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TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

COVID-19 and the Possibilities of Participatory Communication During Crisis

Irene Gammel and Jason Wang

On March 17, 2020, Ontario announced its first COVID-19 death and declared a provincial state of emergency under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. The closure of businesses and facilities was ordered. As our own institution, Toronto Metropolitan University, a large 45,000 student university in downtown Toronto, shuttered its doors, our team at the Modern Literature and Culture (MLC) Research Centre¹ shifted operations online. This was no small feat given that in-person activities were a key part of our research mobilization, especially through the MLC Gallery, where our center's programming had lined up several exhibitions, conferences, and other in-person events. A cornerstone of our center is its collection of rare ephemera and books, a feature that is only accessible to our scholars and students in person. Nonetheless, the unprecedented lockdown and the sudden inaccessibility of our resources required an instant shift, including a mental shift. Barred from the physical, social, intellectual, and creative space that had constituted most of our activities and research identity in Toronto, Ontario, and beyond, we were confronted with a sober choice: either we would wait in a shocked daze hoping for the world to become normal again, or we could step up and make creative use of the limited but new possibilities afforded by the pandemic's restrictions. The latter choice forced us to quickly abandon, or at the very least indefinitely suspend, several projects that we had been working on for months and years and to make creative adjustments in the face of the changed circumstances. Consequently, living the pandemic from day to day, we shifted and adapted our operations with a great deal of dedication, and sacrifice, by the entire team.

In the first week of the lockdown, surrounded by an uncanny new silence, we launched our first Zoom-mediated event, making the pandemic the focal point of the discussion. From our home desks and from quasi-clandestine visits to the university, through the emptied streets of the formerly crowded and noisy metropolis, we began planning for and advertising our first public pandemic webinar in March.

Little did we know that it would evolve as the first of its kind in North America and arguably the world. We invited a philosopher, Torontonian Mark Kingwell, who talked about the need for radical hope, which emerges in the face of cultural devastation;² historian Catherine Ellis, who talked about each crisis being unique and history never quite repeating itself; and literature scholar Irene Gammel who evoked Daniel Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year* (2010 [1722]), written retrospectively decades after the 1665 Great Plague of London, and Camus' *The Plague* (1991 [1947]), an allegory for the plague of Nazism sweeping Europe, which also dramatized the importance of individual and communal ethical action during a crisis. What for us at the MLC was meant to be a singular session, or even a mini-series of two or three events, is stunningly still running at the time of writing this chapter in the fall of 2021. What we initially imagined to be an anomaly, thinking that COVID-19 would become a thing of the past within a month to six weeks, has become the longest arts- and culture-focused initiative addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in North America. To date we have had 66 international speakers and over 2,000 participants, offering an international dialogue on the role of the arts and culture in navigating the pandemic and preparing for recovery. Our book on the topic, *Creative Resilience and COVID-19: Figuring the everyday in a pandemic*, which is largely a product of this series of conversations, was published with Routledge's The COVID-19 Pandemic Series in March 2022.

In this chapter we take the pandemic webinar series as our case study, focusing on key installments that took inspiration from actual events including the first lockdown, and the struggle to find ways of coping with the pandemic over a prolonged period. We considered the ensuing protest comprising youths, activists, and concerned citizens in the United States, which swept Canada and other countries. We responded to this event with our session on the role of intellectuals in a crisis and addressed the culture of misinformation that contributes to and fuels racism. Amid the rise of anti-Asian racism that resurfaced in the immediate wake of the pandemic, with disturbingly aggressive self-righteousness in open daylight, we were confronted with the fact that this was not a phenomenon born of the moment but rather a deeply racist volcano erupting in the wake of the pandemic and the culture of misinformation. This realization led to one of our most emotionally powerful sessions entitled "Xenophobia and COVID-19" (April 22, 2021), during which activist and author Jan Wong and health researcher Josephine Wong spoke powerfully about the threat of being older Asian women in a racist society. In short, the abrupt change of social life during the first wave of COVID-19 brought a flourish of conversations on social issues. Indeed, the broader background for our MLC Pandemic Webinar series was the unsettling fact that the pandemic was politicized from its very beginning, especially with then U.S. President, Donald Trump. As distrust, misinformation, and false knowledge penetrated media discourses, creating a communication crisis, there was a need to seek intellectual guidance. Without a budget, without a sense that we would be recompensed for these events, we operated (and are still operating) mostly with volunteer time and expertise. Except for one speaker, participants donated their time to the series, and this very longevity

