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Special Theme:
INDIAN RESPONSES
to COVID-19

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A Free Open Access Peer-Reviewed Bilingual Interdisciplinary Journal

On the occasion of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's 129th birth anniversary on 14th April 2020, the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Humanities, University of Mumbai has launched a free open access online journal, Sambhāṣaṇ / संभाषण. This interdisciplinary and bilingual journal hopes to bring diverse disciplines in dialogue with each other through critical reflections on contemporary themes.

संभाषण

मुंबई विद्यापीठाचे मुक्त-प्रवेश नियतकालिक

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांच्या १२९व्या जयंतीचे औचित्य साधून १४ एप्रिल २०२० रोजी अधिष्ठाता, मानव्यविद्याशाखा, मुंबई विद्यापीठ यांनी 'संभाषण' हे मुक्त-प्रवेश नियतकालिक प्रस्तुत केले आहे.

या आंतरविद्याशाखीय व द्विभाषिक (इंग्रजी व मराठी) नियतकालिकाच्या माध्यमातून विभिन्न विद्याशाखांमधील सद्यःकालीन प्रश्नांबाबत टीकात्मक व सखोल विचारमंथनाद्वारे संवाद प्रस्थापित करण्याचा एक प्रयत्न आहे.

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Sambhāṣaṇ / संभाषण or conversation as an art of dialogue has been crucial to the development of both Indian and Western thought. Dialogos in Greek literally means “through word”, where one establishes relationships on the basis of conversations to initiate processes of thinking, listening and speaking with others. Thinkers such as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, David Bohm, Hans Georg Gadamer, Anthony Appiah and Martha Nussbaum have projected shared dialogue as a way of understanding the relationship between the individual and society. While Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Pandita Ramabai, Jürgen Habermas, Paul Ricoeur, Patricia Hill Collins and Judith Butler, to name a few, have started out anew through ruptures in conversations. The inevitability of conversation in academic life emerges from its centrality to human development and ecology. Conversations are not restricted to any single territory, but are enacted between global and the local topographies. This online bi-lingual journal aims at continuing and renewing plural conversations across cultures that have sustained and invigorated academic activities.

In this spirit, Sambhāṣaṇ (संभाषण) a bilingual (English and Marathi) interdisciplinary monthly online journal endeavours to:

- be an open platform, where scholars can freely enter into a discussion to speak, be heard and listen. In this spirit, this journal aims at generating open conversations between diverse disciplines in social sciences, humanities and law.
- preserve and cultivate pluralism as a normative ideal. Hence, it attempts to articulate a plurality of points of view for any theme, wherein there is both a need to listen and to speak, while engaging with another’s perspective.
- act as a springboard for briefly expressing points of view on a relevant subject with originality, evidence, argument, experience, imagination and the power of texts. It hopes that these points of view can be shaped towards full-fledged research papers and projects in the future.

संभाषण

संभाषण : मुंबई विद्यापीठाचे महाजालावरील पहिले नियतकालिक.

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांच्या १२९व्या जयंतीचे (१४ एप्रिल २०२०) औचित्य साधून अधिष्ठाता, मानव्यविद्याशाखा, मुंबई विद्यापीठ यांच्या कल्पनेतून 'संभाषण' हे सर्वाना महाजालावर मुक्तपणे उपलब्ध होऊ शकणारे नियतकालिक प्रकाशित होत आहे.

या आंतरविद्याशाखीय द्विभाषिक (इंग्रजी आणि मराठी) नियतकालिकाच्या माध्यमातून विभिन्न विद्याशाखांमध्ये समकालीन प्रश्नांबाबत टीकात्मक चर्चा सुरू व्हावी व सखोल विचारमंथनाद्वारे संवाद प्रस्थापित व्हावा, असा हेतू आहे.

