

Poetry in the Time of COVID-19: A Polyphonic Reading of the Pandemic

Dr. Zeenath Mohamed Kunhi

Assistant Professor, PG and Research Department of English, Farook College (Autonomous), Calicut, Kerala, India

Abstract: *The COVID-19 pandemic prompted an unprecedented global poetic response, as writers turned to verse to document and process collective trauma. This paper proposes a polyphonic reading of pandemic poetry, drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic theory to analyse the crisis not as a single narrative but as a chorus of diverse perspectives. Examining works by poets including Jim Carruth, Carol Ann Duffy, Rukhaya MK, Meena Kandasamy, Nandini Sen Mehra, Imtiaz Dharker, and Simon Armitage, this study traces how Anglophone pandemic poetry operates simultaneously as testimony, critique, elegy, and consolation. The poems move from initial estrangement and isolation to the raw exposure of structural inequalities affecting migrant workers and expatriates, the disruption of death rituals, and glimpses of environmental and human renewal. By examining this convergence of diverging viewpoints, the analysis demonstrates how poetry functions as a therapeutic, critical, and archival force that preserves multiplicity while pointing toward a shared humanity in the face of global adversity.*

Keywords: COVID-19, pandemic poetry, polyphony, migrant lives, new normal

1. Introduction

The fear of contagion and other diseases, as well as man's varying responses to them, have been significant topos in literary writings. From Boccaccio's *Decameron* to Camus's *The Plague*, the spectrum is vast. COVID-19 is no different. Among the many artistic responses, poetry emerged as one of the most immediate and evocative modes, capturing the different dimensions of the crisis. Pandemic poetry reflects what Mikhail Bakhtin attributes as a polyphony, a multiplicity of diverse, even conflicting voices that coexist without being subsumed under a single, authoritative perspective. These prismatic perspectives prove particularly appropriate for understanding pandemic poetry as it reflects manifold experiences: isolation and alienation, the plight of migrant workers, the silences of death and disrupted rituals, the resilience of hope, and the renewal of both human and natural worlds.

2. Methodology

Drawing on Bakhtinian dialogism and polyphony, this paper employs close reading and comparative textual analysis to examine the interplay of "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices" [1] in pandemic poetry, situating it not merely as a record of crises but as a dialogic space where different voices intersect, challenge, and complement one another. By scrutinising the poems of Jim Carruth, Carol Ann Duffy, Rukhaya MK, Simon Armitage, Nandini Sen Mehra, Imtiaz Dharker and Meena Kandasamy, the paper traces how poetry operates as testimony, critique, elegy, and consolation, all at once. Moreover, the geographic and cultural range of these poets, help understand better the 'pandemic experience, as it is diversely inflected by race, class and geography. These poetic articulations, when read together, illuminate the many-layered human condition during COVID-19, offering both retrospective insight and prospective possibilities for imagining a more equitable and humane "new normal."

3. Overview

COVID-19 paralysed life for months, not just in a specific locale but the world as a whole. The pace of the fast-moving world decelerated alarmingly, at times bringing it to a screeching halt. Technology has been paradoxically more relevant than ever before. On the one hand, technology and modern science have had their limitations in curbing COVID-19, and on the other, without technology, one would have lost touch with the outside world. The casualties of the pandemic are unimaginable. The worldwide death toll due to COVID-19 reached alarming numbers. A mere virus was able to alter the world's economic cartography and disrupt social order across the globe. COVID-19 is/was not just another disease affecting the human body, but a phenomenon that altered the social and political ecologies of the world.

Irrespective of the circumstances, the fact that technological intervention has facilitated social interfaces like never before cannot be overlooked. Writers from across the world have made use of this medium to respond to the present crisis. Poets have been highly expressive in sharing their contemplation on the contagion and initiatives like "Write Where We Are Now," launched by former British Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy, provided crucial forums for poetic responses. Duffy articulated the importance of poetry during the crisis: "We need the voice of poetry in times of change and world-grief. A poem only seeks to add to the world, and now seems the time to give." She further adds that the platform "will provide an opportunity for reflection and inspiration in these challenging times, as well as creating a living record of what is happening as seen through our poets' eyes and ears, in their gardens or garrets" [2].

