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COMMUNITY-BASED EMANCIPATORY STRATEGIES FOR BEING RESILIENT IN CHAOTIC TIMES

ESTRATEGIAS EMANCIPADORAS BASADAS EN LA COMUNIDAD PARA SER RESILIENTES EN TIEMPOS CAÓTICOS

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how to create a “beloved community”, as Martin Luther King stated, and how to build daily, long-lasting bonds in our times and spaces. In other words, this article explores the strategies we must devise in order to be resilient in these chaotic post-pandemic times in which we live. In support of this general postulate, numerous examples are provided in which resilient communities have been successfully created that have been able to support individuals who have had to face up to diverse collective traumas such as hurricane Katrina. The emphasis

placed on the community dimension of resilience effectively introduces all the contributions gathered here as a result of the research carried out as part of the ANDREIA project, with the fostering of the pillar of affective relationships being one of the main lines of action.

KEYWORDS: Community resilience, affective relationships, humanizing education.

RESUMEN

Este artículo examina cómo crear una "comunidad amada", como expresó Martin Luther King, y cómo construir vínculos diarios y duraderos en nuestros tiempos y espacios. En otras palabras, explora las estrategias que debemos idear para ser resilientes en estos tiempos caóticos pospandémicos en los que vivimos. Para respaldar este postulado general, se proporcionan numerosos ejemplos de comunidades resilientes que se han creado con éxito y que han podido apoyar a individuos que han tenido que enfrentarse a diversos traumas colectivos, como el huracán Katrina. El énfasis en la dimensión comunitaria de la resiliencia introduce eficazmente todas las contribuciones reunidas aquí como resultado de la investigación llevada a cabo en el marco del proyecto ANDREIA, siendo el fomento del pilar de las relaciones afectivas una de las principales líneas de acción.

***Palabras clave*:** *Resiliencia comunitaria, relaciones afectivas, educación humanizadora*.

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1. WHEN COMMUNITY BONDSEMERGE IN DISASTERS

> *What are the projects that will replace famine, plague and war at the top of the human agenda in the twenty-first century? One central project will be to protect humankind and the planet as a whole from the dangers inherent in our own power.*
>
> Harari (2016)

The name Katrina can no longer be used as a possible designation for any future hurricane. The reason? Because Katrina would become the most destructive hurricane in American history. In August 2005, Katrina –a Category 5 hurricane– devastated the state of Louisiana, leaving an official death toll of 1,577 and 107,379 houses flooded. It also flooded 80% of the city of New Orleans. The "killer storm", as it is known, turned into an apocalyptic calamity as a result of a lethal combination. What causes a natural disaster to turn into a catastrophe? Without a doubt, ourselves. Yes, Katrina's devastating combination was the result of a depressing formula: Natural Disaster + Human Action or Inaction. Unfortunately, as the essayist Nassim Taleb acknowledges, a disaster often escalates to the level of catastrophe because of human action (Taleb, 2012). Similarly, the innovative Judith Rodin argues that crises are intensified by how well or how poorly people prepare beforehand, respond during, or revitalize after facing any catastrophic disruption (Rodin, 2015).

Boris Cyrulnik acknowledges that "you have to strike twice to achieve a trauma" (Cyrulnik, 2002). The first strike, which is irreversible, is the wound inflicted in real life. The second, reversible strike is the social discourse woven around the damaged person that stigmatizes them, humiliates them, rejects them, shames the mand plunges them into despair. In the same way that a trauma needs those two strikes, a natural disaster needs to strike twice to become a catastrophe. In other

words, a natural disaster needs to be associated with a social disaster in order to become a human tragedy. This is how Katrina struck New Orleans twice: firstly, as a natural hurricane and secondly, as a social hurricane. Katrina's devastating outcome was the result of a succession of human failures, including the manmade disaster of levee breaches at 53 sites and the collapse of the extraction pumps, environmental degradation caused by the unrestrained extraction of gas and oil in the Gulf of Mexico and the consequent destruction of natural barriers (wetlands, coastal berms, etc.)in the years leading up to Hurricane Katrina, the social devastation resulting from the government's failure to evacuate residents or provide relief, the consequent panic of the elites (fuelled by fear in the face of rumours and lies from the authorities and the magnification of these dire messages by the media),which led to citizens being abandoned by their fellow citizens and their government, and the appalling disaster resulting from local, state and federal authorities' decisions, which resulted in New Orleans becoming a prison where residents were treated as an enemy when at their most vulnerable. Ultimately, Hurricane Katrina unleashed the worst of tragedies in New Orleans.

