

Phenomenological Review of Enforced Isolation during Global Hysteria: A Romanian Perspective:

Part 2: The Long-term Consequences of World-wide Over-reaction?

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Preamble and Summary

We are heartened that themes from part 1 of this article (Barber, 2020) have begun to inform media consciousness. We note that Covid statistics have recently come under sustained attack from leading statisticians, whose critiques relate not only to the unreliability of testing, but how those tested positive, though symptom-free, were used to boost numbers. The death rate has also since been officially re-estimated downwards by several authorities towards a severe-flu level. Recognition of the effectiveness of a mask with nano pores more than double the size of the invading Covid virus has also stimulated debate, along with the increased danger of vaccinations – especially rushed Covid vaccinations. Such themes, which may have been earlier dismissed as ‘reactive’, are now becoming subject to serious appraisal. We believe all this is a move in the right direction towards a more balanced viewpoint.

In part 1 (Barber, 2020), we sketched the implications of a ‘plague mentality’, as cultivated by a sensation-grabbing mass media and hopefully merely ‘naive politicians’. In this part 2, and taking Romania as our primary focus, we mine deeper into ruptures of social reality, our loss of freedom and rights, and most importantly of all, the recently maimed education of our young. Sinziana, the ‘shadow consultant’ in part 1 of this article, now becomes a voice in her own right. And why bother unpacking Romania? We suggest things well hidden and out of public sight elsewhere are writ large and clearer here in Romania, and what is evident here today will be with you tomorrow.

For instance, as we write the UK is beginning to protest across the country against political injustices of the Covid-19 crisis (www.standupx), something we had in Romania several months ago. And the media response to growing public concern? Note the *Daily Mail* headline, ‘More than 10,000 COVID conspiracy theorists gather in London’! This is an almost identical response to our own Romanian news services at that time!

As stated in our title, what follows is a ‘phenomenological’ account which philosophically examines the structures of experience and consciousness as lived from a transparent *first person point of view*. Consequently, we offer no answers, but rather seek to raise questions and to expand awareness. ‘Better the devil who wakes you up than the angel who lulls you to sleep!’

‘Social Reality’ – a Fragile Creature Imbued with Fear?

How delicate our balance in the world, how fragile the social contract we once trusted. We are wise to distrust, when the knee-jerk health advice of our political leaders has been proven so dangerous, and when society is beginning to normalise the abnormal.

Many people we meet in Romania are calling the Covid-19 crisis a ‘histrionic over-reaction’ or are

labelling it ‘a social experiment’, the more biblical amongst us making reference to the Book of the Apocalypse! If this isn’t interesting enough, Bulgaria has gone so far as to declare Covid-19 a mental illness – so irrational is the anxiety associated with it all. In contrast, we the authors fully accept the existence of Covid-19 and acknowledge that it not only kills susceptible people, but as recent information suggests, it has longer-

term effects upon the nervous and circulatory systems. Yet the reality of this new illness is very far from what's been made of it, so it is over-reaction with which we have an issue, plus political disinformation and common ignorance.

As cracks in the mirror appear and hysteria hopefully lessens, questioning at last begins. Statistics for Covid-19 incidence and deaths are at last being seriously questioned, as are the effectiveness of ventilators, masks and testing. Put patients with respiratory problems on premature ventilation and you weaken respiratory muscles and lower their immunity while inviting infection from a hospitalised environment. As a senior medic in the throes of Covid-19 recently stated: 'If I couldn't breathe on my own, I would be put on a ventilator and, if that happened, my chance of dying would skyrocket' (Chen, 2020). Simply put, ventilators should be considered a very last resort.

Taking the issue of ventilators, the quest for culpability has also begun. Italy holds WHO responsible for ventilator mass deaths due to the banning of autopsies. Breaking WHO's recommendation and continuing autopsies, Italy discovered that some of the respiratory complications associated with the disease could be treatment-induced! And now they are asking for WHO to be held accountable for crimes against humanity for misleading, misdirecting and withholding life-saving information from the world, which has cost the lives of thousands. The call for more ventilators in this context potentiates many more fatalities. But has this cry yet abated?