प्राचीन काळापासून भारतात आणि पाश्चिमात्य विचारविश्वात वैचारिक आदानप्रदानासाठी 'संभाषण किंवा संवाद' ही महत्त्वाची पद्धती म्हणून उपयोजिली गेली आहे. 'Dialogos' या ग्रीक भाषेतील शब्दांचा अर्थही 'शब्दाद्वारे' (through words) असा होतो. शब्दांच्या माध्यमातील संभाषणाला येथे 'डायलॉग' म्हटले आहे. अनेक महनीय व्यक्तींनी उदाहरणार्थ, मोहनदास करमचंद गांधी, रवींद्रनाथ टागोर, सरोजिनी नायडू, डेव्हिड बोहम, Hans-Georg Gadamar, अँथनी अपिहा, मार्था नुस्सबॉम आदींनी व्यक्ती आणि समाज यांच्यातील नातेसंबंध समजून घेण्यासाठी सामायिक संभाषण आणि संवादाच्या पद्धतीचा वापर केलेला आहे. जोतीराव फुले, सावित्रीबाई फुले, डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर, पंडिता रमाबाई, Jürgen Habermas, Paul Ricoeur, Patricia Hill Collins and Judith Butler अशा अनेक विचारवंतांनीही आपल्या वैचारिक मांडणीद्वारे संभाषणाची नवी स्फुरणे जन्माला घातली.

संभाषणाच्या माध्यमातून एखादी व्यक्ती दुसऱ्या व्यक्तीसोबत विचारांची देवाणघेवाण करते. तसेच ऐकण्याची आणि बोलण्याची प्रक्रिया सुरू करण्यासाठी संवादाचे नाते निर्माण करत असते. शैक्षणिक क्षेत्रातील संवादाची अपरिहार्यताही त्याच्या मानवी विकासातील केंद्रवर्ती स्थानामुळे निर्माण झाली आहे. कोणतीही संभाषणे ही केवळ विशिष्ट भूप्रदेशाशी मर्यादित किंवा संबंधित नसतात. तर ती एकाच वेळी स्थानिक व जागतिक स्वभावरचनांनी घडलेली असतात. अशा विभिन्न संस्कृतीतील संवादाच्या आधारे जग समजून घेणे, शैक्षणिक क्षेत्रातील सर्जनशीलतेला जपणे याच भूमिकेतून 'संभाषण' या द्विभाषिक आंतरविद्याशाखीय 'ऑनलाईन' नियतकालिकाचा प्रवास सुरू झाला आहे.

Framework

- This journal is open to contributions from established academics, young teachers, research students and writers from diverse institutional and geographical locations.
- Papers can be empirical, analytical or hermeneutic following the scholarly culture of critique and creativity, while adhering to academic norms.
- Commentaries and reviews can also be submitted.
- Submissions will be peer-reviewed anonymously.
- Some of the issues will publish invited papers and reviews, though there will be a call for papers for most issues.
- There would be an occasional thematic focus.

Guidelines for Submission

- Original, scholarly, creative and critical papers with adequate references.
- All references to the author should be removed from the submission to enable the anonymous review process.
- There can be a limit of approximately 3500-4000 words (for papers) and 1500-2000 words (for commentaries) and 1000-1200 words (for reviews).
- Essays should follow the Times New Roman font in size 12 with double space.
- Marathi contributions should be typed in Devnagari with any Unicode font in size 12 .
- All contributions should follow the author-date referencing system detailed in chapter 15 of The Chicago Manual of Style (17th Edition). The style guidelines in this journal can be consulted for quick reference.
- Authors should submit a statement that their contribution is original without any plagiarism. They can also, in addition, submit a plagiarism check certificate.
- The publication of research papers, commentaries and book reviews is subject to timely positive feedback from anonymous referees.

Publisher

**Office of the Dean of Humanities, University of Mumbai,
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This journal accepts original essays that critically address contemporary issues related to social sciences, humanities and law from an interdisciplinary perspective.

**अधिष्ठाता, मानव्यविद्याशाखा यांचे कार्यालय, मुंबई विद्यापीठ, आंबेडकर
भवन, कलिना कॅम्पस, विद्यानगरी, मुंबई – ४०००९८.**

हे नियतकालिक समाजविज्ञान, मानव्यविद्याशाखा आणि विधी या विद्याशाखांमधील सद्यःकालीन प्रश्नांना आंतरविद्याशाखीय दृष्टिकोणातून भिडणाऱ्या अभिनव आणि टीकात्मक निबंधांचा स्वीकार करते.

“In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared... In other words there must be social endosmosis.”