Writer Rebecca Solnit, in her essay *A Paradise Built in Hell*, which was published after the disaster of Hurricane Katrina, debunks the myth that people become desperate and selfish after disasters. Solnit recognizes that opportunities open up in the darkest moments. Terrible situations in themselves, natural disasters sometimes open a door where community bonds (paradise, according to Solnit) make their appearance (Solnit, 2010). In the maelstrom of disasters, do people dedicate themselves to saving lives or to killing? It depends on your beliefs. Solnit (2010) stresses the importance of beliefs in disasters: What you believe will shape how you act. It depends on whether you believe your neighbours are a greater threat than the ravages of chaos or a greater good to be saved. Fortunately, in New

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Orleans, most people reacted with generous improvisations to save themselves and others. This is how the relational network woven by the constellations of solidarity, altruism and improvisation resurfaces in disasters. As Solnit (2010) examines in her essay, the history of disasters demonstrates that most of us are in need of relationships, purpose and meaning, and participation, even in the most dramatic of situations.

These community bonds that emerge whenever disasters strike reveal how the world could be, reveal the strength of that hope, that generosity and that solidarity that surface in the worst situations experienced. It is our duty, Solnit (2010) claims, to recognize the visible possibilities of these community bonds of solidarity in order to shape them and extend them to daily life in any time and space. These community bonds of daily life remind us of the importance of community resilience as a remnant of what Martin Luther King called "the beloved community". This prosocial behaviour becomes a key element in disaster prevention by reversing the social disaster aspect. In short, the community that is resilient in everyday life creates the immediate conditions to live and face the worst of chaos.

Precisely for this reason, following Hurricane Katrina, the city of New Orleans (NOLA) began to design and implement a strategy in which resilience became a key concept of the city's transformational agenda. Indeed, it even become its official slogan: "Resilient NOLA". However, on the 10th anniversary of Katrina, the city of New Orleans is once again flooded, this time by posters with the solemn phrase "Stop calling me resilient". Through this litany, Louisiana Institute of Justice activist Tracie Washington criticizes the merely cosmetic nature of this resilient city strategy, citing a withering argument: "Stop calling me resilient. I'm not resilient. Because every time you say, 'Oh, they're resilient', you can do something else to me" (Klein, 2014).

Speaking about disasters, statesman Winston Churchill said that a good crisis should never go to waste. If we want to avoid wasting the lessons learned from the devastation of Katrina, we should learn three lessons: the first, that being resilient is possible by building community bonds that flourish in catastrophes; the second, that resilience is built every day; and the third, that resilience should never be an excuse for public governance inaction.

This article examines how to create this "beloved community" and how to build these daily, long-lasting community bonds in our times and our spaces. In other words, this article explores the strategies we must devise in order to be resilient in these chaotic post-pandemic times in which we live.

2. BEING RESILIENT AS A VITAL COMMUNITY ACTION

The Washington Post asked its readers for their definition of 2020. Clarke Smith, a 9-year-old boy from Michigan, United States, sent the best proposal: "Like looking both ways before crossing the street and then getting hit by a submarine". We believe that this definition of 2020 is also the best metaphor to describe the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our lives. We also consider it to be the best metaphor to describe the incomprehensible times in which we live. It can be expressed with the acronym WHAS: World susceptible to being Hit by A Submarine. Its main feature? Responding to a chaotic world. Welcome to the Age of Chaos. In the past we thought we were dealing with an unstable, undefined world characterized by being volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) that had to be given structure. The post-pandemic era (understood as a World susceptible to being Hit by A Submarine) has made the VUCA metaphor obsolete. We need a new metaphor, a new explanatory framework that provides us with new

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tools to face the current prevailing chaos. One of those key tools, as we will see, is resilience.