and generosity takes us deeper into the motivations and shifts in communication that effected a rise in participatory culture as exemplified by our MLC Pandemic webinar series with its total of 21 sessions at the time of writing this chapter in December of 2021.

With the pandemic lasting longer than expected, we embraced the silver lining in the tragedy, keeping alert to the possibilities amid the pitfalls. Given the success of our webinar discussions, we soon shifted from a Toronto focus to inviting more international experts and quickly developed an international following, with most of the sessions routinely drawing over 100 participants. While our MLC Pandemic Webinar series is different from conventional media fan culture, as we argue, it is a phenomenon of participatory culture, which as communication scholar Henry Jenkins suggests has a relatively low barrier for engagement, participants believing their contributions matter, and therefore caring about other people's opinions. As Jenkins and his colleagues explain in *Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century* (2009): "Not every member must contribute, but all must believe they are free to contribute when ready and that what they contribute will be appropriately valued" (6). In that way, participatory culture encourages a shift of focus from individual expression to community involvement.

Likewise, in his book *Speaking into the air: A History of the idea of communication* (2001), media historian John Durham Peters believes that the concept of communication is deeply related to modernity and modern technology. He writes: "Only moderns could be facing each other and be worried about 'communicating' as if they were thousands of miles apart" (2). Since the human world is divided between "me" and "not me" (4),³ communication is a project of reconciling self with others, whereby the binary that pits face-to-face against technologically mediated communication is misleading if one accepts that all communication is mediated. Moreover, since as Peters observes, "Face-to-face talk is as laced with gaps as distant communication" (264), the modern relationship to communication is fundamentally more interpretative than dialogic, characterized by growing anxieties about "authentic" communication (150). Peters contends that communication has always been about the mobilities of bodies and desire as much as about the activities of minds, imagination, and representation. The idea that communication is "sooner a matter of faith and risk than of technique and method" (30) is key in understanding the renewed twenty-first-century interests in communication technology. Communication is not a matter of verification or authenticity; instead, it is a matter of affect that we – that is, "me" and "not me" – are getting along with each other. Robin Mansell and Uta Wehn have argued that "technologies do not create the transformations in society by themselves; they are designed and implemented by people in their social, economic, and technological contexts" (Mansell and Wehn 1998, 12). For Peters, likewise, the most important qualities in communication are neither success and failure, nor authenticity and inauthenticity of communicating; instead, he sees tolerance, love, and mercy for others in their efforts to communicate with me (and others) as the essential yet largely immeasurable quality. "Humans are

hardwired by the privacy of their experience [alongside sensations and feelings] to have communication problems”, he writes (4).

In a similar vein, in *Legislators and interpreters: On Modernity, post-modernity and intellectuals* (1987), Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman explores the sociology of intellectuals, describing the post-modern strategy as “one best characterized by the metaphor of the ‘interpreter’ role” (5). Whereas modern intellectuals sought to make laws based on canons of truth and objectivity, post-modernist intellectuals seek to engender and to engage in a conversation between participants who have in principle been considered each as autonomous being. But perhaps most important for an intellectual context for the extraordinary situation that is the pandemic is the fact that Bauman himself confronted extraordinary situations, first surviving the Nazi regime, and later, in 1968, enduring anti-Semitic persecution and expulsion from his native Poland. Bauman’s ideas are highly relevant to the pandemic, as he theorizes the concept of the “liquidity of modernity”, arguing that because identity is in permanent flux, modern subjects experience profound uncertainty and anxiety. He argues that we need to take “responsibility for our responsibility,” in the personal, social, and global aspects of our lives, suggesting that individuals need to be engaged.⁴ He asks:

Why do I write books? Why do I think? Why should I be passionate? Because things could be different, they could be made better. [My role] is to alert people to the dangers, to do something. “Don’t ever console yourself that you have done everything you could, because it’s not true”, says the philosopher Levinas, who believed that you recognized a moral person as someone who does not think he or she is moral enough. That is also how we recognize a just society – a just society castigates itself that there is not enough justice in our society.

