



Editorial: Serving the Common Good during a Pandemic through Scholarly Publishing

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We are writing this editorial in the time of a global pandemic. Whether working on the front lines, unexpectedly unemployed, working from home, suddenly homeschooling, or some combination of all of the above or something else, most of our lives turned on a dime in mid-March 2020. Things that we previously took for granted, like schools, playgrounds, gyms, churches, hugging friends, planes flying overhead, and professional haircuts, are, for now, no longer part of the landscape of our everyday lives. The hooks in the cycle of the year that remind us what month it is and give us a sense of stability and predictability have been loosened so that we can focus on the one thing that we, collectively, can do to help - stay home. If the last two months has shown us anything, it is that there is massive individual, societal, and governmental willingness to radically upend our everyday lives for our collective well-being and the common good. As the editors of J-BILD, we are seeing these changes through the lenses of belonging, identity, language, and diversity. In what ways can J-BILD serve and support the common good during these times of crisis? By serving the common good, we are referring to a “cooperation to promote conditions which enhance the opportunity for the human flourishing of all people within a community” (Melé, 2009, p. 227). In this editorial, we explore three key elements of the notion of the common good: the social nature of humanity, individual sacrifice, and morality.

Foundational to the concept of the common good is the notion that humans are inherently social creatures with “a natural capacity to form interpersonal relationships and build communities” (Melé, 2009, p. 233). The community is vital to the individual for several reasons; it is through our relationships with others that we define ourselves as individuals. The inherently social nature of humanity is perhaps the main reason that many of us have struggled with the need for physical distancing and isolation during the pandemic. Yet, we have submitted to these measures because, as humans, we are inherently self-interested in protecting ourselves and our loved ones; we recognize that we preserve our own well-being when we preserve the collective well-being (O'Brien, 2009). Similarly, we understand that, collectively, we support the needs that individuals cannot fulfill on their own (O'Brien, 2009); no individual among us could single-handedly build a hospital and few among us are skilled enough to operate a ventilator, but we willingly and collectively pay taxes so that hospitals and medical professionals can serve us and our community. The common good can therefore be understood as a two-way relationship; in serving the common good, the individual serves the community, but the common good served by others also serves the individual (Melé, 2009). However, it is important to recognize that the preservation of the community is about more than self-interest. Humans are, for the most part, also compassionate, and we recognize that others are essentially the same as us in wanting to protect themselves and their loved ones (O'Brien, 2009). Indeed, we have



seen countless examples of selfless compassion in these months, of individuals acting purely out of love and gratitude for their communities. We have seen this in the nightly banging of pots at 7 pm to recognize essential workers, in the donation of personal protective equipment (PPE), in the singing on balconies and street art on boarded up shops; the examples are almost endless. Smith (1920) would describe these as acts of love, a love that we hold for our communities as similar to the love we hold for our children: “All men are my children; and just as I desire for my children that they may enjoy every kind of prosperity and happiness both in this world and the next, so also I desire the same for all men” (p. 319, cited by Alexander & Buckingham, 2011). Similarly to how we do good for our loved ones, individuals serve the common good out of a feeling of love for their community and group affiliation.

Another foundational concept of the common good, and the perhaps most pertinent to our present circumstances, is the idea of individual sacrifice: “in acting within a community, persons and social groups have to subordinate their own interests in all that is indispensable for the realization of the common good” (Melé, 2009, p. 237). In other words, we accept that there is sometimes the need to sacrifice our individual goods or private goals for the success of our community. There have been, and will likely continue to be, countless examples of personal sacrifices that have come from this pandemic, the most ubiquitous being the personal sacrifices associated with staying home, whatever that looks like for each individual. However, when considering the idea of individual sacrifice, we must tread carefully. Individual sacrifice for the common good does not equate to the utilitarian idea of the greatest good for the greatest number (O'Brien, 2009). An example of this idea – the most good for the greatest number of people – would be sacrificing one to save many:

While the notion of common good connotes some sacrifice on behalf of the individual for the realization of the common good for the community, true common good never threatens the good of the person, even though it may demand considerable sacrifice of a person. (Wojtyla, as cited by Melé, 2009, p. 236)

A recent example here is the repatriation of citizens and permanent residents who were stranded overseas when the pandemic was declared; while bringing them home required considerable expense and effort (i.e., sacrifice), and may have increased the risk of the pandemic spreading within our borders, leaving a few stranded to benefit many does not serve the common good.

Here we turn to morality, a third cornerstone of the common good. Morality, as it relates to the common good, can be understood as “the support of human and cultural values such as self-discipline, integrity, trust and solidarity that sustain social capital” (Alexander & Buckingham, 2011, p. 320). One reason we are invested in the values and behaviours of other community members is because it is through our association with others that we define ourselves as individuals (O'Brien, 2009). In other words, the morality of our communities offers a mirror into our own individual morality. Moreover, a society with strong morality is more likely to value human rights and freedoms, which has obvious



benefits to the individual members. This is why sacrificing one to save many is not an example of the common good; it requires a breach of morality, which in turn detracts from the common good because it is good for everyone to live in a society where everyone's human rights are valued and respected (O'Brien, 2009). Similarly, goods obtained through immoral means are not the common good. Recent examples include the hoarding and reselling of essential supplies. The strength with which societies around the world reacted to such behavior is indicative of the extent to which morality informs our behavior.