Futurologist Jamais Cascio coined a new metaphor for the Age of Chaos that goes by the acronym BANI. Now we have to face a post-pandemic world characterized by being: Brittle (our current systems are brittle and susceptible to sudden or catastrophic failures, although they appear robust or solid), Anxious (the situations that surround us cause anxiety because they are not familiar to us, they surprise us and disorient us), Nonlinear (in nonlinear systems there is a disproportion and disconnection between cause and effect, as the pandemic has shown us) and Incomprehensible (decisions in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution are incomprehensible to us: read Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, algorithms, the Internet of Things, etc.). According to Cascio, BANI explains and provides us with new tools to live in the current chaotic state of the world. Thus, the world's brittleness can be compensated by civilizational resilience; anxiety can be relieved by compassion; non-linearity needs moral imagination (seeing in the present the triggers of the future, as we will see later); and incomprehensibility calls for intuition (Cascio, 2020).

In his article *The Resilient World*, Cascio makes his famous distinction between sustainability and resilience: "Resilience is all about being able to handle the unexpected…Sustainability is about surviving. The goal of resilience is to thrive" (Cascio, 2007). In the same article, Cascio recognizes that if we want to prosper in the 21st century, we must fight for civilizational resilience. In other words, we must build a civilization capable of handling dynamic, unexpected changes that threaten us with collapse. As we have already seen, unexpected changes like Hurricane Katrina can easily cause the collapse of a city like New Orleans. The Katrina disaster led to tragedy because it struck fragile systems, non-resilient systems. Specifically, being resilient is that strategic action designed to guide how decisions are made

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in the face of the unexpected, in the face of the incomprehensible. Being resilient is being able to cope with the unexpected, to diversify options and increase the resources available in order to respond to chaotic incomprehensible futures. Cascio's civilizational resilience is what we call generative resilience (Grané and Forés, 2019 and 2020). As Nassim Taleb states when he describes antifragility (a concept also synonymous with generative resilience), being resilient means constantly improving and prospering in disorder, randomness, and chaos; it is flirting with risk and adventure; it is benefitting from crises and facing the unknown (Taleb, 2012). In the chaotic world, in the BANI world, in the WHAS world, being resilient is a primordial action. As we saw in New Orleans, the community bonds, the resilient bonds appeared as a ray of hope in the darkness of the catastrophe, allowing residents to improvise in the face of the unexpected. In short, being resilient is the new action when chaos is the new condition.

Social resilience researcher Michael Ungar states that coping with unexpected changes requires a better understanding of resilience. And this better understanding leads us to recognize that our fate, our life depends more on other people than on the robustness or strengths we possess. Being resilient is not about personal transformation through self-improvement. Thriving depends on the support, the resources and the services provided by our families, organizations, communities, institutions and society. These services and resources provided to us make us resilient. Being resilient depends more on what you receive than what you have. As Ungar argues: "It's about providing the right services to the right people in the right way". In short, our prosperity in life depends on our ability to change the world around us more than our ability to change ourselves, however much the motivational gurus may justify it. Communities rise or fall on the collective basis of taking care of themselves (Ungar, 2019). As we have already seen in the case of Hurricane Katrina,

our lives matter when we matter to others. In short, being resilient becomes primarily a community action. Otherwise it makes no sense either in everyday life or in the worst of catastrophes –or in a world where machines are beginning to proliferate.