(cited in Bunting 2003)

Bauman argues further that in a consumer society, citizens wallow in material objects, in fascinating, enjoyable things. “If you define your value by the things you acquire and surround yourself with, being excluded is humiliating. And we live in a world of communication, everyone gets information about everyone else. There is universal comparison, and you don’t just compare yourself with the people next door, you compare yourself to people all over the world and with what is being presented as the decent, proper and dignified life” (cited in Bunting 2003). In the end, as Bauman sees it, it all comes down to a person and personal responsibility. Providing the example of those who helped victims during the Nazi regime, he explains:

I was fascinated by sociologists’ research into the people who helped the victims: these people were a cross-section of the population. None of the factors which sociologists believe to be the determinants of human behaviour – education, religious belief, political attachment – correlated with the

incidents of heroic resistance against evil. Somehow, the ability to resist is not fully dependent on social conditioning.

(cited in Bunting 2003)

In short, Bauman's argument is that the intellectual has a central role to play within the context of liquid modernity with its concomitant anxieties and uncertainties. We see the webinar series adapting and transforming the semi-structure dynamics of the modern salon with its focus on conviviality, conversation, and social transformation. The communication theories of Zygmunt Bauman, Henry Jenkins, and John Durham Peters underpin this essay and offer reflections on the role of communicating during crisis. Ultimately, we argue for the possibilities of participatory culture in efforts to confront a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. In this we also examine the insights and learning that arise from our webinar series case study and the overall experience of the pandemic.

At Homes: Participatory Cultures from Salon to Webinar

Briefly consider what at first sight may strike us as an unlikely pairing of images. The first is an oil canvas depicting an 18th century French drawing room, crowded from left to right with several rows of well-dressed people seated in a semicircle around a central figure to the left who blends into the group and yet stands out not only because of his red tailcoat and the table he is seated at, covered with an emerald-green velvety tablecloth, but because of his intent body language captured in the middle of speaking. He holds a letter that he's reading from, looking up at one of the audience members. The background is decorated with paintings from floor to ceiling, showing additional portraits, people and landscapes, while a mirror to the right reflects with the group and the paintings on the wall. The group, which is engaged in listening to the dramatic reader or are busy conversing with each other, represents a salon in 1755, among them luminaries of enlightenment literature and philosophy like Denis Diderot and Montesquieu. The painting is entitled *In the Salon of Madame Geoffrin in 1755* and was painted by French painter Anicet-Charles Gabriel Lemonnier (see Figure 9.1).

Compare this oil painting with a screenshot of our April 2021 pandemic webinar, depicting some 25 people on a grid, many of them turned to the camera, captured at the end of the webinar to share on social media to draw audience to the recorded video (see Figure 9.2). In the screenshot, several participants can be seen with bookcases in the background or with paintings, while others figure in this group portrait solely by their still portraits used as avatars to visually signal their participation. Still others show exterior landscape scenes as backgrounds. Even though separated by centuries, both events stage the event's group activity – conveying community and conviviality, as well as art, literature, and cultural interchange. Each event was performed in a specific historical moment, the first taking a retrospective vantage looking from 1812 back to 1755 through the medium of oil on canvas, and the second being screenshot during the fourth wave of the pandemic via



FIGURE 9.1 Charles Gabriel Lemonnier, *In the Salon of Madame Geoffrin in 1755*, oil on canvas, 1812.50.9 x 77.1 inches, 129.5 x 196 cm