Sadly, the demand for more masks is similarly fraught with danger, as political rather than medical agendas seem now to drive this folly. A German doctoral study, no less, has shown that wearing a mask for more than 30 minutes causes slow self-intoxication by breath-induced carbon dioxide – which in itself depreciates the immune response to infection. The safety time-limit for wearing a mask has been suggested to be 15 minutes, after which breath itself, through warmth and humidity, can turn the mask into an excellent environment for pathogens to multiply from outside or within. Anyway, the dimensions in microns of SARS-CoV viruses are much smaller than the pores of the mask tissue – so why bother? Studies also show that medical personnel wearing face masks are more prone to developing migraines and other

complications in the long term. Asthma UK points out that the cry for ever-more masks without 'medical risk assessment' is reckless. But government has yet to respond to their evidenced and sound concerns.

Anything new here? Hasn't political ignorance actively damaged us anyway throughout known history?

Here in Romania, guards on large stores, supermarket entrances and, more recently, schools, electronic thermometer in hand, scan for high temperatures while ensuring the wearing of masks. They remain potent symbols of State control, and are akin to a sign of civil rape by a misinformed government desperate for control, and which has already lost it. But the people push back, crowd the beaches and parks, mask-less, whilst subserviently wearing masks largely to shop or escape fines!

Politicians, at the other end of this tug-of-war, broadcast on all channels government-sponsored messages which market masks as badges of morality and symbols of care for our loved ones. The televised clips in particular are jewels of psychologically imbued propaganda in favour of losing one's 'quotient of face' as the price for keeping one's family alive. Shaming is used as subliminal messaging for guilt-tripping the dare-devils who still chose to wear a countenance as a summer accessory. Actors well chosen for displaying tragic facial expression forewarn the population that they'll never dare look their grandparents or children in their eyes again, should they be contaminated through their reckless disregard of what has become known colloquially as 'the face knicker'. From here to permanently wearing a mask is but a little step, one Romania has already made – since teachers are now actively asking parents to encourage children to wear their masks at home so as to grow accustomed to wearing them in schools. A gross manipulation of our finer feelings all round?

Testing for Covid-19 has also received further scrutiny. PCR testing is largely unable to specifically distinguish between less severe cum harmless viruses and Covid-19. Any viral fragment from an earlier non-Covid source of infection can also turn a test positive! Besides, for readers familiar with the concept of microbiome, it is a commonplace that the human body is made up of a

certain number of cells and an even higher number of pathogens which have always been around and within, and in a perfectly functional symbiosis with the human host. So any time, a healthy individual will be inhabited by a mass of non-self microbial entities, as a condition of well-being.

The trouble is that testing for fragments of viral particles is bound to pick up such symbiotic microbial entities as positive! Fast antigen tests, popular because they are cheap and can be scaled up quickly, have been shown to have false positive and negative results – in some studies as much as a 30–40 per cent error. Take the case of a well-reputed Romanian football team, two-thirds of its players having been tested and found positive! After repeated interventions, *they* have been allowed, unlike all other Romanian commoners, to be re-tested, and surprise-surprise... – their tests came out as negative, and the team was allowed to entertain the public again. Alas, if one is not a Romanian football hero.... So, the farce of ever-increasing numbers based on flawed testing goes on!

Why is the evidence around weaknesses of Covid-19 testing, ventilators and masks taking so long to land? Why are we so blind to reason in this age of reason? No wonder wild conspiracy theories abound, when common sense goes out the window.

When the going gets crazy, right enough the crazies get going! But is there ever a grain of truth in a conspiracy theory? A most disturbing video we unearthed during this Covid-19 crazed time showed an interview with an ex-Rockefeller executive who claimed Covid-19 was a stage towards reducing the population to 2 billion and controlling us by a vaccine containing a nanochip! This is not an isolated idea, as we heard the same, embroidered somewhat, at a recent barbeque. At one time we dismissed such conspiratorial stuff out of hand; but sadly we now feel compelled to listen in order to better understand society's more extreme paranoid core surfacing from shadow. And who are we to say they are wrong? And though hopefully not of them, we nevertheless must walk amongst them. Moreover, their numbers are now increasing! The more perturbed the wider social field becomes, the more its individuals think, speak and act from its shadow archetype.