3. THE "DO NOTHING" STRATEGIES: CONSCIENTIZATION AND HEALING

What happens to our humanity when we talk to machines? According to psychologist and sociologist Sherry Turkle, when we communicate through our digital devices we acquire different habits. Digital technology seduces us, but it silences us and makes us forget what we know about life. These silences have given rise to a crisis of compassion (remember the anxiety in BANI) that has diminished us at home, at work, and in public life. Technology does not facilitate emotions and diminishes introspection. Screens lessen the depth of our communications, simplifying them and demanding immediate responses. Moreover, they lead us to a life of constant distraction and addiction to multitasking. As Turkle (2011) says, "the more time we spend connected, the lonelier we feel". The digital world offers the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. Indeed, we use technology to isolate ourselves. The solution? The time has come to for a course correction. According to Turkle (2011), we need to make space and time available (stopping being busy) for face-to-face conversation as the most human –and humanizing– act that we can perform. Eye contact is the most powerful route to human connection and turns us towards others and towards ourselves. To do this, we have to reverse our inattention to others in our ever-connected lives (Turkle, 2011, 2015). Her message is forceful: "Turn off your phones and start living".

What happens to our humanity when we read on machines? Reading and dyslexia expert Maryanne Wolf acknowledges that digital media trains us to be broadband consumers rather than meditational thinkers. Since the human being

was not born to read, the acquisition of literacy is one of the most important human epigenetic achievements, since it allows us to develop our maximum potential when we learn to read. It is true that we read more these days, but we read in shorter bursts, sometimes even reading diagonally or vertically. Speed, immediacy, digital overstimulation, multitasking and information overload all work against deep, slow reading. Thus, digital reading prevents the formation of the slower cognitive processes that make up deep reading, such as critical thinking, personal reflection, imagination and compassion. Furthermore, digital reading undermines our ability to draw analogies and conclusions. The generation of distracted, bored, grasshopper-minded readers do not have the time or inclination to cultivate a calm eye that allows them to take on board the point of view and feelings of others. The solution? According to Wolf (2018), we need to reclaim the rhythm of time for a more conscious life and to have more cognitive patience to disconnect from the excessive use of digital devices, devoting time and attention to deep reading regardless of the medium.

As the technological populariser Nicholas Carr claims, we are trapped because machines have taken over our lives. It is true that digitalization makes our lives easier and our tasks lighter, but technology also narrows our perspectives, limits our choices, trivializes our reasoning and subjects us to surveillance and manipulation.“Google undermines our ability to think deeply”, says Carr. Social media has bred superficiality and polarization (Carr, 2010 and 2014). The automated complacency that occurs in the digital world lulls us into a false sense of security. In short, the more capable the tools, the more atrophied the minds.

What happens to our humanity when we connect with machines? We may lose part of our humanity if we sacrifice face-to-face conversation and deep reading, among other deficits. And that is very bad news because we must not forget that the main contribution of deep reading and conversation to the human species is a

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democratic basis for critical, inferential and reflective capacities. Moreover, it is the basis of collective consciousness, of community bonds. We will fail as a 21st century society if we do not educate our citizens to process information critically, wisely and vigilantly. Without books, without literacy, without conversations, good society fades away and digital barbarism with its monsters can triumph in the same way Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans.

To ensure conversational citizens, deep-reading citizens, citizens, therefore, who are critical, inferential and reflective, we need to demand to "do nothing". The writer and artist Jenny Odell claims the right to stop being the subject of productivity when defending "doing nothing" in order to resist the attention economy (Odell, 2019). The first half of "doing nothing" relates to the emancipatory strategy of conscientization (in homage to the pedagogue Paolo Freire). It is a political project that involves distancing oneself from the attention economy. Conscientization means becoming aware of the inner workings of surveillance capitalism and involves supporting alternatives, imagining new possibilities, and refusing to cooperate in our own surveillance. The second half of "doing nothing" has to do with the emancipatory strategy of healing. Healing is a societal project that means reconnecting with a more human time and space. As we have already mentioned, having space and time to "do nothing" is of vital importance for thinking, reflecting, and healing ourselves individually and collectively. It is a type of nothing that is necessary to repair ourselves and do something different. Healing also means, more than ever, opening our eyes and recovering active ways of looking and moving towards a new culture of care, compassion, love and service.