The poems discussed in this paper are written by poets from across the globe who have carved a niche for themselves in the literary landscape, made more popular by social media. These poems vary in theme and texture, ranging from personal experiences to political expressions. Lockdown, sickness, humiliation, separation, discrimination, social distancing, death, hope and resurgence of nature figure either

metaphorically or literally in their poetic articulations. Read together through Bakhtin's polyphonic lens, these diverse voices create not cacophony but a complex harmony that encapsulates the ramifying effects of covid times.

4. Isolation, Distance, and Alienation

The paradoxical equation scripted by the virus is aptly encompassed in the caption "binds us, but holds us apart" [3]. The poem "The Long Bench," written by the Scottish poet Jim Carruth, expresses the emotional and social crisis impacted by the corona virus. He presents the irony of 'physical distancing' in succinct verses. The equations of love and fear have been inverted in the poem against the backdrop of the pandemic. The poet longs for the parks and long benches. These socialising spaces are redefined in the framework of the lockdown. He wonders whether the desired distance would be achieved if two individuals were seated at either end of the long bench. and contemplates the irony involved [3]:

Where distance kept
Is love's measure
and death dances
the space between. [3, line 5-9]

The poem stems from his sentiments of separation from his near ones. Simultaneously, it echoes the emotions of millions trapped in the closed maze charted out by the virus. The poem, on a broader level, articulates the anxieties, insecurities, and alienation of migrant workers and expatriates stranded in foreign lands. It was as if COVID-19 had suddenly infused a sense of alienation that was hitherto never experienced by many expatriates.

However, it is agreed upon that online interaction, to an extent, was a respite and facilitated social communication. Everyone has been "cast into an alternate universe" of the new normal, as articulated by Rukhaya in her poem "Corona: A Dream Deferred." She says "gestures change meaning" and "Handshakes are poisonous, / hugging disastrous, / houses cages," [4] indicating the semantic and spatial inversion imposed by the pandemic, where previous symbols of social normalcy become instruments of fear and confinement. She further writes of how people no longer brag about their "flying stories" as "the rich become more vulnerable / migrants become guests, / and returnees intruders" [4, lines 23-32]. The paradigm shifts in the guise of the new normal are captured succinctly in these deceptively simple verses. As in Carruth's poem, she too elicits the ambiguities associated with social distancing.

To highlight the theme of alienation, Armitage alludes to the story of the plague in Eyam in the 1660s, in his poem, "Lockdown" [5]. The contagion reached Eyam via a bale of cloth imported from plague-ridden London. This fabric, believed to harbour infected fleas, was instrumental in the death of the tailor's assistant tasked with drying it, marking the village's tragic initiation into the epidemic. The reference to the "thimbles brimming with vinegar wine purging the plagued coins" runs parallel to the use of sanitisers that have replaced most cosmetics in the COVID-stricken crisis.

The depiction of the lovers separated by the river evokes a palpable sense of emptiness and distancing, which is often manifested during the global pandemic [5]:

star-crossed lovers on either side
of the quarantine line
whose wordless courtship spanned the river
till she came no longer. [5, lines 13-16]
These lines pulsate with the pain of loss and separation.

Another poem that churns the readers' guts is "Hands" [2] by Carol Ann Duffy. The poem impacts a sudden, jarring fracture between the communal and the personal. The opening, "We clap at the darkness/ hearken for the sound / of my daughter's small hands," (lines 1-3), establishes an immediate, ritualistic connection, referencing the collective act of applauding essential workers, a gesture of solidarity against the abstract threat of the "darkness." This unity is violently disrupted by the conjunction in the next line. The "but" instantly negates the hopeful search for connection by introducing the blunt, enforced reality that "she is miles away" [2]. This swivel transforms the poem from a public act into a private angst, emphasizing how the pandemic's geographical rift negates communal support. The final, searing image, "though I can see her hands / when I put my head in my own," [2, lines 4-6] underscores the depth of the trauma; the speaker is forced to retreat into an act of self-consolation and embodied grief, where the child's presence exists only as an internalised, psychic vision, highlighting the failure of physical and technological connection and imprinting a definitive image of isolation on the reader's mind.