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Editorial Note

Grief has become more visible as a natural, psychological, social and even political response to the experience of loss and bereavement in the ongoing pandemic. Indeed, the latter can also be termed as the “pandemic of grief” (Alacron 2020, Weir 2020). Such luminousness notwithstanding, philosophical and psychological reflections pertaining to grief are few and far between (Gustafson 1989, 457). One could begin with dictionaries to connect everyday understandings of grief with those of academicians. The Merriam Webster Dictionary identifies it as “a deep and poignant distress caused by, or as if by bereavement”. Similarly, the *Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* defines grief as “An intense emotional state associated with the loss of someone (or something) with whom (or which) one has deep emotional bond” (Reiber, Allen and Reiber 2010, 334). Thus, grief is related to a sense of losing a deep attachment, a feeling of rudderlessness, an experience of vacuum, among several other textures of meaning. It is construed as a response to loss of a close (mostly) human connection with whom there has been a bond. Lives are grieved in many contexts such as war, terror, broken relationships...

Grief is also cognitively related to a set of beliefs and circumstances of the grieving person (Gustafson 1989, 466). Right from the moment it begins to envelope the agent, its cause is palpable— as for instance, the loss of a loved person. Hence, Gustafson notes that unlike fear, “grief cannot be irrational in its cognitive dimension” (1989, 466). Thus, grief is not simply a random, private or spontaneous emotion, but also has physical, cognitive, social, cultural, philosophical, religious and spiritual dimensions, symptoms and patterns. Its expressions also vary according to personality, belief systems and the specific circumstances of the bereaved. Such multifariousness that is beyond and within the individual, also reflects constants of coping with loss and the changes therein. The bereaved reign in and express feelings of loss in unpredictable ways, so that there is no singular way of grieving.

The unpredictable and individual character of grieving emerges very explicitly in Cheryl Strayed’s memoir *Wild* (2012), which documents her effort to cope with her mother’s sudden death. Her many modes of coming to terms with being bereft, reveals that loss cannot simply be equated or exchanged. She evocatively describes her shared grief with her mother who was diagnosed with cancer, “We didn’t exchange a word. Not because we felt so alone in our grief, but because we were so together in it, as if we were one body instead of two” (Strayed 2012, 12) Strayed’s “pinning intensity” (2002) of attachment for her mother triggered a pattern of addictive self-destructive behaviour that destroyed her marriage and relationships. Four years later, being unable to continue on such a note, she decided to grieve alone by embarking on a hike. She trekked, all alone along 1,100 miles from the border of California–Mexico to Canada, sojourning across nine mountain ranges for three months. Her journey braving the vagaries of weather and terrain, was also one of a gamut of memories, emotions, fears and hopes through introspective griefed in isolation. She created a work of art by finding words for her moments of abject isolation and sharing it with others. *Wild* reveals how grief can both weaken and strengthen the bereaved. Strayed’s complex and diverse ways of enduring, shows that grief need not be a closure, but can also open the possibilities of new ways of being.

The enabling power of grief emerges from its relationship to a deep attachment, to love. As psychologists have noted, grief is

inexorably bound to love. Strayed rightly notes that human beings are encouraged to develop interests in music, television shows, new age religion; "...but we are not allowed to be deeply sad" (2002). There is a social pressure of getting on with life by getting past grief. Yet one can never slough off grief, as it is reinforced through an intense sense of attachment to the person who has been lost. Strayed discerns the intense grief that she felt on losing her mother at the age of twenty two to being attached to her mother's interesting life of confronting and overcoming struggles, rather than her death (2002). Her processes of grieving shifted from crying with her mother to refusing to accept the constructive side of life through self-sabotage. In overcoming such a suicidal mode of grieving, Strayed set out on a long journey all by herself to understand and articulate her feelings. This suggests that following Freud grief is a process of libidinal reinvestment (1957), but as Clewell (2002) argues, this is not an autonomous process that completely abandons the original attachment. Rather, following Freud's later writings, Clewell suggests that the self can never entirely overcome the original attachment underlying grief (2002, 63). This in turn leads to the self never achieving a complete identity in being permeated by its lost attachment; since the loss is also a condition of the self's own identity the possibility of living with loss is opened up (Clewell 2002, 65). Hence, Freud relates the eros or the life instinct to thanatos or the death instinct. The grieving person's process of sublimating libidinal energies from the deceased to newer attachments is a difficult and painful process; it is also one of "endless mourning" (Clewell 2002, 65). Strayed sublimated her attachment in writing her story of grief, a laborious, mentally exhausting and yet rewarding task.

