Opposite Directions

*How the Pandemic Fuels Nationalism and Universalism*

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**Abstract**

The Covid-19 pandemic is a powerful reminder that there is only one humanity and that all individuals are subject to infections and illness. However, news media and the internet are overflowing with data that reminds us of the fact that we are living in an unequal world in which even neighbors close their borders and observe how other countries are faring in the battle against the virus. Literature is no stranger to these opposing orientations, between local and global, national and universal. This essay will address some of the historical uses of global issues in literature and how they play a particular role in world literature, as well as comparing them to the current situation. Traumatic literature is of particular concern in terms of representation and decorum, and the formal inventiveness that this demands and inspires.

**Keywords**

trauma – representation – witness – nationalism – transnationalism

1 Numbers and Stories

One early realization as the Covid-19 pandemic turned out to be an actual, global pandemic in the spring of 2020 was that virtually no-one alive had experienced anything like this before. A hundred years distant, the Spanish Flu was so far in the past that hardly anyone had any memories from their childhood about it. Suddenly, we found ourselves in a situation where generational memory didn't provide soothing knowledge about how to get through this, interpret it and deal with all aspects of the disease, from lockdowns to deaths.
Another effect that was very apparent to people who prefer to understand the world through words and narratives was that the world became all about numbers. Like almost all other countries, in Denmark the government put up a tracker on a website, in February 2020. This made it possible to see how the critical statistics shifted throughout the spring. First came the number of infections, increasing slowly from a couple in late February to suddenly hundreds each day in early March. Then that figure faded into the background, as the number of people hospitalized and the number of deaths became more relevant. Fortunately, we are now (June 2021) also counting the number of people who have been given the vaccine.

During the first wave, everybody got a crash course in the news media with an approach to reality that hardly anyone had ever considered before, involving terms such as incidence rate, positive percentage, and exponential growth. These were all useful concepts which people needed to understand in order to grasp what was happening and why new measures and restrictions might not just be a plot to exercise power. Any such plot would indeed be powerful, but believing in it also depended on maintaining a willful state of ignorance. Humans look for narratives, maybe one of our most vital traits, a source of freedom from time and space, a source of joy, and a way of coping with meaningless tragedy. But what is the narrative of Covid-19? This is a question too big to answer with data alone, which may be why many people reverted to reading literature from earlier pandemics. Boccaccio. Defoe. And imagined pandemics, as in Camus.

Two significant reactions gained traction with the pandemic, which didn’t always bring out the best in people. One was the orientation towards the nation and the attempt to understand the world in comparative terms. “Everyone else will be Italy in 9–14 days’ time,” warned a British epidemiologist in March 2020, addressing the countries that were hesitating to implement a lockdown (Smyth). In Scandinavia, people looked to Sweden, where lockdowns weren’t implemented, and saw how the death toll rose much more sharply there than in neighboring countries which resemble Sweden a good deal. There wasn’t much talk in my native Denmark about how Norway and Finland managed to keep the disease at bay a little better than we could ourselves. It also became apparent how much one’s health depended on society and the state, and how important it was to impose sensible regulations and have access to professional healthcare. But did these measures plant the seeds of a new form of nationalism?

The other orientation was one of global awareness, also supported by graphs and figures which on different scales told the story of one world – an unequal world. And this world was sometimes unequal in ways which (at least for
the first year) challenged the typical narratives, which normally assume that Europe and North America always fare better than Africa and Asia. Even more importantly, the bottom line became apparent: this was a problem that the whole world had to face together. Some parts sooner than others, though, as the race to acquire vaccines shows. Furthermore, in the sea of information and misinformation, citizens found themselves needing to figure out how to cope with the paradox of global solidarity in a world with closed borders.

This essay deals with two aspects of the conditions for dealing with the effects of the pandemic in world literature by comparing it to two related challenges for literary studies. Firstly, I will ask how the pandemic can be compared to other phenomena or topics that hold unique potential for addressing and giving concrete expression to transnational issues. Secondly, I consider how the pandemic relates to issues of representation typically found in traumatic literature dealing with human-made atrocities, but whose scale and effect are comparable to the Covid-19 pandemic. As outrageous as it may seem at times, the creativity and complexity of literature – and other art forms – are what helps culture deal with the blunt blows of history.

