digital media used to revitalize the public sphere.

Third, university international education is at a crossroads. The simple fact is that it cannot operate with closed borders or in an increasingly politicized environment of trade wars, immuno-wars, and strained US-China relations that will determine the shape of US and world politics leading into the US elections over the next five months. There cannot be a return to ‘normal’ for the neoliberal approach to international higher education because it’s

essential benefits have been severely compromised with the pandemic rupture. The 'return' of Chinese students to the neoliberal western 'education' economies will now become a question at the intersection of politics and trade as a new pragmatic approach adopted by the CCP, as Australia is finding out after its intemperate insistence of an inquiry of the virus that reflects more of a witch hunt than a genuine open scientific inquiry. Chinese students that make up a substantial proportion of all international students will increasing only be permitted to go to 'friendly' host countries that are not a part of an orchestrated attempt to scapegoat China and get Trump reelected.

Postscript: Covid-19, higher education, and new possibilities

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We began this experiment in collective writing trying to develop in the form of an article that included a diversity of informed scholarly opinion limited to 500 words. We invited some twenty-five contributors largely based on our combined international networks. This is a form of rapid response expert thinking from noted world scholars designed to get in a condensed form a play of imaginative possibilities. The normal article requires at least twelve months before it is published from the point of submission. This kind of collective piece is elicited, submitted and edited within a month with the idea of providing a vehicle for commentary and criticism to be made on a contemporary event or set of processes as close to their inception and development as possible.

This article is three times larger than a normal academic article it speaks to a different genre than the normal academic article. The aim was to draw informed or expert opinion in a way that attempted a global representation and licensed contributors to indicate how their own research supports a distinct view of the Coronavirus crisis, how it has affected their scholarly work, how it has revealed certain underlying issues with higher education, and how it might help us speculate about future. In this way, this collection of short 'think pieces' represents a revival of the 'expert circle' in response to a practical question that requires an understanding that is both historical and sociological but also political and philosophical.

The core question in our invitation for scholarly contributions centered on how institutions of higher education have managed the crisis in an attempt to continue to do their work, in this case with a shift to online teaching; what this has revealed about the recent shifts in the corporatization of higher university; and how we might reimagine the new pedagogical possibilities for universities post-Covid-19. Of course as we expected the responses to these questions have varied greatly, both in the form they have taken and in the content of the views articulated. Almost no attempt has been made to modify the analyses submitted, so that these we reproduce here a greater degree of spontaneity and authenticity.

A note about the order in which contributions have been arranged here is in order. This article begins with a series of contributions that describe how higher education has been affected by the Coronavirus crisis, and what it has revealed about the contradictions of the ways in which higher education is currently organized, both in relation to configurations of knowledge and approaches to teaching and learning. Challenged here is the binary between the old normal and the new normal, with thoughts about how Covid 19 has created an opportunity to critically interrogate the epistemological and ethical foundations about the presumed normal. Contributions that follow highlight the challenges that the corporate systems of higher education had already faced, which now need to be reexamined in light of the inadequacies and contradictions laid bare by the crisis.

The next set of contributions focus on the experiences, limitations and the possibilities of online pedagogies. The new technologies and the virtual space for teaching and learning has clearly

opened up new options, but these options have severe limitations. They detract attention away from the importance of face to face dialogue, and those collective modes of learning in which physical presence is essential. There are dangers also in online education becoming a cheaper option for universities starved of cash, intent on stretching their spatial reach. However there are ways in which online education can produce great benefits, but only if they do not simply duplicate the worst of on-campus teaching. Radically new ways of thinking about online education are needed, if it is to be pedagogically productive in helping students to become critically engaged learners.

However, experiments with online education should not only be viewed as tools for making teaching and learning more efficient. The focus should only be on pedagogic techniques but also on pedagogic purposes, located within broader speculations about the future of higher education. The last group of contributions in this collection point to the crucial importance of reimagining the role that universities should play in the formations of a democratic and just society that addresses the environmental challenges that the world now faces within a context in which the rise of anti-intellectual and anti-globalization populist movements have become stronger, with growing confidence to undermine the institutions whose central purpose it is to create spaces for the production of new knowledge, and with it new ways of thinking about how we might live together.

In conclusion, let's return to Arundhati Roy's essay on the pandemic, where she argues that '...in the midst of this terrible despair, it offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves. Nothing could be worse than a return to normality'. In this essay, she uses the opportunity to discuss the poetry in the absence of mobility – 'who could not be thrilled by the swell of birdsong in cities' – and an uncanny stillness and time for reflection on the nature of global capital: 'The virus has moved freely along the pathways of trade and international capital... But unlike the flow of capital, this virus seeks proliferation, not profit, and has, therefore, inadvertently, to some extent, reversed the direction of the flow'. She seizes on the moment to examine the engine of global capitalism as 'the wreckage of a train that has been careening down the track for years'.

Insightfully, Roy argued that the Coronavirus crisis has 'mocked immigration controls, biometrics, digital surveillance and every other kind of data analytics, and struck hardest – thus far – in the richest, most powerful nations of the world, bringing the engine of capitalism to a juddering halt. Temporarily perhaps, but at least long enough for us to examine its parts, make an assessment and decide whether we want to help fix it, or look for a better engine'. The horrific irony she draws attention to are the health inequalities in the richest country in the world where 'in the era of the virus, a poor person's sickness can affect a wealthy society's health'. Yet it is also the case that the front-line first responders are often Afro-American and Latino – often cleaners, nurses, and supermarket workers – whose populations are disproportionately affected by the virus because of a health infrastructure tilted toward the middle class that leaves millions of Americans without any form of medical insurance.