Strayed reminisces how friends, family and strangers with good intentions tried to discipline her grief by recommending strategies of management (2002). A notable advise was to follow the Elisabeth Kübler-Ross model with five definite stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance of grief (2003, 51-146). She observes that such a reductionist paradigm of overcoming grief has become well-entrenched in hegemonic social-cultural discourses. It mechanizes grief and determines simple ways of containing it through prescribed methods that are imposed on everyone. Thus, there is no awareness of differences in the formula. Moreover, it fails to engage with grief as a phenomenon of loss, learning and meaning. It does not

accommodate the unpredictable side of responding to grief, for instance as with Strayed's self-destructive behavior. However, acknowledgement of attachment and sublimation of grief rest with the griever, a person from the outside cannot mentor or supervise it. Therese Rando offers a more nuanced perspective to mourning with sensitivity to individual differences and without reductionism (1991). She comprehends the process of grieving as one of mourning, requiring recognition and reaction to loss and separation. This process recollects and reexperiences the lost person, while at the same time relinquishing the attachments that undergird it in ways that both readjust and reinvest (1991, 225–288). Thus, learning to live with loss involves finding new meaning. However, such new meaning does not completely relinquish as Rando implies. Nor does it lead to an abiding reconciliation. In creating meaning out of loss, the paradoxes of being attached to the one who departs remain. Thus, grief cannot be understood through glib notions of slipping into comfort and coherence. An element of irreconcilability and incoherence is inherent to grief.

Grief and Sorrow

There is a tendency to think of grief in terms of sorrow. Alternate dictionary definitions suggest as much. For instance, the Oxford English Dictionary defines grief mainly as “intense sorrow, especially caused by someone's death...” . Analogously, the Cambridge Dictionary defines grief as “a very great sadness, especially at the death of someone” As Gustafson notes, there are good reasons to see an affinity between grief and sorrow: both tend to have common causes, objects and even consequences (1989, 467). However, as Gustafson notes, their intentional aspects differ in that grief is about desiring the lost person, while sorrow is related to wishing. A person's sorrow is connected to wishing that the loss of the one who is emotionally close did not happen. There is no paradox in this. On the other hand, the grieving person continues to cling to the lost person, despite being factually aware of the bereavement. As a resultt, grief leads to greater vulnerability whereby caring and valuing it are acts of responsibility for all human beings (even those who do not have immediate grief).

Caring and Valuing Grief

As Strayed's memoir *Wild* highlights, there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Further, one cannot simply wrap up grief and move on to other matters. The trauma of loss is also its persistence because of one's attachment to the lost person. Processes of grieving attempt to find meaning in such trauma. In the course of finding ways of coping with grief, support from others – family, friends, strangers – does matter. For among human beings whose community roles are crucial grief has an adaptive value following Gustafson (1989, 459). Its intense reaction to loss of family can also be channelled to coalescing society into a whole. And this is precisely why there is an urge to express grief as Strayed did through her memoir. Yet adaptive, literary cultural responses are not the only modes of engaging with grief. As Gustafson notes, grief is a "hypercognized feeling" (1989, 469) in that there are many ways of expressing it, interpreting it and responding to it across cultures. Cultural ways of engaging with grief play a special role in comprehending loss and meaning through it. The research by Walsh et al (2002) reveals that people who profess stronger spiritual beliefs seem to resolve their grief more rapidly and completely after the death of a close person than do people with no spiritual beliefs. Religious or spiritual rituals and beliefs also help in lending larger meaning to the dialectic of life and death in grief. By socially sharing grief, individuals and communities try to find meaning in their distress.