Community resilience requires these two emancipatory strategies of conscientization and healing. Such strategies must liberate collective actions. Among others, as a conscientization strategy, retaining decision-making ownership

and fostering moral imagination; as a healing strategy, expanding the concept of "us" and humanizing ourselves by caring, looking and being compassionate.

3.1 Retaining decision-making ownership

What happens to society when we transfer power to a system created by a small group of people who make decisions on behalf of the majority? Let's see. An algorithm decided the final grade of British school children because the COVID-19 pandemic meant it was impossible to hold entrance exams. The algorithm penalised students from low-performing schools, lowering their marks by 40%. As mathematician Cathy O'Neil acknowledges, we live in the age of the algorithm. The decisions that affect our lives are not made by humans, but by mathematical models. According to O'Neil, when algorithms become more like inscrutable black boxes that favour the fortunate and punish the oppressed, we can label algorithms, without hesitation, as authentic weapons of mathematical destruction (O'Neil, 2016) or algorithms of oppression (Noble, 2018). Algorithms are not perfect because they cannot simulate exceptions, nor can they think through all possible contingencies. Fortunately, the student demonstrations beat this unfair algorithm.

Futurist Amy Webb argues that companies and governments are changing the world through algorithms. In the second part of her essay *The Big Nine: How the Titans and Their Thinking Machines Could Warp Humanity*, Webb (2019) describes three possible scenarios that the development of artificial intelligence (AI) could lead to: the optimistic, the pragmatic, or the catastrophic. Step by step, we are getting closer to the catastrophic scenario. As Webb acknowledges, while it is true that machines can think, it is also true that thinking machines can make decisions that produce real-world effects and that they can produce original thought. It is also true that AI

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machines have a mind. Unfortunately, however, humanity is increasingly removed from the decision-making and development centre of AI (Webb, 2019). Welcome to the AI future where dystopia is increasingly becoming reality.

"We thought we were searching Google, but Google was searching us". That is how bluntly sociologist Shoshana Zuboff described surveillance capitalism. Algorithms and AI direct and control us like puppets in a new perverse business model in which the product to be sold is ourselves and in which our experiences are datafied with the lure of a free service. It is a new form of market with a new logic of accumulation in which surveillance, the attention economy (based on tools designed to manipulate and hook us like tech junkies) and the economy of action (they hack us to sell predictions about our future and manipulate our future behaviour) are the fundamental mechanisms to boost their digital monopoly. It is an industry that extracts data as raw material for the surveillance economy (Zuboff, 2019).

For the technology researcher James Williams, the digital industry responds to monopolies of the mind that today are occupied by the forces of industrialized persuasion. These empires of the mind are the empires of the present. In the age of distraction, this digital industry has come to embody a next-generation threat to human freedom. Therefore, the liberation of human attention could be the most decisive ethical and political struggle for our time. According to Williams, it involves rejecting our current attentional servitude to surveillance capitalism and urgently mobilizing ourselves to assert and defend our freedom of attention (Williams, 2018).

It is true that machines are superior when it comes to organizing large amounts of data, but we human experts are still more useful and wiser thinkers than our digital partners. Digital systems should therefore leave the final decision to the individual. Instead of supplanting human judgment, digital thinking should supplement it. In short, to be resilient in these chaotic times we need to recover our time, our attention

and, above all, our decision-making power. This is why we must reclaim the right to make good decisions. This is why we must teach decisionality.