Surveying the various conspiracy theories sprouting up at this time, certain common themes emerge and often overlap:

- 1 Governmental monitoring and technological surveillance of the population;
- 2 Genetic modification of various populations through experimental drugs or vaccines;
- 3 De-population and Eugenics via lab-made pathogens or experimental cures for these since the fragile balance of the world's resources has become an unsustainable system;
- 4 The control of future generations through mind-bend by socialisation to new norms, as evidenced in 'social distancing' and authoritative political correctness in our schools and educational systems.

Leaving aside the content, for which believers in each of the above scenarios readily cite factual evidence, rather standing back to perceive the whole – what is the underlying message? Obviously, there is a generalised mistrust in governmental motives; a loss of faith that current holders of power are beneficent; a suspicion there are secret societies and/or government think-tanks attacking our way of life; that the individual and her/his freedom is under severe attack. One could say that, historically, this has always been so. But now, the scientific and circumstantial social means for the same are being realised. Take genetic re-programming, which is now possible – for instance, there is a biomolecular institution which has attracted a lot of attention of late because it's developing a new vaccine technology based on 'messenger RNA' that stimulates an immune response; take nano trackers which have been used for tracking wild animals for many years now; take the most obvious – that the European Union has combined sovereign states in a mono political block; and last but not least, take the wide, bewildering media coverage that Bill Gates' eugenic and compulsory vaccination views receive... – so to see the roots of where mistrust blooms writ big.

Then again, it's becoming increasingly difficult to believe that sane and rational voices with a humanistic intent are guiding humankind. Governments are not transparent entities, and are not beyond nefarious motives. For example, 'Operation Mocking Bird' proved that the US Central Intelligence Agency was actively manipulating news media and people's minds and perception of reality as early as 1950s. Is this still active? No one knows. So we all have reason enough to doubt.

In times of trouble individuals and groups fall into their shadow archetype and inferior functions, hence Nazi indoctrination speaks for a hidden part of us all. And just as in Germany in the 1930s, the more controlled and repressed we are, the louder and stronger our socially despised qualities tend to become. Government is not immune from this process.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated that Covid-19 should not be used as a pretext for transgressing human rights. He felt a need to remind world governments that forced, coerced or mandated vaccinations violate the principles of the Nuremberg Code, which states that ‘any preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic medical intervention is only to be carried out with the prior, free and informed consent of the person concerned’.

When legitimate protests are grouped with the crazy fringe and compulsory vaccination is being considered, even the most sane and rational amongst us could be excused for making tentative inquiries as to whether we could be being conditioned for State control.

What Happened to Our Personal Freedoms and Individual Rights?

Governments have recently gained immense control and assumed authoritarian powers on very flimsy evidence; hopefully they will not be slow in giving back that which they have taken away? But far too many politicians act as if democracy and civil rights get in the way of their executive power and governance; so don't hold your breath.

Brussels gave the President of Romania a promise of 80 billion euros based on per hectare of Covid-19 cases reported. Would this be reason enough to hype up numbers? And the conditions imposed on this gift? Some 12 billion euros have to be paid back by Romania. So has the European Union just bought Romania? Many Romanians on the street believe so.

No doubt the Romanian government saw its investment in upping the figures a good deal. The President promised the money would be used to modernise schools and hospitals and update social infra-structure, but gains at state level will likely be counterbalanced by losses at the individual level due to economic rupture, with many being pushed

further towards poverty, despair and suicide. Off the ledger sheet, it's not a good deal! How can we benefit the State by destroying the people?

When governments are misquoting and falsifying statistics, abetting our economic suicide and curtailing our freedoms, the ground grows ever-more fertile for conspiracy. In truth we see no need to have imprisoned the over-65s, to ground down the wider population, cripple the economy or trample civil rights. This is beyond justification.

To add insult to injury, during lock-down, officials of Romania are reported to have signed 14,000 official permits for the de-forestation of their own country. This will not be forgiven. And the bottom line: due to lock-down, Romania is forecast to endure the biggest economic recession in the past 24 years. And what hits Romania today will likely hit the rest of you tomorrow.