Empirical research on grief points to how the death or separation from a loved one creates significant trauma to individuals because of the deep relationship with the deceased (Holmes and Rahe, 1967). The studies by Stroebe, Schut and Stroebe (2007) and Prigerson and Jacobs (2001) demonstrate that bereaved individuals are more vulnerable to mental health problems such as depression, substance abuse and risk of suicide. This reveals that the phenomenon of grief cannot be simply side-stepped or resolved through management techniques. Moreover, grief has enormous social and political dimension as well, following Butler (2009). Grief is the basis of valuing life for a life that is not grieved is also not valued. She argues that in a world divided by wars, the identity of communities and value of life is ascertained through grievability (2009, 38). Thus, human beings struggle to be grieved as well. This is underlined by the pandemic as well. The spaces for social possibility of grieving by meeting one another have shrunk.

Most people grieve in isolation due to the constraints of being physically apart. As a result, there is a greater need to memorialise grief and value life.

The research papers, commentaries and book review in the fourth issue of Sambhāṣaṇ continue to engage with the grief of the pandemic from the Indian context. The challenges of coping with the losses of the pandemic by young adults and children are addressed by research papers on psychology and Buddhist therapy, as well as, a commentary. The prize winning essay on sexual violence interrogates the extent to which the home can be viewed as a haven. The crisis of theatre is the focus of both a research paper and a commentary. The fragility of ecology and living in Kashmir during the pandemic are analysed by research papers. The commentaries engage with the complex technologies of online teaching, COVID-19's challenges to the economy, the loss of the city and a new relationship to theatre.

Despite the innumerable difficulties faced by the University in coping with the challenges of online teaching and admissions, we have received unstinting support from the administration. We, the Honorary Editor, Editor and Co-editors, are immensely grateful to Prof. Suhas Pednekar, Vice Chancellor and Prof. Ravindra Kulkarni, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for their constant encouragement and generosity. We thank all our authors in this issue for their thought-provoking papers, commentaries, review and obituary notes. As always, several members of our Advisory Committee and Board of Consulting Editors have rendered their important advice to bring this issue to the light of print. We thank our Review Editor for imaginative inputs. We are deeply obliged to our peer reviewers who have shared their expert reviews despite the time crunch. Our Assistant Editors have worked round the clock, putting aside their own schedules, to bring out this issue. Heartfelt *Dank* to Ms. Prajakti Pai, our Designer and Artist for aesthetically integrating the written pieces together and for her immense patience. Our *shukriyaan* to Dr. Srivaramangai, Mr. Sanket Sawant and Mr. Rohit Choubey for their ready help through busy schedules with the online mode.

NOTES

1. However, subsequently there have been several philosophical engagements with grief although it has not received as much attention in philosophical discussions as say, love; although love and grief are closely related. For recent discussions of grief see for example Butler (2009) and Cooper (2012).
2. Merriam-Webster, s.v, "grief," accessed August 3, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/grief>
3. Morris and Dane-Farber (2011) identify loss, change and control as typifying grief.
4. Freud was one of the first thinkers to bring out this relation (1957), while Parkes makes the relationship between love and grief very explicit (2009)
5. Such as *The Ego and the Id* (2018) See Clewell (2002, 60-63)
6. Kubler-Ross's model has been improvised by Collin Murray Park and John Bowlby(1970) as four stages of grief management. They begin with emotions being frozen and move to the phase of yearning to bring back that which has been lost. The subsequent phase of depression is preoccupied with loss and final phase of recovery leads to the renewal of identity and normalizing. However, this complexity notwithstanding, the very idea of progressively moving through various stages of grief is both linear and naïve. It assumes that grief can be overcome and resolved by following a method. See Stroebe, Schut and Boerner (2017) for a detailed critique of the "stages" perspective to grief.
7. The Concise Oxford Dictionary, Tenth Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) s.v. "Grief"
8. Cambridge English, s.v. "grief", accessed August 3, 2020, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/grief>

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A Free Open Access Peer-Reviewed Bilingual Interdisciplinary Journal

Editorial Team

We gratefully acknowledge the constant support from Prof. Suhas Pednekar, the Vice Chancellor and Prof. Ravindra Kulkarni, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Mumbai in publishing this journal.

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***to keep pedagogies of
hope alive,*** endeavoring
to bridge digital divides
during this pandemic.

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