

Pandemic Fatigue as a Process of Self-exhaustion: A Systemic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Pandemic fatigue is a recurrent topic in the narration of the mental effects due to pandemic. It is generally described in term of exhaustion or tiredness, lack of attention for everyday activities, anxiety and loss of hope and it occurs, in different ways, for those who are particularly exposed to the distress of COVID-19. Being a discomfort rooted in the existential frame, pandemic fatigue cannot be interpreted only as cluster of psychological / psychiatric symptoms or syndromes. Metaphysics can fruitfully suggest an interpretative path for understanding pandemic fatigue in terms of a systemic condition that can be referred to the "underground diseases", quoting Dostoevskij "Notes from the underground". The paper will compare pandemic fatigue to the existential exhaustion suffered from the prisoners of the Nazi concentration camp described by Etty Hillesum (1914-1943), the Dutch intellectual who died in Auschwitz. Finally, the author will strive to highlight the processes that lie beneath the mental exhaustion of pandemic fatigue through the lens of systemic thinking (Urbani Ulivi, 2019; Minati, 2019), focusing a very contemporary trait of multifaceted profile of the experience of void (Fisogni, 2020). It will be noticed that, far from being a symptom of failed hope, pandemic fatigue proves the necessity for human subject to be resilient, especially in such dark, unprecedented times.

Keywords: Pandemic fatigue, Anxiety, Distress, Resilience, Systemic thinking

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