Lock-down itself is now also being challenged, in the oh so sober *Daily Telegraph*, no less, with evidence and learned quotations. The viral mildness of Covid-19 and governmental over-reaction have at last also been recognised – is the world starting to awake? Sadly, it appears it is the economic rather than moral issues that figure large inside the UK press. Much copy is being devoted to the Covid-19 recession, the ‘Great Shutdown’ that closed a third of the world; forecast as the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression, far worse than the Great Recession of 2008–9. But what of individual freedom and sense of community, which have suffered much more than the economy? This appears far less newsworthy.

This last Easter (2020), a big date in the Romanian orthodox calendar, while in previous years candles in red glass shades would have festooned the churches and cemeteries, this year we had but three adorning our nearby city of the dead. It was eerie to watch a religious broadcast without a congregation. Simply closing the doors of the temple here. Just as attempting to sever the connection with sky, God and his saints is a no-go-area, taboo and blasphemy for this people! It did not happen in times of plague, nor during the 45 years of communist experiment in Romania. The fact that it's been perpetrated during the Covid-19 event has vexed the national soul, perhaps beyond repair. The burden of this little political decision will ever be upon the shoulders of the decision makers, and there are voices amongst

Romanian citizens saying that the days of their leadership are counted between an enraged earth and an enraged heaven.

Romania is a highly religious nation, more like the UK in the 1950s. Many broke curfew to celebrate Easter, keeping tradition with fires burning bright. Judging from the sirens which were trying to cover the sound of church bells tolling, the police were out in full force this Easter, hunting for fines.

The Blind Leading the Blind?

Not all politicians are corrupt. There are likely many well-meaning parliaments. But the fact remains that politicians have been mugged into acting as dictators to abet our economic suicide! Hopefully when they realise what they have done they can forgive themselves, rather than justify their ignorance? Then again, note the personality profile of the average politician as seen in the news, strutting before us their narcissism, competitiveness and love of power. They are hard to trust at the best of times.

In light of earlier discussion and the nonsense of our current situation, we are caused to entertain our worst fears. In wilder moments our imagination runs riot, and we ask ourselves whether there is a subversive underground economic war raging around us. We fear underhand political agendas are contributing to our dis-at-ease. This Alice in Wonderland situation is fostering severe doubt!

We believe the truth behind this deadly farce will out – in its own good time. But will the world ever be the same? It will take a long time for the paranoia cultivated by these troubled times to recede – if ever. Social distancing, lock-down, bankrupting some, the suicides of others, stomping on civil rights – all have fed a paranoid streak in society that may be impossible to extinguish, and just has to run its course.

We were informed in late April that 342,000 deaths world-wide had resulted from suicide, compared with 203,798 by coronavirus. A pandemic of suicides had even then already overtaken the rates of highly inflated coronavirus deaths! And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Depression is also reported to be at an all-time high. In this light, mental illness is now the primary disease! And what of the soul, the essence of us?

Coronavirus, we suggest, is best seen as a portal through which to view the shadow of all that is denied in modern times. Positively, it may be waking us up, turning us from lambs for slaughter into sturdier beasts. A mirror that tells us we can no longer sleepwalk through life or trust in a mythical protective governmental parent. However, if governments are capable of making a cock-up on this scale, whatever might they do next? With global warming already upon us, one might say the worst has already happened.

Governments have let us down before, and will so again – it's the nature of the beast. Nevertheless, for the world's sake nations can't go on with their past peak-consumerism of world resources, a dangerous brinkmanship that has led to de-forestation and environmental pollution – twin monuments to institutionalised greed. What part have politicians, with their innate tendency towards 'party loyalty' bordering on organised criminality, played in such disasters? Can we really afford to remain pawns in their dangerous games? Many we meet are asking similar questions.

Politicians are posturing as saviours, but they have not saved us from Covid-19 but, rather, have caused more damage by locking us down and keeping us out of reach of normal bacterial exposure – which itself prompts the immune system into health. Isolation breeds lowered immunity. All immunologists testify to this simple fact, and are warning against the dangers of returning to a social life with newly emerging bacteria and viruses after prolonged segregation. It will be a severe winter for many.... Where do politicians get their expert advice from?