2 Transnational Themes

Some stories and themes travel better across national borders than others, as they give readers without intimate knowledge of culture one or more hooks into the universe of a work of literature. The past decades have shown a shift in the perspective on world literature, going from privileging either strangeness or universalism towards a focus on complex cultural encounters where the known and the unknown blend. People don't agree entirely about this view of world literature, and there are good arguments in favor of focusing on the untranslatable or to strive for a more profound engagement with classics of national literatures. However, an approach that also cares about impact cannot disregard the similarities among works that circulate widely.

The pandemic itself holds significant potential for attaching readers to works with its global reach and impact, not only on people's everyday lives but also in terms of setting the agenda in the media world, where people also live a significant part of their lives. However, the pandemic has also influenced the perspective on world literature through its effect on influential themes that help literature circulate and attach itself to foreign literary cultures. In this essay I will focus on how the past year has seen a change in digitization, climate change, posthumanism, and migration.¹ Each of these could be transnational

¹ These themes are also dealt with in Thomsen Grand Challenges! Great Literature?
or global themes that transcend a local perspective and draw on very widely recognizable phenomena when dealt with in literature.

The theme of a world which was suddenly focused on data relating to the pandemic is of course closely associated with the process of digitization that is currently taking place globally, although not evenly everywhere. With more than one billion cell phones in Africa alone, it is hard to overestimate how radically everybody’s world has changed on that continent in the past decade and a half. Nearly everyone alive today, particularly the younger generation, has a completely different interface to information than preceding generations. In many ways, access to information relies on a much more uniform system, from access to the internet to the operating systems of smartphones.

The pandemic has pushed the use of our computers and mobile devices even farther, as well as highlighting the dilemma between fighting diseases and protecting individual freedom. Apps that react to close contact with possibly infected individuals push messages to inform people of new restrictions and to monitor movements at specific checkpoints (a function that has been used most widely in China). One irony is that facial recognition, rightly seen as an increasingly problematic technology with significant potentials for creating an Orwellian dystopian society, doesn’t function well when people abide by mask mandates.

The contrast to former eras is stark. One can hardly blame George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four for failing to imagine cell phones or artificial intelligence, although he did imagine machines that could write books. Even people growing up in the 1970s or 1980s had no clue how quickly information would become available, or how quickly access to this information would grow. The misinformation that ran parallel to the US presidential election and its aftermath in 2020, and the attempts to play down Covid-19, are just two examples of the way the use of misinformation has spread. It seems fortunate that the anti-vaccination movement, which has already had some traction against the prevention of children’s diseases, has not been widely successful. Even so, there is a suspicious correlation between people who refuse to vaccinate and those who don’t accept the outcome of the 2020 US election.

One of the first times that pandemic imagery was seen in fiction was in Don DeLillo’s The Silence. People wearing face masks in airports were a prominent symbol of new behavioral patterns, both in real life and in DeLillo’s novel. However, there is a significant difference in the way the year 2020 played out and DeLillo’s short novel: the reliance on technology that enabled the production of effective vaccines is in stark contrast to DeLillo’s fantasy of a world in which all electrically powered technology breaks down. In the novel airplanes crash, and the breakdown of technology confines people to their immediate surround-
ings, staring into black screens hoping that something will reappear. DeLillo doesn't get it wrong: this is fiction, and his allegorical tale of technological breakdown is part of an ongoing meditation on the different pulls in our time. The longing for a more straightforward and more immediate relationship with the world and the wonders of feeling connected, which was already central in his earlier novels such as Underworld and Cosmopolis, became a more relevant conflict. Not necessarily as a choice, but as a way of finding a balance. Even so, the pandemic showed that digitization was crucial in ensuring that societies could function and lives could be saved. It also demonstrated that visions of future human life as individuals sitting in high-tech pods with screens all over are dystopian not least for supposedly “born digital” younger generations, who desperately craved a return to personal encounters during the pandemic.