3.2 Fostering moral imagination

Years and Years, Squid Game, The Hunger Games, The Handmaid's Tale, Black Mirror, and Divergent are among the bestsellers and series that have triumphed in sales, prizes and views. Welcome to Dystopiland. We are faced with the general public's addiction to dystopias. Dystopian stories, those narratives that approach reality from the prism of fatalism and capture our fear and existential panic, have become a mass trend. According to the philosopher Francisco Martorell, we are facing the dystopianization of our culture. This means we perceive and interpret reality in a dystopian way, persuaded that we suffer from hidden conspiracies (George Soros, pizza shops, etc.; paranoia has become the perfect tool for thinking about the world) and that we dwell in the entrails of a perpetual human decline. For Martorell (2021), the great casualty of the millennialist lucubrations of the dystopian era is, precisely, utopia. Fear of a worse future has replaced hope of a better future. These are bad times for utopia. According to Martorell therefore, we need to replace this culture of determinism, pessimism, fatalism, inevitability, panic and fear (made explicit by the famous acronym TINA, There Is No Alternative) with a utopian common sense and to rethink or reset utopia. We need to reverse the crisis of utopia and reactivate the enlightened purpose of transforming reality (Martorell, 2019 and 2021).

In their book Liquid Evil, sociologist Zygmunt Bauman and philosopher Leonidas Donskis explain that a ghost is haunting Europe: the ghost of the absence of alternatives. Indeed, both authors define liquid evil as that presumed absence of alternatives (even their impossibility). As Donskis argues, "we live in a world without

alternatives. The world has never been so infested with fatalistic and deterministic beliefs as it is today. It is a pervasive world of fear and fatalism where there is no room for critical thinking and self-questioning" (Bauman and Donskis, 2016). In this culture of determinism, alternatives are not allowed. Thus, the individual's ultimate belief in social determinism, fatalism in the market economy or technological inevitability predominates. According to both authors, the absence of dreams, of alternative projects, of utopias, or of dissent, are the most significant aspects of this materialization of liquid evil.

How can we dilute this liquid evil and regain revised utopian versions that allow us to visualize hope in a better future? Firstly, by substituting acronym for acronym, for example TINA for TAMA: There Are Many Alternatives. This means fostering optionality (the basis of generative resilience; Grané and Forés 2019). At the same time, it means ceasing to believe in the pernicious idea that there is an optimal way of doing things. On the contrary, there are many great ways of doing things. Secondly, diluting the liquid evil involves regaining ownership of the construction of the future. Deterministic culture leads to the loss of human possibilities, including the ability to wonder and to create. Moreover, it excludes freedom of choice and, above all, takes away our ability to build alternative futures. We must regain the power to imagine, to intend, to promise and to build a different future. How? Through moral imagination, defined as the generative capacity to appreciate and imagine in the present the triggers of the future.

For peacebuilder John Paul Lederach, overcoming cycles of human violence entails shifting relationships from those defined by fear, mutual recrimination and violence to more communal relationships characterized by love, mutual respect and commitment. According to Lederach, the flows of fear destroy. By contrast, those of love build. That is the challenge: how to move from what destroys to what builds.

That is what Lederach calls constructive social change. To transcend the violence inscribed in our communities and spread constructive change, we need to regain the ability to foster, generate, mobilize and build the moral imagination: the ability to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that even includes our enemies (Lederach, 2005).

In short, in a resilient world, the future becomes an opportunity rather than a destination. To be resilient in these chaotic times, first we need to imagine and then to get up and start walking. And walk, and walk. And never stop walking and imagining (Grané and Forés, 2020). To be resilient in these dystopian times, we need to foster hope, moral imagination and critical thinking. This is why we must claim the right to future time. This is why we must teach generativity.

3.3 Expanding the concept of us

When we search for a term on Google, most of us assume that everyone gets the same results, but this is not entirely true in the age of digital personalization. According to cyber activist Eli Pariser, as of December 4, 2009, there is no longer a standard Google. From that date, Google's Page Rank algorithm suggests what is best for each of us in particular. Since then, the surveillance economy's personalization algorithms have been creating a unique universe of information for each of us: they are the filter bubbles. These bubbles are invisible, isolating us from some and immersing us in others, building a tailor-made world that fits us perfectly. In our bubble we see what we want to see about ourselves in an infinite loop, even if this means being trapped in a static, limited version of our identity. In short, personalization has given us a public sphere classified and manipulated by algorithms, purposely atomized and hostile to dialogue, leading toa loss of

mental flexibility and the openness created by contact with anything different (Pariser, 2011).