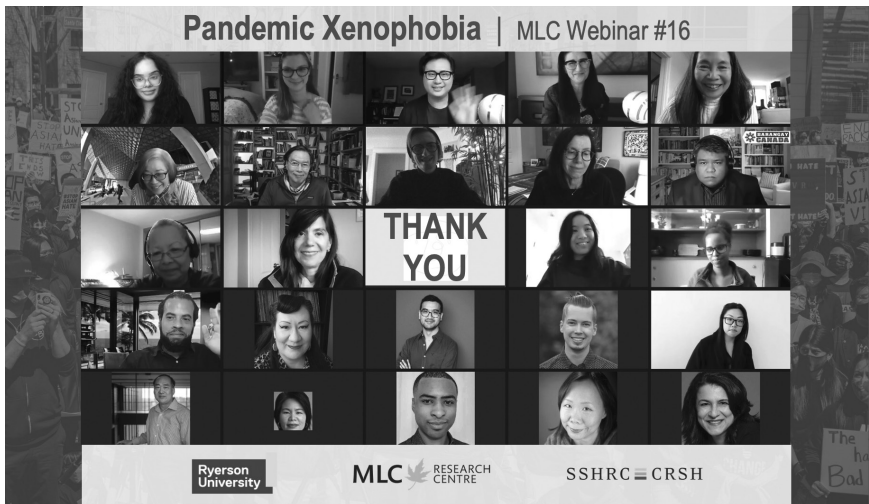


FIGURE 9.2 Cameron MacDonald, Screenshot of *Pandemic Xenophobia*, MLC Pandemic Webinar Series, Zoom-mediated, April 22, 2021

Zoom, capturing a moment from the end of the session. Both images enact the community through the group's interaction. With emphasis on the immediacy of the cultural experience, their juxtaposition helps unravel our pandemic webinar's dynamic form as steeped in the institutions of humanistic culture.

From the vantage of participatory culture, both images can be contextualized by Jodi Dean's 2001 article "Cyber Salons and Civil Society: rethinking the public sphere and transnational technoculture", reflecting on salon culture as a practice of rational conversation as conceived by Jürgen Habermas, as a space apart from the economy, "a space where people could exchange ideas and voice criticism on matters of shared interest or concern. The vitality of the exchanges was such that new work and great minds first sought legitimacy in the salons" (244). Dean contrasts this traditional salon with its guidelines for rational and polite conversation with the cyber salon that provides networked interaction, and exchange in a late capitalist techno culture, and which can also be adapted to 21st-century pandemic culture, with its strong focus on networked communication and creation of community from one's home-base.

With its combination of listening, talking, and cultivating conversation about contemporary art and life, the image of the salon conjures the gatherings of Gertrude Stein in Paris. Stein herself said: "Conversation was not a reproduction of listening and talking and this was said and when there was more there was some understanding of that" (quoted in Bilski and Braun, 1). Indeed, the salon is an institution of modern culture steeped in the 18th century French and European traditions, according to salon theorists Emily Braun and Emily Bilski. Characterized by the regularity of social gatherings, typically organized for a given day of the week, the salon is marked by its *jour fixe*, which for our pandemic webinar series was often the last Thursday of each month (from 4–5 PM ET), allowing participants to grow accustomed to checking in with some regulars and meeting new members as well. Salons are marked by the semi-structured, semi-open format of these so-called *at homes*, which in our case occurred not weekly like many of the salons, but monthly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The idea of the home is central here: as moderators we took our participants into our homes (and were taken to their homes), revealing backgrounds of lives lived, spatial extensions of ourselves, and frequent subjects of conversation during the informal conversation with the audience that typically preceded the official start. At the same time, many participants also shared their home space in turn, inviting us into not only their home offices, but their living rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms. The sighting of a bed or daybed was not unusual, poignantly recalling the salon's long-time focus on the divan as an image of salon sociability with its focus on comfortable, flexible seating arrangements. According to Bilski and Braun, a successful salon depended on a core group of returning habitues, that is, loyal group of participants, often a combination of close friends and persons of renown whose very presence makes the salon attractive and desirable (2). For example, we used our list of previous participants to invite to subsequent webinars, with the number of members growing with each session. And if members of renown are important for the traditional salon, our webinar attracted renowned personalities, from retired editors and publishers to university presidents, from lawyers to nurses, from scientists to policy makers who bestowed credibility and expertise through their presence and engagement.

