



Your invitation to contribute to

## *Living with catastrophe: re-thinking survival as everyday practice*

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Edition Editors: **Fizza Hasan and Erica Piasecka**

### **Challenging ‘the Great Man’ paradigm**

This Special Issue of AMED’s online journal *e-Organisations and People* (*e-O&P*) brings together new ways of thinking about catastrophe and survival. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted our vulnerabilities as individuals, groups, organisations, systems, countries, and continents. Yet, in a global context, ‘the Great Man’ paradigm, which highlights the historical achievements and agency of a few (usually white, male, middle-class<sup>1</sup>), seeks every opportunity to reassert itself.

The year 2020 has forced the world to acknowledge its dependence on the labour of multitudinous, anonymous, and frequently underpaid frontline workers. It has also revealed the resilience of individuals, families, and communities, and how vulnerable and elderly people (isolated and reclassified as ‘high risk’) have become exposed. This requires us to seek a new understanding of what it means to live with and through catastrophe.

### **Telling alternative stories of survival: ‘the Sick Woman’ paradigm**

In this context, we want to step away from the figure of the Great Man, and look to alternative stories of survival. These could recognise illness as “*the night-side of life*” (Sontag, 1991), or resist the temptation of triumphalism by acknowledging that “*illness will always be with you as long as life is with you*” (Khakpour, 2018). We might step towards what Johanna Hedva (2016) describes as the figure of ‘the Sick Woman’. By this, the artist understands not only chronically ill or disabled women, but all those, regardless of gender, “*who are faced with their vulnerability and unbearable fragility, every day, and so have to fight for their experience to be not only honored, but first made visible*”.

As guest editors, we wish to acknowledge that while the isolation and suffering brought about by the pandemic have reached a devastating global scale, many people have journeyed through catastrophe before, for example while living with chronic illnesses, (generational) trauma, continued instability, the feeling and pain of loss, (forced) migration, or alienation. Our interpretation of ‘survival’ does not necessarily imply a recovery narrative: in some cases it may be more of a process of endurance, or ‘hanging on’.

With this in mind, we invite members of the AMED network and beyond — including early career scholars, activists, artists, designers and journalists — to use their experience and understanding of the pandemic as an opportunity to illuminate myriad ways of survival during and after catastrophes in a broader sense. We encourage proposals and submissions in the form of more traditional academic pieces, articles from other scholarly practitioners, as well as contributions in other non-traditional formats (e.g. poetic, visual...). Reach out to us if you

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<sup>1</sup> to which we could add cis-gender, heterosexual, able-bodied, Western etc.

have questions about how your work might fit. Following Sara Ahmed's (2017) use of citation policy as feminist practice, we also particularly welcome contributions which cite works from diverse backgrounds, and not solely from the standard canon.

**Possible perspectives** (you may, of course, suggest others) may be:

- **Gender, Race and Class** (including inequities, access, structural inequalities as “categories of comorbidity”)
- **Disability and Illness** (including discourse, recovery, vulnerability, eugenics)
- **Temporality** (also non-linearity, queer temporalities, anti-progress narratives)
- **Spatiality** (including connectivity, public space/arena, urbanity, access, private and domestic spaces)
- **Subjectivities** (such as deserving/undeserving patients, the ill subject)
- **Power** (imbalance of, North-South and East-West dynamics, intrafamilial, knowledge as, among others)
- **Affect** (including history of emotions, feelings, humour as survival)
- **Labour** (also domestic, unregulated, precarious, gig economy, etc.)
- **Activism and representation** (including (in)visibilities, discourse, protest and illness, journalism).

#### **Critical friendships**

We want to honour *e-O&P*'s commitment to the role of ‘critical friendship’ within the writing and editing process. You can find out more about critical friendships [here](#), or in the copy of *e-O&P*'s general [Notes for Contributors](#) that we’re attaching.

#### **Outline writing and publishing schedule**

We invite you to:

- Send us a brief paragraph or two expressing your interest and outlining some of your provisional ideas (by the 7th of December 2020 – **earlier if possible**), perhaps including the details of a chosen critical friend if you’d like such support (don’t worry if you can’t think of one, we shall do our best to provide if that would help!).
- Participate in an optional collaborative online workshop (date to be negotiated). Here, practising critical friendship, you’ll be supported to develop your ideas and work further. Please let us know whether you might be interested in principle in participating.
- Work up your emerging drafts within a collaborative editing process, possibly involving other critical friends if you wish (January – mid-May 2021).
- Finalise and send us the pre-publication Word version of your contribution (by June).

#### **Other offers of support invited by the *e-O&P* Editorial Team**

- If at this stage you are interested in becoming a critical friend rather than an author, you are also welcome to send us a paragraph explaining why you would like to do so, and describing your interests.
- Also, please let us know if you’d like to help AMED technically as a designer of online material with our plans to publish some of these contributions digitally in multimodal formats other than pdf (e.g. html, podcasts, YouTube videos, creative writing, poems).

Please also feel free to contact either of us co-editors in advance of sending your expression of interest if there's anything you'd like to ask or discuss first.

### About the guest editors



**Erica Piasecka** is a postgraduate student currently undertaking the second year of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Granada. Her research focuses on the use of visual participatory methods to explore women's experiences of chronic and "invisible" illness. Contact: [ewp507@york.ac.uk](mailto:ewp507@york.ac.uk)



**Fizza Hasan** is writing her MA thesis at the end of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree she undertook at the Universities of Bologna and York. Her research explores how notions of womanhood take shape in emerging national and anti-colonial contexts. Contact: [fh905@york.ac.uk](mailto:fh905@york.ac.uk)

Both guest editors have a background in language education and communication, and are looking forward to seeing how ideas unfold/take tangible forms via (writing, editing and conversation in the context of) critical friendships.

**Submissions:** Submissions can take the form of academic papers or reflective, experiential, creative and multimodal pieces. Please submit your initial expression of interest/proposal by following this [Dropbox link](#). A provisional title and paragraph or two will do. Please include your name and contact details so we can get in touch.

**Review Process:** Proposals and submissions will be reviewed regularly, and selected based on relevance and engagement with the theme. Clarity and creativity are also important.

**Deadline:** The deadline for initial proposals is **7th December 2020**.

**About AMED and e-O&P:** The Association for Management Education and Development (AMED) is a long-established membership organisation and educational charity devoted to developing people and organisations. Its purpose is to serve as an independent forum for people who want to share, learn and experiment, and find support, encouragement, and innovative ways of communicating through writing and conversations that are open, constructive, and facilitated.

[e-Organisations and People](#) is AMED's quarterly online journal which addresses innovative approaches to personal, professional, organisational and societal development in a reflective and accessible way.

### References

- Ahmed, S. (2017). *Living a feminist life*. Durham: Duke University Press, p.15.
- Hedva, J. (2016). *Sick Woman Theory*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.maskmagazine.com/not-again/struggle/sick-woman-theory> [Accessed 11 March 2020].
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- Sontag, S. (1991). *Illness as metaphor and Aids and its metaphors*. London: Penguin, p.3.