Locked up, dwarfed in our bubbles, we are increasingly outraged by the points of view of other people who dare to make us leave our digital refuge. Indeed, indignation (in addition to hate, anger and shame) is the heroin that gets us hooked on social media. The digital personalization of filter bubbles easily leads to a world of provocation, insults and lies, a world of hate that plunges us into the age of confrontation (Salmon, 2019). Unfortunately, the extraordinary rise of this moral outrage embedded in the attention economy on a social and global scale has negative repercussions on democracy, because decent policies require citizens that listen to and understand reality from the point of view of other people. When street law, mob justice (ochlocracy) or mob rule is imposed, the path is cleared for tribal impulse and the possibility of expanding *us* disappears. In truth, populism is nothing more than the moralistic version of this difficulty of building communities in the digital society (Williams, 2018). According to political philosopher Michael Sandel, we have lost sight of the key notion of the common good. Sandel acknowledges that technological meritocracy has generated a digital caste system that has become a tyranny in which there is no room for concern for the common good (Sandel, 2020). The gap between the AI tribes and citizens is corrosive to the building of community bonds and the expansion of *us*.

Indeed, the connection does not generate an*us*. It is only developed by human relationships. People who join together in the digital hive do not develop a community, despite what Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg (2017) says with his claim of building a global digital community. The human groups that make up these networks are characterized by malleable, fragile bonds with vague, shifting borders. While the idea of community is associated with continuity, the network is associated

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with fluctuation and inconstancy. Replacing the concept of community with that of network represents a bad deal for the common good, since the network is a weak basis for democratic strengthening.

To be resilient in these chaotic times, we need to expand the definition of *us* and broaden the tribe beyond our algorithm-filtered world. This is why we must claim the right to the common good. This is why we must teach openness.

3.4 Humanizing ourselves by caring, looking and being compassionate

"You are not special. You're not a beautiful and unique snowflake". This vilification, which appears in the 1999 cult film Fight Club starring Brad Pitt and directed by David Fincher, is apparently the origin of the concept of the snowflake generation. It is a neologism aimed at digital natives to criticize their supposed fragility, their emotional instability, their susceptibility to being offended, their low tolerance for frustration, their inability to deal with opposing opinions and, ultimately, their low resilience. Indeed, it is a generation that is the product of three educational failures: overprotection in their childhood (resulting in their extreme fragility), lack of coping skills (hence their demand for glass bubbles to minimize the dangers they may face), and being made to feel special and unique (which is why they see themselves as deserving of praise for being unique like snowflakes).

People belonging to this snowflake generation have an exaggerated sense of self, which is very much in keeping with the emotional capitalism that prevails in the age of the surveillance economy. According to the philosopher Byung-Chul Han, "like" capitalism is characterized by this hyper-individualism. For Han, 21st century society is a performance society characterized by positivity where everything negative must be eliminated (such as any negative thoughts or feelings). The extreme demand for

performance generates depressed, burnt out and unsuccessful people (Han, 2015). This same performance society is also characterized by algophobia: phobia of pain or generalized fear of suffering. Han (2022) believes that the subject of this performance should be someone who is free ofany possible pain and always happy. Han calls a palliative society; a society that does not have the courage to face pain. In the palliative society, suffering is considered a weakness incompatible with performance. In this palliative society, positive psychology predominates, advocating well-being, happiness and optimism as key elements for personal flourishing (Han, 2021).