While a digital dystopia seems easy to avoid simply by going offline, climate change now darkens our vision of the future in many ways, whereas the 1960s had positive visions of what the world would be like in 2000. Whatever the situation in 2050 may be, we can expect that climate change will be an overshadowing problem. The breakdown of ecological systems, the flooding of the world, or desperate attempts to leave Earth have now become not only subjects in fiction, but a common reservoir of ideas of what the future holds. Fiction is doing its part in various genres to create narratives that connect the effects of the incomprehensible number of sources of climate change with a more tangible expression, sometimes pointing out issues that fly under the radar of public attention. Margaret Atwood is one writer who deals with the conflation of technologies and ecological crisis, as reflected in both her fictional work and her essays:

I'd like to add a sixth Horseperson of the Apocalypse: the collapse of the oceans. Never in human history have we come within a fingernail of deading the oceans, but we're doing it now. Our efficient fishing technology is about to exterminate the reason for its own existence. We've scraped the bottom, ruining breeding grounds; we've dumped megatoxins, as in the recent Gulf of Mexico spill; we've made war on the alpha predator sharks, thus causing an explosion of their ray prey, which are now strip-mining midsize fish.

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One of the difficulties in reacting to climate change is that it is slow-moving and hard to grasp. The pandemic, on the other hand, moved fast and affected all societies at once. The sudden change in human activity also led to reflections on how future behavior could and should change. Shaming people for
flying was already becoming an issue before the pandemic, and the lockdown made people reflect even more on when they needed to fly.

Another essential term of the times, posthumanism, has become more relevant on two accounts. First of all, the pandemic is a reminder, if one is needed, of how complex and connected the human body is. Our dependence on a complex immune system, on bacteria that don't share our DNA, and our vulnerability towards diseases are not new, but have been given a much more forceful presence. In particular, the transmission of diseases from animals to humans has raised questions of the ethical nature of animal husbandry, not least on an industrial scale. Denmark culled all their mink after evidence of widespread infections of Covid-19 that would also infect humans and possibly generate new mutations of the virus. The infamous wet market in Wuhan also became an emblem of how human greed turned out to have unexpected global consequences.

The road out of the pandemic, the vaccines that became available less than a year after the first reported cases in China, also gave a taste of what a future with more advanced medicines might look like. The benefits of being vaccinated are not just having a low risk of suffering severe illness as a result of Covid-19: the vaccine also makes it easier to resume all sorts of social interactions from travel and leisure activities to in-person jobs that are critical for many workers. Without over dramatizing the situation, the Covid-19 vaccines can be seen as dividing humanity into two, a theme that recurs in science fiction. It is often felt that one of the most problematic effects of transhumanism is that the unity of humanity could be lost. Vaccines aren't divisive in such a dramatic way, but the combination of personal safety and the social consequences of not being vaccinated are not trivial. Even more, global vaccination could foreshadow a future in which an increasing number of medicines, therapies, and advanced devices will make a difference to a large group of people while leaving others behind. Inequality would be felt both among neighbors and between nations with significant wealth gaps. It has become apparent that there are huge differences in the way in which vaccines are distributed. What would happen if an expensive but effective medicine for extending life came onto the market? When would the dystopian vision of divided humanity that H.G. Wells envisioned a long time ago in The Time Machine play out? Wells imagined that eight hundred thousand years of natural selection could end in dividing humanity into two branches: one living above the ground (the plant-eating, child-like Elois), and one living below (the debased, pallid Morlocks):

I do not know how long I sat peering down that well. It was not for some time that I could succeed in persuading myself that the thing I had seen
was human. But, gradually, the truth dawned on me: that Man had not remained one species, but had differentiated into two distinct animals: that my graceful children of the Upper World were not the sole descendants of our generation, but that this bleached, obscene, nocturnal Thing, which had flashed before me, was also heir to all the ages.

Wells 110

The long time-span described by Wells and the dissimilarity to the human as we know it feel almost innocent compared to the things that could take place much faster and more radically with the help of technology.

While Wells’ story is also a brilliant analogy of the industrial class society of the late nineteenth century, the changes imagined in contemporary fiction are much closer to the present. Sometimes they even somewhat ironically preclude the present, as in Kazuo Ishiguro’s 2004 novel Never Let Me Go, a story of a cloning program set in the United Kingdom in the 1990s, with clones functioning as spare parts for their originals. The question of being vaccinated, as noted above, isn’t directly comparable to the divisions imagined by these stories. Nevertheless, the pandemic has shown that access to certain medicines makes a world of difference. We already knew of vast differences in life expectancy depending on social status within each nation, not to mention the differences between wealthy and impoverished societies. But the sudden and global demand for vaccines has made this much more evident in a clear-cut binary situation that makes the works of Wells and Ishiguro even more relevant as a backdrop to what it would mean to lose the unity of humanity. Or, as Margaret Atwood puts it:

There is a seventh Horsecreature of the Apocalypse: bioengineering. We can now change species not only through selective breeding, as we’ve been doing for millennia, but by altering their DNA. The potential for tinkering with our own bodies and brains is vast: we won’t be able to resist the morph-your-DNA temptation. We’re also fooling around with animals, plants, and microorganisms – all with the noblest of goals, naturally, one of which seems to be the cornering of the world seed market by a few giant corporations.