Of late, Romanian doctors have been enrolled to become 'loyal agents of the State'. Many doctors beyond Romania already align themselves with 'the great and the good'. One group of doctors writing in *USA Today* suggested that the government should impose special fines on people who will refuse vaccination, and that businesses should refuse to serve dissenters. Another doctor writing in an online publication called *The Conversation* suggested that people who refuse a vaccine should be given a psychoactive drug to induce compliance! Such is the rampant paranoia of these Covid-19 informed times in 'the land of the free' that some medics seem to have forgotten their Hippocratic Oath.

Rape of the Innocents: The Death Toll of Humanistic Education?

The Romanian Ministry of Health has published an order proposing sanitary and protection measures to be taken by schools. Classrooms should be rearranged to ensure at least one metre between the desks. Transparent separators will be installed where the 1-metre distance can't be ensured. Both students and staff will wear protective masks at all times, and pupils will be monitored to ensure social distancing (they are not allowed to hug, touch or to stay close to one another), and must not exchange personal items (phone, tablets, writing tools, toys, etc).

To further fuel any latent paranoia, the draft stipulates that pupils must have an affidavit signed by their parents on each day of school stating under penal liability that their child is in a perfect state of health. Given the unreliability of Covid-19 testing and the general suspicion within the population, many parents are fearful that this Catch 22 situation could open them up for legal persecution, should their child sneeze in school! And should this infelicitous event of a sneeze happen, the child would be immediately isolated in a special room in school, wherefrom his whole family, parents and siblings would pick him or her up and they would all go from there to hospital to be PCR tested en masse!

Nor can the UK rest on its laurels! Reports have reached us from a North London school where government guidelines generated such refinements as a white line at the school entrance where parents leave and pick up their appropriately distanced children; pupils grounded at their appropriately distanced desks throughout their working day – including lunch, as canteens are closed; what is shared is placed in a quarantine box for seven days until deemed non-contaminating. This dehumanisation is further abetted by children being forbidden to bring in their own packed lunches and water bottles, being forced to drink tap water, having their tables wiped down every 1–2 hours throughout the day, and circles drawn around them in the playground 2 metres from others. There is also a Covid-19 song sung five times a day that starts, 'Stay 2 metres away from me'. A teacher reported that 'many children do not need five times a day now, as they are complying so well with the new norms – only once a day works fine!' Fine indeed... – *not!*

How can any educationalist ferment obedience and compliance to the norms of a totalitarian culture? Shades of *1984* blending with the indoctrination camps of Nazi Germany spring to our mind. What social skills and human qualities currently taken for granted fossilise in such climates? How do friendships form and humans remain social animals in such conditions? It looks like this post-Covid school climate is breeding social alienation alongside possible cognitive retardation and, simply put, lunacy.

At heart we are more sad than angry. Our daughter cannot attend school with her colleagues and kin, for the educational system is isolating children one from another to the extent they cannot form friendships nor learn the rudiments of social and group identity – as we did. We weep for this simple loss. What scars will these times leave on our children? Relationship is what defines humanity. Are we not social animals any more?

An Awakening? Or False Dawn?

Thankfully a counter-reaction is also in evidence in Romania. More people are speaking out against the draconian methods. Even our highly conservative apartment-block security guard, a traditionalist by nature, does not believe coronavirus is widespread, and suspects governmental foul play. If it beggars the belief of conservative common folk, a massive push-back is not far behind.

God help any winners from this situation, for they will be squarely in the sights of mass projections of blame. If a war mentality grows from these embers, who's to say revolutions will not follow? Desperate people enact desperate acts.

Can positives flower from this chaos? If this false plague stimulates the need for seed change, will this dark time be all for the bad? Are we, the authors, in danger again of being too over-optimistic? Are we trying ever so hard to see light at the end of the tunnel as to delude ourselves?

Suddenly in answer to our query, the mobile phone on which we're typing this manuscript begins to shake and emit a high-pitched buzzing that causes hearts to leap, imbuing us with a flash-fear of an emergency on the scale of nuclear war! Luckily one

of us can read the invading Romanian text. Both phones have likewise been commandeered by the Romanian government to issue an emergency message about some unimportant details concerning the current state of alert which replaced the state of emergency some time ago. We feel incensed by such governmental high-handedness! How dare they invade our privacy so rudely! We are angered and shocked that our composure can be so violently interrupted. Big Brother has been brought to life in far too real a way! Damn them! Anger has replaced our brooding hopefulness. How dare they reach into our bedroom in our intimate space to dictate their terms!