In the same critical vein, psychologist Edgar Cabanas and sociologist Eva Illouz condemn the happiness industry in their book *Manufacturing Happy Citizens*. According to both authors, the science of happiness has contributed to the privatization of pain by making each person responsible for their pain. Each person is responsible for their failure or success, their wealth or poverty, their health or illness. Everyone has the life they deserve. The stressed, the depressed, the marginalized, the exploited, the addicts, the lonely, the unemployed, or the unsuccessful, if they do not lead a happier life it is because they have not tried hard enough or because they do not know the key to happiness. The formula is very simple: be happy. In the “like” society, not only is pain privatized, but any social dimension of it is also eliminated. A world where every person is responsible for their suffering reduces the space for pity, compassion and solidarity. Moreover, it also removes the space for dissent, protest or the possibility of collective imagination and struggle. In short, the happycratic society eliminates the thirst for revolution because it establishes that the conditions for improvement are not social, they are exclusively psychological. It is not society that needs a change but people, who have to learn to be happy, learn to adapt, survive and improve (Cabanas and Illouz, 2019). It should be noted that the reasoning behind Happycracy is highly pernicious because it begins from the

premise of a close relationship between happiness and goodness: A happy person who feels good is a good person; a person who feels bad or is unhappy is a bad person (Bauman and Donskis, 2016). These are bad times for melancholy, sadness, or suffering.

The smartphone is designed so that we never take our eyes off it. It thus reinforces the egocentrism and narcissism prevailing today. “In digital communication, the other is increasingly less present”, Byung-Chul Han acknowledges. And he adds that the digital world makes the other disappear as a voice and as a look. Digital media eliminate the encounter, the face, the presence. This is how digital communication weakens the community: “Time as time of the self makes us blind to the other”. Han even goes so far as to state that “the telos of the digital order is to eliminate care” (Han, 2022).

For philosopher Victoria Camps, caring is a democratic duty and another way of being in the world. We need to build a democracy, a society, a caring and careful city (which does so while preserving dignity) that is willing to take charge of the human contingency in all its manifestations (Camps, 2021). Human existence is to care, to be compassionate, to love, to look, to converse, to read deeply, etc. To be resilient in chaotic times, we need to humanize emotional capitalism. Humanizing means recovering the other by looking, listening, caring and being compassionate. This is why we must claim the right to a human digital home. This is why we must teach human warmth.

4. SPACES AND TIMES TO RETURN HOME

On Christmas Eve 1914 during the First World War, at various points along the Western Front, German and Allied soldiers agreed to a spontaneous truce to socialize

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with human beings beyond their trenches. Gifts and food were exchanged, trees were lit, even a game of football was played and ceremonies were held in memory of those who had fallen on both sides. The Christmas Truce of the First World War established a space and time of inviolable shelter, an asylum or refuge for humanity.

The answer to the digital onslaught cannot be reduced to turning our backs on the digital world and practicing total digital detoxification. Nor, logically, completely assimilating the digital society with all its vices. It means redoubling our commitment to being human in premeditated spaces and times that become a human home. These spaces and times allow us to return home to forge digital disobedience to the attention economy. This disobedience will consist of withdrawing attention from screens and directing it elsewhere. Similarly, these spaces and times will allow us to weave the community bonds necessary to face natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina. These spaces and times will allow us to weave strong bonds through face-to-face interaction, conversation, debate, deliberation and confrontation necessary to contemplate the world as it could be with all the hope that comes with it. In short, weaving these spaces and times as an emancipatory strategy will allow us to be resilient in these chaotic times in which you can be hit by a submarine.

Computer scientist Kai-Fu Lee ends his bestseller AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley and the New World Order with the following desideratum: “Let us choose to let machines be machines, and humans be humans. Let us choose simply to use our machines and, more importantly, to love each other” (Kai-Fu Lee, 2018).

5. EPILOGUE

Towards the end of her book The Age of Surveillance Capitalism, Shoshana Zuboff evokes the collective resistance that preceded the fall of the Berlin Wall on

November 9, 1989, stating: “The Berlin Wall fell for many reasons, but above all it was because the people of East Berlin said, ‘No more!’” (Zuboff, 2019). And she ends with the wish that “No more!”be our declaration to reclaim the digital future as humanity’s home.

Hopefully, here and now, after reading this article in depth, you will begin or pursue paths of digital disobedience to imagine a more dignified *us*. Dare you? It is time to go home… to even do nothing.

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