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Finally, migration has played a significant role in the world and in literature, particularly in recent decades. About three percent of the world’s population are migrants. However, the cultural influence of migrants is hard to overestimate, as it influences both receiving and sending cultures, changing labor mar-
kets for both highly skilled and unskilled workers and underlining the importance of remittances from migrants to their countries of origin. Many writers today address the condition of migration in their works, based on their own experiences; migration is also a key topic in world literature because it breaks with the logic of works belonging to one literature, and invites experiments with multiple languages.

With the pandemic, migration took a hard hit. Loss of income for the many migrants working in service, separation from their home country, and a general sense of a world that had (to some degree) previously celebrated mobility, all demanded new ways to cope with things. In Britain, recently freed from mainland Europe, there was some irony in discovering how many caregivers were migrants and how badly the country would have fared without them. One story is bound to be told again and again, namely that the first approved vaccines that rolled out came from Mainz-based BioNTech. The company was founded and spearheaded by two Germans with Turkish roots, the married couple Uğur Şahin and Özlem Türeci. In a time of rising populism and xenophobia, such stories are a welcome reminder of the positive contribution of migration. There are many new chapters in the history of migration waiting to be told from the perspective of the individual and the societal impact that the pandemic has highlighted.

Digitization, climate change, posthumanism, and migration are significant themes that provide transnational perspectives on the world, but obviously they aren’t the only themes that influence contemporary literature in this way. However, they have all been affected by and gained even more relevance from the pandemic, although none of them are as traumatic as the pandemic in themselves. Only through a deep engagement with the trauma it has caused can the story of the pandemic be grasped.

3 Writing Trauma

The representation of trauma in literature, not least of the Holocaust, is filled with ethical dilemmas. The question of whether the writing even matters as long as it is truthful was challenged by survivor and Nobel Prize laureate Imre Kertész, who made the case for both the importance of great writing as well as the freedom to use allegory in the representation of the Holocaust (268). Daniel R. Schwarz has shown in *Imagining the Holocaust* how the representation of traumatic events begins with testimony that is followed by realist fiction before modes such as allegory and even satire can be introduced (40–45). And some works blend the different registers, such as Art Spiegelman’s *Maus I* + *II*. 
The literature on Covid-19 will also share another trait with Holocaust literature in terms of involving many nationalities. Alvin Rosenfeld has pointed out, in *A Double Dying*, that literature on the Holocaust is the first literature that, from the outset, can only make sense when seen in an international context (34). This is by definition a trait shared by a pandemic. An important and more recent contribution to the debate on memory is Michael Rothberg’s *Multidirectional Memory*, in which he argues convincingly that trauma should be studied as connected to understand how they are shaped by local conditions while being related to global trauma:

While there can be no doubt that many manifestations of contemporary violence, including war and genocide, are in part the product of resentful memories and conflicting views of the past, I argue that the conceptual framework through which commentators and ordinary citizens have addressed the relationship between memory, identity, and violence is flawed. Against the framework that understands collective memory as competitive memory – as a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources – I suggest that we consider memory as multidirectional: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative.