5. Migration, Precarity, and Marginal Lives

While many poets detailed alienation within their homes, others spoke of an external reality, of how the pandemic brutally exposed and magnified existing inequalities. For these individuals, the defining motif was not solitude, but the raw, unforgiving struggle for survival against a lifetime of structural injustice. Rukhaya is at her satirical best in her poem "Travelogue of a Virus". The opening lines of the poem, as conveyed through the perspective of the virus, read: "I was born in China/ though some call me 'made in China' /as I journeyed from bats to humans" [6, lines 1-3]. As all are aware, the aetiology of the COVID-19 outbreak was subject to much debate and contention. As James Fallows notes, the western world leaders had gone to the extent of labelling COVID-19 as the "Chinese virus," insinuating China's deliberate role in 'creating' the pandemic and ruling out the possibility of a natural outbreak in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019 [7]. Cohen and Sirkeci observes how the pandemic brought to light the systemic structural vulnerabilities among transnational populations, or what can be understood as "cross-border precarity," the multiple, interconnected insecurities that expatriates experience across both home and destination countries [8]. Expatriates were subject to immense psychological stress as a result of familial separation, health anxieties, and discriminatory politics, wanting them to withdraw from the host countries [9, 10].

In yet another poem titled “Corona Jihad” [11], she makes an acerbic critique of religious bigotry in the context of COVID-19 when she says: “My name is Virus, and I am not a Khan. / You know me better, / as I hide in beards and shawls” [11, lines 8-10]. The poet undermines power structures with her incisive verses, revealing how the pervasive pathogen has stricken the very core of discriminatory politics. Again, in the poem “Travelogue of a Virus,” she highlights the limitations of technology in the face of this uncontainable virus that ‘embraced’ people irrespective of all the differences charted out by man: nation, class, religion, ethnicity,

No trains, no flights, I am still on,
I don't take orders, I invert them--
Third World, Second world, first world:
Equality is not equity.
I am still on my world tour,
despite your lockdown. [6, 35-40]

The inversion of the world order is stylistically executed by the gradual shift from uppercase to lowercase in the mention of the three worlds. The vulnerability of mankind, in general, is succinctly wrought out in these verses filtered through the lens of the virus. “It 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” [12]. The virus does not discriminate, “but we humans surely do, formed and animated as we are by the interlocking powers of nationalism, racism, xenophobia, and capitalism” [13].

In the poem “Corona: A Dream Deferred” [6], she confronts the core of human apathy: “Mother Earth waking up/ and breathing after ages. /We are yet to awake.” The last line reaffirms Georg Hegel’s famous words that the one thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history. While the poet seeks solace in the earth’s reclamation of its space, she is sceptical about human insensitivity. This aspect of human nature forms the crux of Nandini Sen Mehra’s poem “The Migrant Walks Back, Home” [14]

Mehra, a Singapore-based Indian poet, portrays a realistic and bleak picture of the inter-state migrant workers in India, one of the most affected groups of people during the COVID-19 catastrophe. The lockdowns had brought their lives to a standstill, leading to income loss, and forced evacuation in some cases, leaving “their work and livelihoods,” [14]. The abrupt loss of income and a precarious future reflected the deep insecurity that shaped their everyday existence [15]. These hardships aggravated as “pre-existing vulnerabilities... were made worse by the epidemic” [16, 17], resulting in what scholars describe as a humanitarian crisis.

These uncertainties and vulnerabilities as well as the insensitivity of the privileged, are captured vividly in Mehra’s concrete poem. The poem is shaped like a bundle of cloth tied to a stick, a mythic image of migration. She writes [14]:

And now they say we must go home but we
Do not have one. We never did. Our only home is in
Each other, or
In death. [14, lines 9-13]

The poem poignantly addresses migrant issues both thematically and stylistically. The opening lines, “I packed my radio, my dreams, my life, in a dusty cloth and tied it, secure/ at the end of a stick, a staff in my hand, I held my little child,” [14, lines 1-2] jut out to point fingers at the heart-rending predicament of the migrant workers in general and the callous attitude of the authorities concerned.

Mehra’s concrete poem reminds one of the unsettling images of the migrant workers walking back home, waiting in endless queues for food, stripped of their dignity; sitting huddled helplessly in unwelcome places, children lying on footpaths braving rains and the searing sun. These are people extruded by their employees “like so much unwanted accrual” [12].