We return now to the question we posed at the start of this editorial: in what ways can J-BILD serve and support the common good during these times of crisis? First, we can continue to provide a forum for individuals to find a sense of community and shared purpose. Academic journals are linked to institutions of learning. This is particularly true for J-BILD, as we find our roots in the field of education and our editorial board is made up of educators specializing in education. Spaces of education and learning are important to the themes of belonging, identity, language, and diversity because schools are the pivot point around which most individuals' social and community lives spin at one point or another. Schools are also key spaces where we negotiate issues relating to belonging, identity, language, and diversity. From the preschooler to the graduate student, the closing of schools and the rapid shift from on-campus to online learning and homeschooling has become a lonely but necessary means of serving the common good. Yet, in serving the common good, we must remember our indelible human need for connection, community, and belonging. During this time of physical distancing, our concern for our students, our faculty, and ourselves centres on the question "How do we create a sense of community for the students when they have to be in isolation?" (Rancic, 2020). While means of social connection and interaction have quickly taken on new forms in many arenas of our lives, what has become so clear is that J-BILD continues to be a project that fosters connection and community amongst people, most of whom have never met in person, many of whom live in different time zones. J-BILD has become, for many - us includes - a community that fosters a sense of belonging.

A second way that J-BILD can serve the common good is by continuing to provide a touchpoint of normality for our community. As an online and digitally mediated journal, J-BILD is one part of our lives that has not needed to be re-thought in any way during the Covid crisis to continue to thrive. J-BILD is a stable space during this time when just about everything else we understand to be normal in our world has changed. This provides a small glimmer of hope for the future of scholarly publishing; online and open access have become a necessity in most primary, secondary, and higher education institutions. In higher education in particular, we have observed (and applauded) examples of publishers who are opening up access to digital versions of their course packs and textbooks, letting paywalls go by the wayside. It is hard to imagine how they will ever close up again after this.

Finally, J-BILD will serve the common good by providing a forum for essential dialogue about issues that have the potential to divide us. This pandemic has shone a spotlight on



how much we need each other, as well as on our capacity to pull together as a local and global community to serve the common good. We are seeing that the human need for connection is prevailing - communities are coming together; we hear about (and take part in) acts of kindness, sharing, and care every day. We cannot let exclusion, intolerance, inequity, and divisiveness weaken us as a global culture. We are going to need to be at our strongest to address the great and looming existential crisis of global warming. We need to learn from this experience, learn how much we need each other for our collective survival. J-BILD will continue to be a space that emphasizes the need for open debate and dialogue on issues related to belonging, identity, language and diversity. We need these conversations so we can come together and face the future, in all its uncertainty, together and unified.

On that note, we are pleased to share with you five articles that address and explore issues of belonging, identity, language, and diversity in different contexts. While none of these articles relate specifically to Covid-19, their contribution to the discourse on issues of belonging, identity, language, and diversity are powerful, nonetheless. This issue includes a critical literature review, a research proposal, and three research studies.

“Semiotics of Belonging: Authentication and denaturalization in youth language” is a critical literature review by Catherine Tebaldi, who asks what youth scholarship can teach us about young people’s understanding of identity, belonging, and power. Drawing from literature published between 1989 and 2019, Tebaldi critically considers the current state of understanding and debate surrounding the interplay between youth linguistic practice and dominant racial hierarchies. Based on her interpretation of the literature, Tebaldi considers our current political moment and how racial hierarchies and white identities are played out in social media.

Ether Bettney’s article “Research Proposal: Exploring Heteroglossic Approaches Through A Comparative Case Study of Spanish-English Bilingual Schools” describes her proposed research study, a comparative case study of three Spanish-English bilingual schools, one each in Canada, Columbia, and the United States. Through the study, Bettney seeks to explore how such schools can negotiate the shift from a monoglossic to heteroglossic approaches towards language learning. As argued by Bettney, the proposed research has the potential to inform our understanding of the impact of heteroglossic approaches on learner outcomes and identities, as well as potentially informing policy and practices in schools as they move away from monoglossic approaches to supporting language learning.

Venus Darius is the author of “Persévérance scolaire de jeunes et jeunes adultes nouveaux arrivants haïtiens face aux besoins d’encadrement institutionnel à Montréal”, a research study that reports on recent the impact of institutional leadership on young adults. Specifically, the author seeks to explore the impact of institutional leadership on Haitian-Montrealers who have dropped out of high school. The author analyses and discusses data drawn from semi-structured interviews, with finding suggesting the need



for school supervision and sociopolitical support in support young Haitian-Montrealers. The article concludes with recommendations for research and policy.

Marinka Swift is the author of “First they Americanize you and then they throw you out’: A LangCrit analysis of language and citizen identity,” a research study exploring themes of belonging, identity, language, and diversity as they intersect with the experiences repatriated 1.5 generation Mexican-Americans. Swift explores how individuals who have experienced deportation after living in the United States negotiate their sense of belonging and citizenship identity. Using a LangCrit theoretical framework, Swift analyses digital narrative data from the Humanizing Deportation project to reveal how gen 1.5 adults negotiate their identities through language and navigate the language ideologies surrounding the deportation experience. The article concludes with recommendations for further research and work.

“Digital Autobiographical Identity Texts as Critical Plurilingual Pedagogy” is a research study co-authored by Christina Tjandra, James Corcoran, Maria Gennuso, and Allison Yeldon. In their multiethnographic study, the authors explore the impact of digital autobiographical identity texts (D-AITs) for language teacher candidates and the extent to which D-AITs have the potential to be identity affirming and transformational tools for language teacher education. The authors analyze a polyvocal data set of dialogic exchanges among themselves, in which they consider and reflect on the D-AITs as pedagogical tools to support language teacher identity development and affirmation. Key themes from the data analysis are shared and discussed. Findings suggest that D-AITs represent a unique pedagogical tool for supporting language teacher candidates’ identity whilst also supporting critical language awareness and academic literacies.

Take good care, J-BILD readers.

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