By distinguishing three types of salons, the cyber salon, the relational, and the friendly, the latter two being salons that thrive on civic friendship and the search for friendship, as well as the cultivation of intimacy (Dean 2001, 245), Jodi Dean argues that “an emphasis on civil society presents and moves toward heterogeneity and contestability as well as an acknowledgement of the contingency, variety, and potential for violence among the diversity of political styles and engagements” (250). While for Jürgen Habermas interactivity in the salon is based on the authenticity of face-to-face encounters, and intimacy that was often extended via letter writing, its popularity prompting the emergence of the novel of letters (Dean 2001, 257), the cyber salon, in contrast, as Dean documents, provides a model of interactivity, subjectivity, media, and political space significantly different from the rational and friendly salons of traditional salon theory (Dean 2001, 258). For example, while both in-person and virtual salon experiences are embodied, computer-mediated interactions take a different form of embodiment, including the use of carefully constructed backgrounds; the use avatars that help veil identity, thus creating different experiences of subjectivity compared with the traditional in-person salon. As Dean writes, “their choices regarding how to represent their bodies extend beyond those easily available to people you meet in person” (Dean 2001, 259). The cyber salon described by Dean highlights the potential for fragmentation, postmodernism, or deconstruction, which differs from the traditional public sphere where “trust is linked to unified, embodied subjectivity” (259). In contrast, the cyber salon allows for a play with different identities and personae, which may even be perceived as threatening (259). As Dean writes: “The projection and fabrication of personae independent of a specific embodiment are deemed particularly dangerous and usually a cause for psychiatric or judicial intervention” (260). Consequently, the model of interactivity for the cyber salon includes “disembodied as well as in body interactions,” thematizing flux and uncertainty (260).

If the traditional salon is governed by rules of rationality, with a focus on polite conversational turn-taking and witty exchanges, the pandemic webinar as a cyber salon both echoes and departs from this pattern, as it has more dramatic and even explosive potential, depending on the topic at hand. A good example is our session on “Human rights, freedom, and COVID-19” (on November 30, 2021), which sparked the most outspoken hostility and displeasure about the session in the comments that followed it. One of the invited speakers, James Gacek, a Canadian professor of justice studies, made an impassioned plea for the importance of vaccination by polemically referring to anti-vaxxers as irresponsible “sociopaths”, which sparked the following loud responses in our email feedback round up of the session.

From a clinical audiologist at a Toronto Hospital

One sided, no room for discussion, uneducated views nurturing robotic sheep. feel sorry for the fools that presented this and the sheep that follow this narrative. They’ve got their heads up their asses if they think they are safe. These communities will come after them too. When will you wake up fools?

From anonymous

One-sided discussion with no room to question the narrative we are used to hearing for the past two years. I am appalled that your speaker James Gacek called unvaccinated people “sociopaths” and “lacking compassion” which are inappropriate ways to label people who are exercising their God-given right to refuse medical treatment. It is quite disappointing that such educated people brought so much bias and personal political views to a discussion that was meant to be about “Human Rights, Freedom and COVID-19”. In the future, it would be nice to see opinions from both sides rather than only from the politically-correct side.