Just one shocking instance of these vulnerable lives is that of the sixteen migrant workers who were mowed down by a goods train in May 2020 [18]. Another disturbing picture is that of the toddler who was seen toying with the blanket-turned-shroud placed over her dead mother’s body at a Bihar railway station [19].

These are just a few incidents that caught media attention in a language reduced to statistical detachment. But the pain and misery of their plights, to an extent, can only be captured in the powerful verses of a conscientious poet. Unfortunately, these migrant-lives were not accorded the attention and concern that they rightfully deserved. When many Indians cried out loud on their social media walls with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, only a few cared to whisper migrant lives matter.

The measures taken by the State and central governments in India have yielded little benefit. Many migrant deaths had been reported during this period on account of reasons ranging from starvation, accidents, police brutality, suicides, and lack of proper medical intervention [20, 21].

Moreover, evidence indicates that individuals from disadvantaged and marginalised communities are more susceptible to higher infection and mortality rates related to COVID-19 and that low-income groups have been most affected by the lockdowns [22]. This issue, as one is aware, was not limited to migrant workers or a single country, but rather transcends national boundaries. To quote Judith Butler: “But not everyone has a household or a ‘family’ and increasing numbers of the population in the US are homeless or transient. So ‘the household’ is figured as a space of protection, but that is hardly true for many people” [13].

6. Death, Ritual, and the Silence of Loss

The pandemic exposed not only systemic inequalities and prejudices, but also the fragility of all human lives in the face of death. Poetry, here, became an elegy for disrupted rituals and silenced farewells.

The theme of death and isolation is disturbingly yet forcefully portrayed in Meena Kandasamy’s poem “India is My Country” [23]. One of the most dreaded experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic was the inability to offer a dignified funeral service to many coronavirus-affected victims. As

Kandasamy puts it: “No heavy as sorrow rose-marigold garlands, no one tying / up the corpse’s big toes together, no one folding its rigid / hands as if in prayer [23, lines 3-5]. While articulating loss, she also expresses how all cultural markers have been easily subsumed by COVID 19: “no funeral drums, no pall-bearers, no coffins, no / vaikarisi, none of the hysteria we came to associate with / death, none of the collective catharsis,” [23, lines 16-18]. The poet graphically presents the sights of anonymous corpses wrapped in plastic and rows of open pyres in haunting verses. The absences that mark her poem relegate life to the margins, while death revels in its isolation. Her words, “On this last journey: no mortal remains, no farewells, no last words” [23, lines 27-28], say it all.

In a similar vein, Duffy’s “Since You Ask” [24], is a compulsive series of alliterative phrases that forcefully articulate the absurdity of human existence in the background of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown. The title unambiguously suggests that it is her reluctant reply to an obvious question. The lines below exemplify the urgency of her concern and the ensuing apprehension:

Scunnered, stymied, shafted, shaded,
shat on from a great height, spaffed, spooked,
shit-faced, seething, skewered, sickened,
strung-oot/rattling, sidelined, screwed, sent
round the twist, [24, lines 1-5]

The entire poem, both structurally and metaphorically, represents the chaos, absurdity, unpredictability, fear, alienation, and menace associated with the coronavirus-ridden world situation. The poem amplifies the “claps at the darkness” referred to in her poem “Hands.” Though the tone and tenor of the two poems differ, an element of uncertainty marks both. The intermingling of sense and nonsense lends a Pinteresque touch to the verses: “isolated, isolated, / loopy, lippy, locked-up, landlocked, / horrified, hacked-off, hijacked, hurt, / kiboshed, killjoyed” [24, lines 27-30]. However, the poem ends on a note of ambivalence where the last line echoes in bold “OK, OK, OK.” This could be a definitive sign of the finale of her frustration, or it probably registers the optimism and meditative self-assurance that resides in the regenerative power of humanity as the word “onwards” follows the triple OKs.

7. Hope, Renewal, and the Resurgence of Nature

Carruth’s “Long Bench,” [3] despite its theme of alienation, also offers hope. The pandemic has been challenging in terms of physical, emotional, social, and economic aspects. Yet, it is the sense of yearning for human company that strangely turns out to be therapeutic, as Carruth puts it. He wants the longing for life and love to be stored as “nut and seed” that would grow each day “in strange hibernation/ readying for its end – the sharing of the feast” [3, lines 15-17]. Glasgow’s Lord Provost Philip Braat states that the “Long Bench” is an “important contribution to the cultural life of the city during this difficult period” and “Jim Carruth’s eloquent lines as he states must have found an echo in the hearts of many Glaswegians at a time when everyone in the city was “pulling

together to keep each other safe by restricting movements and social contacts” [25].