In my book *Mapping World Literature* from 2008, I presented five characteristics of literature on traumatic events. The Holocaust is the most prominent example of an atrocity dealt with by world literature that seems incomprehensible and impossible to represent. Even so, the events have to be told, and literature must overcome problems with finding appropriate forms. *Mapping World Literature* presented five components of (or challenges facing) traumatic literature: 1) representing masses without losing sight of the individual, 2) understanding the shift in perspective when a biological binary, life or death, takes the foreground instead of more mundane matters of wealth, love, and fame, 3) comprehending the closest that one can get to absolute evil, 4) being truthful and relying on witness accounts, and 5) refraining from writing about such events as being solely in the past, regarding them instead as something that continues to affect people (Thomsen *Mapping* 110–117). Undoubtedly, with its millions of deaths, the pandemic’s traumatic effects will be felt for a long time. However, in other respects, it is very different from genocidal events in Belgian Congo in the late 19th century, in the Ottoman Empire’s last years, in Europe during the Second World War, Cambodia in the late 1970s, or Rwanda in 1994. Even so, many of the same challenges of writing literature that does more than
news reporting are similar and require decorum without losing its edge. As with the literature on mass killings, some people doubt that literature has any particular role to play, while others point to the virtual memorials that a novel can become.

At the time of writing, global deaths from Covid-19 are in excess of three million people following more than one hundred and fifty million registered cases (my own mild case in March 2020 was never registered because tests were scarce at the time, but the antibodies provided proof that I wasn’t suffering from the common flu). But the actual number of deaths may be two or three times higher (The Economist 17). Figures like this make sense, they are helpful, and we have ideas about demography that can help to put them into perspective. Three million is roughly the population of Brooklyn and Manhattan combined, and more than the population of Puerto Rico or Uruguay. We can also compare these figures with the number of deaths in wars and other destructive events. The death toll from Covid-19 in the United States to date is almost the same as the number of deaths in the American Civil War. But although graphs and tables provide some context, it is impossible to comprehend what millions of deaths actually mean.

This problem of representation is also central to the literature of atrocities and other mass killings, not least because a prime ethical task of literature is to counter the indifference to the individual. The balance between the glimpses of mass loss and the stories of a few individuals taken to represent the many cannot be ignored. Daniel Defoe writes in A Journal of the Plague Year:

I might be more particular as to this part, but it may suffice to mention in general, all trades being stopped, employment ceased: the labour, and by that the bread, of the poor were cut off; and at first indeed the cries of the poor were most lamentable to hear, though by the distribution of charity their misery that way was considerably abated. Many indeed fled into the counties, but thousands of them having stayed in London till nothing but desperation sent them away, death overtook them on the road, and they served for no better than the messengers of death; indeed, others carrying the infection along with them, spread it very unhappily into the remotest parts of the kingdom.

Defoe even provides tables of losses month by month. At the same time, he also understands the importance of describing the conditions of specific individuals and recounting the odd details of their struggles:
I come back to my three men. Their story has a moral in every part of it, and their whole conduct, and that of some whom they joined with, is a pattern for all poor men to follow, or women either, if ever such a time comes again; and if there was no other end in recording it, I think this a very just one, whether my account be precisely according to fact or no.

Two of them are said to be brothers, the one an old soldier, but now a biscuit-maker; the other a lame sailor, but now a sailmaker; the third a joiner. Says John the biscuit-maker one day to Thomas his brother, the sailmaker, 'Brother Tom, what will become of us? The plague grows hot in the city, and increases this way. What shall we do?'

The weaving of concrete stories and the sense of incomprehensible loss are hallmarks of the long tradition of respecting the magnitude of events while also insisting on a personal, narrative perspective. One of the earliest and strongest reactions to Covid-19 came from the novelist Jesmyn Ward, who has previously written on the consequences of Hurricane Katrina. Against the most tragic background, she wrote an exceptionally moving essay on the death of her husband from respiratory failure at the beginning of 2020, "On Witness and Repair: A Personal Tragedy Followed by Pandemic." Ward describes in detail how rapidly her husband's health declined in January 2020. She grieved as the pandemic picked up speed and the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 created mass protests. The ending of the essay is both highly personal in the account of her husband's dying hours and a call for justice for Black Americans: "When my Beloved died, a doctor told me: The last sense to go is hearing. When someone is dying, they lose sight and smell and taste and touch. They even forget who they are. But in the end, they hear you" (Ward).