So why do we stay in Romania? Well, we love the place. Granted, it's a little like Britain in the 1950s, with a healthy church and park keepers in little green huts – so it has a shaky regressive familiarity about it; but much more than this, there is a potent spirituality in the air. Granted, Bucharest is far from the rural peace of the countryside with horse-drawn carts and picturesque villages, but even here surprises dwell. Lines of devotees stand waiting to kiss, cross and prostrate themselves before saints' relics; clairvoyant priests and miracle cures with holy oil abound; Gypsy children offer posies in silver paper to BMW, Porsche and Mercedes drivers at traffic lights; old leathery-faced women in rags sit with out-stretched hands begging outside supermarkets – many mediaeval flavours like this linger on the breeze. Buildings tend towards the scruffy and people drive upon their horns, but the city has a human pace of life throbbing in its heart of hearts. This is a post-industrial society in name only, with ancient and post-modern influences side by side. Simply, it still has soul. The people have retained their innocence; and though sophisticated and expressive they wear their emotions on the sleeve, not tightly repressed below a dinner jacket. It's easier to relax when you know where you are. So, we are here to stay.

There are some rays of hope. People looking inwards, reorienting their lifestyle from work to family relationships, shopping with more awareness, more care around health and dieting. Hopefully this mundane-level change will percolate higher. Perhaps this soulless time will breed a soulful one? After all, chaos often precedes metamorphoses.

One more blessing will be when those responsible for this current crisis are identified and held to

account. The news media have blotted their copy book with extremist reporting: when they realise they've been duped, they will likely be vociferous in allocating blame to other than themselves... – if those who control the news let them!

We heard on the news that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has done an about-turn, admitting that Sweden's open policy was more effective than its own recommendation to stay at home! We also read that a newly formed Romanian body is demanding a re-statement of civil rights and legal action against WHO and the Romanian perpetrators of lock-down! We feel greatly supported and vindicated – hence our circulation of this account.

When they initially opened the parks, few entered. It was as if people were shy to be out. True, there was a brisk wind and the sky was overcast, but so very few people. The police cars kept their sirens blasting out over the cityscape, so it appeared nothing had really changed: though there were more cars out upon the road and an occasional soul littered the park, something was still missing. Confidence? Trust? We later ventured out ourselves. The wind had dropped and it was bordering on dusk, and more were out to join us. There was a newly acquired gentleness on the faces of those met, less of the usual harshness, a sensitivity missing from earlier times. A stifled joy of being at liberty in the world with others?

Underneath the shy joy of freedom, when we look inside ourselves we can catch a resistive resentment lingering, a sort of defiant anti-authority unforgiving attitude. Like we've been toyed with far too long, and we're damned if we'll appreciate going out when you let us, on your terms at your timing. A general begrudging of our bumbling governments and their political games. This is the lasting damage we were hinting at earlier. The internal cost of enforced lock-down without supportive evidence leaves a lingering sense of deceit. Our current government hopefully won't last long, and the president, the figurehead and spokesperson of all that's happened to us will not come out of this unscathed.

There are enough sheep-like, authority-crushed folk left over here from the communist days in Romania, the ones still wearing masks and gloves when driving alone in their cars; but many bright

independent thinkers with sharp intelligence also abound who can cut through the crap and mushroom management they're being fed. The public-facing politicians here are transparently egotistical and make little pretence at being otherwise. UK politicians are far more sly. Here they shamefully bask in their power and imagined untouchability. But a push-back is brewing. Folk here are not in-your-face aggressive, as in the UK: they spent too much time, historically, first under Turkish domination and then under Soviet-inspired communism to pin their true colours to the mast; but when the time comes, we believe they will act swiftly enough.

Almost in response to the above paragraph, we hear of an interesting development in Romania where the ex-mayor of Cluj – the 4th largest city in Romania – has sent an open letter to the Prosecutor of the High Court of Law demanding action for the genocide perpetrated against the people of Romania, citing the president and other political officials for the lockdown, falsification of deaths and fake news, which he considers crimes against the people. On this same day we bump into a neighbour in the park, a high-ranking crisply intelligent statistician, who confirms our belief in the falsification of Covid-19 deaths, and provides sensible and solid information about groups campaigning against governmental action during this so-called pandemic, plus others who totally reject the concept of enforced vaccination being muted by government. He is also acutely aware of the casualties induced by vaccination, with an obvious overlapping of the countries most affected by the virus and the ones with the most aggressive vaccination policies being worst hit. Is the UK population as awake as my Romanian compatriots? Or will they remain as lambs welcoming slaughter?