The redemptive power of poetry in connection with the pandemic is thoughtfully expressed by Simon Armitage, “It’s unlikely that there’s going to be a book of poems that is a consolation against catastrophe, but just in poetry’s nature, in the way it asks us to be considerate of language, it also asks us to be considerate of each other and the world. In the relationship with thoughtful language, something more thoughtful occurs” [5]. Armitage ensures that the poem is not dystopic. The poem’s second part is an extension of the theme of separation but imbued with more hope. It alludes to Kalidas’s Meghadūta, where a *yaksha*, a nature spirit, pines for his beloved on a distant mountain peak. He beseeches a kindred cloud to carry his message to his love in the Himalayan city of Alaka. This part is replete with highly evocative images of sinuous streams, beautiful meadows, and untainted earth marked with bamboo forests and snow-hatted peaks, waterfalls, creeks, beautiful flight of cranes, all embalmed by pollution-free air – “the air/ hypnotically see-through, rare” [5, lines 31-32].

By alluding to the Eyam plague and the city’s resurgence from the same, Armitage offers hope to the readers. He concludes by stating that “the journey may be ponderous at the time, long and slow, / but necessarily so” [5, lines 33-34], marking the inexorable nature of recuperation. Myth and technology are interlinked in the references to the ‘yaksha’ and the ‘clouds’ that aid in ‘telecommunication.’ While hoping for a refreshed world, he acknowledges that such speedbreakers are necessary to control the unchecked exploitation of the earth, water, and air. Pandemics in earlier times, too, have compelled people to abandon the past and reimagine their surroundings in the context of the ‘new normal’. Arundhati Roy, in her essay “The Pandemic is a Portal,” writes:

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. [12]

For Judith Butler, the new normal entails an urgent need to acknowledge and confront capitalism’s impact on the pandemic, advocating for solidarity with the marginalised, which implies a critical shift in societal values and norms [13]. Žižek, too, engages with the idea of a ‘new normal’ in *Pandemic!*, when he envisions a transformative global order capable of addressing systemic social and economic injustices. He is not referring to traditional communism in this context. He instead advocates a kind of “global organization that can control and regulate the economy, as well as limit the sovereignty of nation-states when needed” [26, p. 45]. Writers and philosophers envision the emergence of a new normal as an opportunity for the realisation of a more equitable, hopeful, and ethically grounded world.

Another poem that restores faith in human goodness is Imtiaz Dharker’s “Cranes Lean In.” The poem is about a telephone

conversation she had with her daughter during the COVID-19 lockdown in London. Themes of the restoration of Nature and the goodness of human nature run parallel in the poem:

You say nothing
is too far, mothers
will find their daughters,
strangers will be neighbours,
even saviours
will have names. [27, lines 9-14]

To quote Dharker's own words about the poem: "I could hear the phone calls all over the world, people separated and searching for words of hope and consolation to give each other. The words my daughter gave me were about kindnesses, and something we had both been waiting for: the cherry trees blossoming in the parks and streets of London" [2]. Žižek echoes a similar sentiment: "No coronavirus can take this from us. So, there is a hope that corporeal distancing will even strengthen the intensity of our link with others" [26, p.3]. The fact that the disruption of man's physical proximity and the limitations imposed by the pandemic have the potential to strengthen human relationships is reassuring.

8. 'New Normal' Reflections

As poets discussed reflect, meanings have been inverted, subverted and reinvented in strange ways. The very word 'positive' deconstructed itself by being 'infected' with the virus. The comfort of homes became crippling for many. There were no longer backbenchers in (online) classrooms. Spatio-temporal dimensions became fluid like never before. Private space encroached on the public and vice versa. Again, the phrase 'social distancing', though a legitimised term, turned out to be a misnomer with profound psychological implications for the general populace. In the given context, 'physical distancing' is/was a more appropriate term as expressed by some social critics, because social interactions and social relationships are/were possible through social networking sites. However, this kind of corporeal distancing gave rise to a new type of untouchability that ironically has no caste/class/racial distinctions. Xenophobic societies were forced to encounter just two discriminatory entities – the Covid-positive and Covid-negative.