The text mixes the very personal 'I' with the general 'we' on behalf of the black community, whose repression for centuries has been made clear throughout the essay. Ward's emotional relief that Black Lives Matter is not just an American movement but had sympathizers globally offered a new perspective to the deep trauma that she has lived with her whole life:

This is the belief that America fed fresh blood into for centuries, this belief that Black lives have the same value as a plow horse or a grizzled donkey. I knew this. My family knew this. My people knew this, and we fought it, but we were convinced we would fight this reality alone, fight until we could no more, until we were in the ground, bones moldering, headstones overgrown above in the world where our children and children's children still fought, still yanked against the noose, the forearm, the starvation and
redlining and rape and enslavement and murder and choked out: *I can't breathe.* They would say: *I can't breathe. I can't breathe.*

I cried in wonder each time I saw protest around the world because I recognized the people. I recognized the way they zip their hoodies, the way they raised their fists, the way they walked, the way they shouted. I recognized their action for what it was: witness. Even now, each day, they witness.

Ward

Ward's essay is haunting because of her tragic loss, and highly moving in its multiple weaving together of stories.

The pandemic may be a threat to everyone, but most of the victims are people who have very few resources to draw on. In world literature, one of the challenges is understanding what is at stake in an environment with which you are unfamiliar. It is possible to gain considerable understanding of social hierarchies and the desires and preferences of a fictional hero, but you can't be certain that you have grasped all the nuances in the way that the original culture intended. The same doesn't apply to traumatic literature, in which a biological and universal binary sets the tone: life and death are at stake, an issue which affects all of us, no matter which culture we belong to. The literature on the pandemic addresses the same issue. This doesn't mean that contexts disappear, but they are framed differently. The reader has an immediate understanding of what might happen, whereas the same isn't necessarily true in literature focusing on the pursuit of social status, love, and wealth in a culture that may be more or less foreign.

The literature of the Holocaust and of other genocides is profoundly a literature of witness to something that is very close to absolute evil. No matter how we historicize events or humanize their perpetrators. Unlike the trauma of genocide, unless unsubstantiated theories of a deliberate spread of the virus turn out to be accurate, there is no agency behind the virus. It just is. And wants to replicate itself. It causes nasty and deadly diseases, but it is hard to think of it in moral terms. What, then, does it mean to have witnessed the pandemic? In Holocaust literature, it was crucial to get access to witness accounts of the horrors of concentration camps and other sites of atrocities, as there was very little documentation otherwise. There were certainly none of the high-resolution photos and videos that we now increasingly take for granted. In the attacks on New York City and Washington DC on September 11, 2001, there was an abundance of images and video testimony that left people wondering if there was anything left to say. And yet literature gradually found an answer to this question, as the images of planes crashing into buildings and people jumping to
their deaths did little to help the public understand the loss of lives and the change in mindset among Americans in particular.

Is the Covid-19 pandemic in need of witnesses? We have images from all over the world, even ethically challenging images of dying people and grieving relatives. As with the events of 9/11, it seems to be the task of literature to understand not just all those emotions that are triggered by iconic images but to draw on them and go beyond that. As Jesmyn Ward’s story shows, some moments can only be shared in literature. It is an open question how the pandemic will be remembered in just a few years, when hopefully it is no longer a daily concern. Will people who have not lost family and friends shake it off? Will literature have trouble dealing with the pandemic because so much has been said about it already? The Spanish Flu has not left a mark in fiction comparable to the number of lives it cost. Will we learn from that? As revealed in the examples presented above, there are plenty of lessons to learn. But is literature up to the task this time?

4 What Is Left to Say?

The rich leave the plague-stricken cities for the countryside and tell stories, while the poor are left to die in their crowded neighborhoods. Is this happening now or in 14th-century Italy? Judging from maps of New York City chronicling infections street by street, what happened in the 14th century seems to be happening again now, which is depressing in many ways. One thing is for sure: the pandemic calls for solidarity across borders. The temporarily closed borders are symbols of a situation that cannot last, emblems of a loss of personal freedom and also of social connection.

The pandemic is not a grand narrative but a tragic occurrence in world history. It is an event in which all kinds of stories come together: of nationalism, of unselfishness, of global solidarity, of greed in a time of crisis. Issues that make us reflect on the role of literature beyond national borders, and on how literature can connect rather than creating distance. To some extent the pandemic is not even amoral but nonmoral – the banality of microbes – but our reactions to it are not, and neither are the ways that we can connect the pandemic with the grand challenges of our time, such as migration, digitization, climate change, and biotechnology.

One of the most incomprehensible aspects of Covid-19 is that the viruses are so minute that the world’s supply of them could all fit in a can of soda (Yates). I don’t know what to do with that image, but it is hard to shake off. Some writer will hopefully make good use of it.
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