MORI opinion polls, after surveying opinion across 27 countries, found that the British were more likely to be concerned about Covid (59 per cent) than the global average (43 per cent). Has the once *Great* Britain been frightened into submission?

Epilogue – Humanists Arise!

Blame our humanistic souls, but from out of all this pessimism brought about by a corrosion of liberty unseen since the Second World War, we still believe – if we allow ourselves to awaken individually, then nationally and globally, like the hundredth monkey phenomenon – that something positive may flower. Hopefully conscious recalibration can be achieved

without bloodshed. We don't seek revenge so much as restoration, reorientation and healing.

Is this us yet again desperately trying to hope? A sort of psychological defence against the horror we are living within and are currently striving to work through? Time will no doubt tell.

We welcome the Italian incentive of identifying the culprits behind this mass genocide. By all means charge them all with crimes against humanity – WHO, the mass media, insight-less government, megalomaniac politicians and medics, the pharmaceutical companies. But put them to trial in the manner of the Nelson Mandela era, not the Nuremberg Trial. With love and respect, not vengeful anger. Shame them into remorse and re-educate them, rather than execute them.

Knowing that illnesses are designed to release the toxic load we carry, we look within ourselves and beyond Romania to ask: 'What toxins within individuals and the world community have been expelled through this plague?' Had we collectively reached a point where a crisis had to happen? If faith in the old social order has been shaken to its roots, might a new enlightened order now be seeded? Pray let it be so.

On a personal level, we the authors have looked inwards and used this time to strengthen our core relationships, becoming more contactable parents and lovingly expressive in our nuclear family. We have fallen into great despair, strained our tempers, expressed our fears but repeatedly reawakened love, opening our hearts while strengthening our spirits. We are always prepared to strike at the jugular of the beast that is attacking us – hopefully with love rather than anger – and are determined that the coronavirus crisis will be the making, not the breaking of us!

At the last, it is best having the mass hysteria and paranoia shaking us out in the open, than continuing to destroy us deep within. 'Symptoms' strive towards release and health. Ignorance and repression frustrate healing. All too many in this Covid-ridden time are content to turn a blind eye to injustice around them. They support the official view – not always because they believe it, but because they feel more comfortable doing so. Comfort makes cowards of us all. Some have lost family or friends to infection, and cannot as yet step back from their grief to see other forces at play. Others fully believe

the narrative coming from the official providers of truth through the official channels.... All expressions are valid. Respectful dialogue is the important thing.

We believe humanism is a powerful weapon in this war against this invisible enemy, and are sharing and keeping in dialogue with all we meet. Hence this essay.

As humanists honouring such essential moral decencies as altruism, integrity, honesty, truthfulness and responsibility, we believe we are obligated to challenge complacency and act impeccably to survive this time, if we are to prevent a further fall into a long global night of the soul. For this is the moment for gentle armchair humanistic philosophers to transform into humanistic warriors!

Research Resources

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About the contributors



Paul and Sinziana Barber have been married for some seven years, and for the latter period have shared their life with Lily aged 6. Paul hails from a Gestalt and academic stable, and authored *Facilitating Change in Groups and Teams – A Gestalt Approach to Mindfulness* (Libri Press, 2012), and Sinziana from an artistic and philosophical one, informed by Jungian analysis and three volumes of published poetry – alas in Romanian. We are both psychotherapists, and have been living the dream since blessed by love. Life has not always been easy – but most certainly exciting. We are strong because we have learnt when to surrender and when to challenge each other, to integrate and confront our respective shadows! Fire meeting water – but we dare you to define which of us is which. We live in Bucharest, experientially exploring how humanism and faith may inform the everyday life of Romania’s magical realism. Address for correspondence gestaltinaction@msn.com.

SOME HUMANISTIC WISDOM

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.”

Marianne Williamson, 1952-