The kind of treatment meted out to the Europeans who toured India at the onset of the virus is a case in point. Racist remarks like "Kung flu" by an unnamed White House staffer [28] to refer to COVID-19 were nothing short of an indictment against the Chinese. Asian-Americans in general took offence to the remark. Ironically, on the one hand, the pandemic had united the world with its widespread invasion, sparing no country from its infectious touch. As Žižek notes, the virus initially operated as some sort of a supreme egalitarian entity [26, p.42). Simultaneously, racist, classist, and other factional divides became all the more explicit too with the spread of the pandemic. The British journalist John Authers remarks that the initial solidarity had gradually "given way to a bitter factional and cultural battle, with rival moral principles hurled like metaphysical grenades. Different countries have taken antithetical approaches while the US has split itself almost into two nations, divided between those who wear masks and those who do not" [26, p.2, 4]. The coronavirus outbreak also

sparked a massive epidemic of ideological viruses that were dormant in our cultures, including fake news, paranoid conspiracy theories, and outbursts of racism [26, p.39]. Arundhati Roy in her essay "The Pandemic is a Portal" states that in India, its deep-seated inequalities and apathy towards suffering was exposed in the course of the pandemic. "The lockdown worked like a chemical experiment that suddenly illuminated hidden things" [2].

9. Conclusion

The world has never been the same since the pandemic. The poetic responses to COVID-19 have captured the nuances of the change in a dialogic engagement that transcend mere documentation to establish the tripartite significance of poetry as a critical, archival, and therapeutic force. This prismatic framework, which promotes a plurality of independent voices, from the satirical critique of xenophobia to the mournful lament over isolated deaths and broken lives to hopes of resurgence is significant, as it resists reducing the pandemic experience to a single, monolithic narrative of loss. Through these poems, this study exposes the deep systemic fractures and inequalities that the virus illuminated, as seen in the devastating plight of migrant workers. Simultaneously, the poems serve a powerful archival purpose, providing an immediate, intimate record of the crisis, while their articulation of shared fears and resilient hope grants them a profound therapeutic quality. The multiplicity of voices reveal a central paradox: it is precisely by honouring the distinct, divergent ways we experienced suffering that these poems converge upon the fundamental truth of our shared humanity. This corpus of diverse verses thus functions, not just as a retrospective record, but as a collective voice that holds history accountable and stands as a portal seeking a more equitable world.

References

- [1] Bakhtin MM. Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics. Emerson C, translator, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 1984, p.6.
- [2] Flood A. Carol Ann Duffy leads British poets creating "living record" of coronavirus. The Guardian [Internet]. 2020 Apr 20 [cited 2020 Jun 20]. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/apr/20/carol-ann-duffy-leads-british-poets-coronavirus-imitiaz-dharker-jackie-kay>
- [3] Carruth J. The long bench. The Scottish Poetry Library [Internet]. [cited 2020 Sep 26]. Available from: <https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poem/the-long-bench/>
- [4] Rukhaya MK. Corona: a dream deferred. Facebook [Internet]. 2020 Apr 4 [cited 2020 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://www.facebook.com/rukhuaya.mk/posts/pfbid08vhhmD4ht2CmUFMLhSZ9bXBiiuEuRBBPmq7nozRaUB3BPEPzQbVPozhHZCH4KEc8>
- [5] Flood, A., Lockdown: Simon Armitage Writes Poem about Coronavirus Outbreak, The Guardian [Internet]. 2020 Mar 21, [cited 2020 Jun 20]. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/mar/21/loc>