Arundhati Roy, is right also to worry about 'my country, my poor-rich country, India, suspended somewhere between feudalism and religious fundamentalism, caste and capitalism, ruled by far-right Hindu nationalists' and other poorest countries that face a global health emergency that the planet has never experienced before. Coronavirus has laid bare that the world has within it squalid cities where children live on the waste of others, where there is not running or clean water, and unhygienic conditions follow from poverty, unemployment and lack of education, where in the refugee camps where more than seventy million people live in tents. Natural disasters have always affected the poor more than the rich because the rich can always leave, they live in solid houses, they carry personal insurance and can afford medicine.

The observation that the virus does not discriminate is not entirely true – it takes out the poor, the weak and the elderly first but like all ecological and viral or bacterial pandemics it has the power to infect everyone, and the virus can be lockdown in one country to infect and re-infect another. The Coronavirus crisis has demonstrated once again that the world is interconnected and independent, not only in an empirical manner but also ethically and

politically. While we are right to discuss aspects of online pedagogy and how higher education might survive the financial crisis, it is equally if not more important to consider the broader issues about the purposes of education in which nation-centric thinking may produce disastrous consequences. It is not a matter of what can education do so much as understanding and instituting new models of sociality and social relations based on collective responsibility and action, and the ethics of the other.

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A No Manifesto¹ of still searching²

I. Gathering flowers: anthologizing actions

ἀνθολογία: *anthologia*: a collection of flowers

有的时候,

试着用用那些自己不惯用的语言.

Sometimes,

Use languages beyond your own.

Sometimes,

Return to the sounds you first spoke.

Sometimes,

Get attention by using throwing off syntax.

Sometimes,

Speak clearly.

Sometimes,

Work urgently.

Give voice.

Sometimes,

Value slowness.

Work silently.

All times,

All of us are needed

to gather flowers.

¹socavamos la sociedad interiormente. por ésto somos subversivos [sic] y amorosos. además somos tan pequeños y desconocidos que la libertad es nuestro delirio, no sólo imaginativo. sino real... nuestro intento macabro es de ar [sic] desnudos a los humanos. sin ideas preconcebidas ni atamientos convencionales, atamientos-vestiduras. no se asusten, nuestras obras tardarán años en aparecer: no estamos jugando. la parte interior de las semillas es suave.

we undermine reality from within, which is why we are subversive and loving. and being so minor and unknown means we can take pleasure in our freedom, both imaginatively and literally... our macabre intent is to leave humans naked, without preconceived notions, without conventional attachments-attire. have no fear. our works will take years to manifest. we are not playing around. the interior of the seed is soft. [Vicuña, C. (1967/2018). *No Manifesto de la Tribu No/No Manifesto of The No Tribe*. In C. Vicuña & R. Alcalá (Eds.), *New and Selected Poems of Cecilia Vicuña* (pp. 248-249). Berkeley, CA: Kelsey Street Press.]

²By the late 1940s Camus was exhausted and depressed at the burden of expectations placed on him as a public intellectual: as he confided to his notebooks, "everyone wants the man who is still searching to have reached his conclusions." From the "existentialist" philosopher (a tag that Camus always disliked), people awaited a polished worldview; but Camus had none to offer. As he expressed it through Rieux, he was "weary of the world in which he lived"; all he could offer with any certainty was "some feeling for his fellow men and [he was] determined for his part to reject any injustice and any compromise." [Judt, T. (2001). *A hero for our times*. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2001/nov/17/albertcamus>]

II. Planetary palimpsest

palimpsestos, from *palin* “again” + *psēstos* “rubbed smooth”

a manuscript or piece of writing material on which later writing has been superimposed on effaced earlier writing; something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form³

In this crowning cacophony, listen to what’s not being said.

“Watch the shadows,

Look in the margins.

not the puppets.”⁴

Take refuge from “*vemödaalen*: the fear that everything has already been done ...

‘it should be a comfort that we’re not so different.’”⁵

“La certidumbre de que todo está escrito nos anula o

nos afantasma.”

... The certainty that everything has been already written nullifies or makes phantoms of us all.”⁶

Open to *wabi-sabi*

impermanence,

imperfections.⁷

侘- *wabi* – less is more

寂- *sabi* – attentive melancholy

We’re being rubbed smooth again.

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³Oxford Dictionary.

⁴Indonesian Wayang puppeteer in T. Vitale (Director). (2018, October 7, 2018). Indonesia. In Zero Point Zero Production Inc. (Executive producer), *Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown*: CNN.

⁵Koenig, J. (2014, November 9, 2014). *Vemödaalen: The Fear That Everything Has Already Been Done*. *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ftDjebw8aA>; (“The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows is a compendium of invented words written by John Koenig. Each original definition aims to fill a hole in the language—to give a name to emotions we all might experience but don’t yet have a word for. All words in this dictionary are new. They were not necessarily intended to be used in conversation, but to exist for their own sake... you can settle it yourself on your own terms, without feeling too lost—safe in the knowledge that we’re all lost.” <https://www.dictionaryofobscuresorrows.com>)

⁶Borges, J. L. (1956). “La biblioteca de Babel,” *Ficciones*; Buenos Aires: Emecé, p. 507; Borges (1962), “Library of Babel,” *Ficciones*, New York: Grove Press, p. 503.

⁷Juniper, A. (2011). *Wabi Sabi: The Japanese Art of Impermanence*: Tuttle Publishing.