From a student of commerce

I was under the impression that this webinar would be a discussion with opposing views not a powwow of one-sided discriminatory propaganda. For a panel consisting of such educated individuals it is surprising that they were unable to remove their bias from the topics at hand. It is also ironic that this was a human rights webinar and at no point were the rights of unvaccinated people and students addressed

With over 100 participants, the 19 written responses, about half of which were positive, were almost double the quantity from the written engagement of other sessions. While most of our 21 sessions to date have prompted generally positive responses, this one was different in that it included many negative and harsh comments about the panel’s being biased. In total, the webinar discussion accommodated five live questions from the audience, several of which were asked by audience members who were given the microphone via our central unmuting function. At least one of the five was focused on anti-vaccination, with the question including a well-formulated, manifesto-like statement on behalf of the anti-vaxxer position. There was also an instance of a participant’s direct messaging one of the speakers, Carissima Mathen, a professor of law at University of Ottawa, who then called out the participant via the chat box by copying his abusive comment for others to see. The participant then left a lengthy feedback message for the organizers insisting that he was not an anti-vaxxer. Because of the perceived one-sidedness by anti-vaccine activists, there was an outcry by those who wanted to hear their clamoring for freedom validated.

From the beginning, the participatory function of the audience feedback loop was crucial to the webinar series. The very first session, which aired on April 2, 2020, and ran under the title “Pandemic: What are the lessons of history, literature, and philosophy”, provided the enthusiastic support that encouraged us to continue by hosting a second, and then subsequent events. This was proof that we were successful in what we had hoped to establish, namely: a community of people living through uncertainty and an informed conversation with the help of experts

joining us from cross-disciplinary fields. A doctoral candidate from Indiana University commented: “It was a great experience and a very warm (and much-needed) human interaction”, and many others echoed the excitement of the webinar’s ability of cutting through silence imposed by the lockdown and quarantine restrictions, as expressed by the following doctoral candidate in literature from the University of York in the UK:

I love it and my mind is exploding while listening to the talks. The philosophy speaker is excellent and his talk is thought-provoking. However, it’s hard to focus and catch up with the talks. I find it easy to be absent-minded. May I suggest that the speakers attach slides or pictures to their talks in the future?

A lengthy comment by a Toronto professor of mechanical and industrial engineering ended with an expression of gratitude: “Thank you for your kind efforts in instilling vibrancy in the current ‘boredom’”. Perhaps most interesting was the fact that the webinar spilled over into new communities, bridging between town and gown, as the following anonymous comment underscores.

Thanks for allowing folks outside the university community to also attend. This was my first event I attended live in Canada and I was pleasantly surprised by the acknowledgement of indigenous peoples’ rights. Such a gesture is unthinkable in the state where I’ve lived for the last 3 decades, Texas.

Still, even from the first sessions the participatory involvement meant an active shaping of the evolving event. With critiques and suggestions for improvement, many comments we received focused on participating in shaping the very structure of our webinar. For example, some criticized our introductions as too long, and the one-hour events as too short. We nonetheless kept our tight timeline as a useful frame both in mediating the time availability of unpaid speakers and as a way of counteracting the inevitable Zoom-fatigue brought about by long sessions. Participants also made suggestions on how to shape the interaction between moderators and participants, as when a student of English expressed disappointment about one of their favorite speakers having been cut off by another panelist, noting: “I have a small critique about the facilitation during the Q&A period: each panelists needs to be given the opportunity (should they want) to speak on a question that they find relevant to their work and interests”. Conversely, a regular participant on the same panel, a professor and former dean, left this note about the format, also actively participating in the shaping of the series:

I’m not sure it works that all three presenters offer their responses to every question. You might have room for more questions from the floor if (a) the questions were directed to one particular member of the panel; and (b) the responses were a little more concise. If there are questions to which all three

members' answers might be of interest, the monitor might ask one or two of the speakers to offer their response.

In other words, our participants took an active stake in the format of the webinar, and its interactive dynamics, negotiating the format through feedback. Moreover, even though we never asked for topics, participants volunteered topics that they wanted covered, and several topics that we ended up featuring, such as the "Sex, dating, and the pandemic" session (September 23, 2021), were the result of direct feedback. In our fourth pandemic webinar, "Coping with Crisis through Humour, art and performance" (June 4, 2020), one participant argued for further democratizing of participation:

The frank and honest discussions and stories from the panelists was enlightening and appreciated. Having access to intellectual content was a surprise and also quite enjoyable. I'm looking forward to future webinars and would like to know what type of content is being considered, and would be interested in voting for content or subject matter of that was ever an option.