- kdown-simon-armitage-writes-poem-about-coronavirus-outbreak
- [6] Rukhaya MK. Travelogue of a virus. Facebook [Internet]. 2020 Apr 28 [cited 2020 May 2]. Available from: <https://www.facebook.com/rukhaya.mk/posts/pfbid037RfEjEk176Ai7zQ6V9AegK31M4L63wD1qvstp7EUUf7wbZYyU9yect9dAaQ6TQQcl>
- [7] Fallows J. A 2020 time capsule #5: "The Chinese Virus". The Atlantic [Internet]. 2020 Mar 18 [cited 2020 Apr 24]. Available from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/notes/2020/03/2020-time-capsule-5-the-chinese-virus/608260/>
- [8] Cohen JH, Sirkeci I. Introduction. In: Sirkeci I, Cohen JH, editors. COVID-19 and migration: understanding the pandemic and human mobility. London: Transnational Press; 2020. p. 1–10.
- [9] Baburajan P. Psychological impact of COVID-19 pandemic among expatriate residents in the UAE. Avicenna [Internet]. 2021 Jun 24 [cited 2020 Apr 25];2021(1). Available from: <https://doi.org/10.5339/avi.2021.3>
- [10] Mathew J, et al. Cross-border precarity: the complex strain on expatriates and their families amidst public health crisis. Global Health. 2025;21. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-025-01098-4>
- [11] Rukhaya MK. Corona jihad. Facebook [Internet]. 2020 Apr 7 [cited 2020 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://www.facebook.com/rukhaya.mk/posts/pfbid02Pzvq5aTXtMTe96Y7DHGv33xpVUccxBN9jbExpui6gkaE94RiLzPjGUJX3JgShPiU>
- [12] Roy A. The pandemic is a portal. Financial Times [Internet]. 2020 Apr 3. Available from: <https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca>
- [13] Butler J. Capitalism has its limits. Verso [Internet]. 2020 Mar 30 [cited 2020 May 1]. Available from: <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4603-capitalism-has-its-limit>
- [14] Mehra NS. The migrant walks back. Facebook [Internet]. 2020 Apr 9 [cited 2020 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/130191190483958/search/?q=the%20migrant%20walks%20back>
- [15] Dhar NS. COVID-19 induced income loss among migrant workers. Econ Pap [Internet]. 2022 [cited 2022]. Available from: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9874837/>
- [16] Jha SS, Lahiri A. Domestic migrant workers in India returning to their homes: emerging socioeconomic and health challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rural Remote Health. 2020;20(4). Available from: <https://doi.org/10.22605/RRH6186>
- [17] Kumar S, Choudhury S. Migrant workers and human rights: a critical study on India's COVID-19 lockdown policy. Soc Sci Humanit Open. 2021;3(1). Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2021.100130>
- [18] Rupasinghe W. Sixteen migrant workers killed by goods train. World Socialist Web Site [Internet]. 2020 May 14. Available from: <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2020/05/14/inra-m14.html>
- [19] Toddler tries to wake up dead mother at Bihar railway station. Hindustan Times [Internet].
- [20] Gopalan HS, Misra A. COVID-19 pandemic and challenges for socioeconomic issues, healthcare, and national health programs in India. Diabetes Metab Syndr. 2020;14(5):757-9. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsx.2020.05.041>
- [21] Ray D, Subramanian S. India's lockdown: an interim report. Indian Econ Rev. 2020;55(1):31-79.
- [22] Galasso V. Covid: not a great equaliser. Covid Econ. 2020; 19: 241-55.
- [23] Kandasamy M. India is my country. Instagram [Internet]. 2021 Apr 25 [cited 2021 Apr 28]. Available from: <https://www.instagram.com/p/COFtrHbJ7tR/>
- [24] Duffy CA. Since you ask. Manchester Metropolitan University [Internet]. 2020 Mar 23 [cited 2020 Apr 27]. Available from: <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/write/since-you-ask.php>
- [25] Glasgow's poet laureate writes poem for coronavirus city. Glasgow Times [Internet]. 2020 May 14 [cited 2020 Sep 19]. Available from: <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/18446364.glasgows-poet-laureate-writes-poem-coronavirus-city/>
- [26] Žižek S. Pandemic! COVID-19 shakes the world. New York: OR Books; 2020, 45.
- [27] Dharker I. Cranes lean in. Manchester Metropolitan University [Internet]. 2020 Mar 22 [cited 2020 May 25]. Available from: <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/write/cranes-lean-in.php>
- [28] Boyer D. Trump spars with reporter over accusation that staffer called coronavirus "Kung Flu". The Washington Times [Internet]. 2020 Mar 18 [cited 2020 Apr 25]. Available from: <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2020/mar/18/trump-spars-reporter-over-accusation-staffer-calle/>