The participants involved were looking for a combination of experiences: the feeling of community and exchange; the search for answers and language during crisis; but many of them also yearned to use the process to discover concrete strategies of coping with adversity. As a postdoctoral fellow from Toronto commented on our webinar on "Comics and COVID-19" (March 25, 2021): "I really enjoyed this webinar. It was delightful to hear how artists have coped with the pandemic in a visual format. And of course, humour is always welcome". One of panelists of the Comics session had shared with his social media followers prior to the event, indicating that he was "looking forward to talking about some comics that have made me feel less alone, more collective, less anxious, more outraged, less despondent, more committed, and more".

Another participant, one of our most loyal attendees, a retired editor from Toronto concurred:

I rely on this monthly webinar to keep my brain functioning. The MLC series examines important topics from an international perspective. The calibre of the participants, who participate from all over the globe, the level of discussion and energy, the apparently endless issues raised in each session is astonishing.

Indeed, with each panel, we have sought to rise to the challenge of presenting high caliber speakers and ideas. We wanted each participant to rise to the occasion, and to reflect not just scholarly work but personal soul-searching, tapping the personal ways in which people had been touched, changed, and prompted to action by the pandemic.

As these examples suggest, with its focus on the possibilities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the success of this webinar series is significantly linked to the rise of participatory communication, in which participants' investment and enjoyment of their online social engagement is innately linked to the feeling that their contribution is valid and important to the overall community. We have explored this phenomenon through the lenses of Zygmunt Bauman's, Henry Jenkins's, and John Durham Peters's communication theories, with the goal of illustrating the possibilities of participatory culture in confronting a crisis like COVID-19. As for the broader lessons and application, it's worth recalling that participatory communication advocates for an imperative of dialogue that emphasizes an inclusive, democratic information and knowledge exchange among different constituents and stakeholders. According to Jan Servaes and Patchanee Malikhao (2005), participatory communication conceives of people as a dynamic nucleus of development, meaning "lifting up the spirits of a local community to take pride in its own culture, intellect and environment" (98). And while there are intersections between the pandemic webinar series and traditional salon culture, especially with respect to the format of conversation and knowledge exchange, the webinar is ultimately a technological enabler that allows panelists and participants to cross borders, geopolitical cultures, and methodologies. In the end, this participatory communication also implies dialogical communication in the sense of the dialogical pedagogy of Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire (Shih 2018), in which each participant is an autonomous being that demands respect and an equal chance in communicating. Like Bauman, Freire sees the world as changing and fluid with participatory communication propelling new relationships between communicators. Ultimately, the dialogical principle in advancing the conversation has been a key feature making the pandemic webinar a participatory cyber salon of sorts as well as a flexible medium in negotiating transition. As one of our habitues sums it up in their feedback note to a panel on "University Leaders Navigate COVID-19" (May 21, 2020):

Gives us hope for the future
 We are not going back to normal.
 We do need a reset.
 And yes the students are the future.

Notes

- 1 Established in 2006, the Modern Literature and Culture Research Centre is a research hub which provides training for 25–35 undergraduate and graduate students as well as for post-doctoral fellows and visiting scholars. For details, see mlc.torontomu.ca
- 2 Mark Kingwell references Jonathan Lear's conceptualization of radical hope as the hope beyond imagination. See Jonathan Lear's *Radical hope: Ethics in the face of cultural devastation* (2006).
- 3 Peters's concept of the "me" and "not me" is drawn from William James' *Principles of Psychology* (1890).
- 4 In *Liquid Modernity* (1999), Bauman uses "liquidity of modernity" as a metaphor to describe the condition of continuous, relentless mobility as well as social and cultural changes in individual and collective identities, personal and social relationships, and global economics.

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