Martina Madaula Munt

“I miss the freedom to think anything can be possible.”

Valldoreix, Barcelona province, Spain, 18 March – 1 May 2020

I graduated from the Master’s program Cultural and Social Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. Just a few weeks ago, at the beginning of this month I decided to move back to my hometown, Barcelona. I had graduated and I had a few social projects I wanted to undertake back home. Most of them were unpaid, but I figured I had to commit to my passions and ideas if I wanted to start a career as an anthropologist. Now I am back in Spain, and Spain is collapsed. The virus, we knew from the news and that apparently had the ability to stop a whole country, suddenly interrupted a career that seemed already very hard to build up. I am in lockdown with my parents and sister who is a recently graduated doctor. My parents work in the theatre industry and they have both lost their jobs. My grandma lives alone, she is healthy, and calm, it is not the first time she lives a catastrophe of such measures. But we worry about her. We are all very lucky, we live with family, we have a garden and for the moment, we have some savings. We only have to worry to stay together and care for each other. My Whatsapp group chats are very active lately, people have more time and need to communicate I guess. A few of the groups are from friends that live in poorer areas of Barcelona; they are migrant women with whom I have previously worked ethnographically. They are not as lucky. But they also don’t seem to complain. In this diary, I will try to bring up all the contradictions I am living daily whilst the coronavirus crisis develops.

Wednesday, 18 March 2020

I am wearing a facemask, the glasses on top, the look of quarantine I guess. I feel I want to do so many things, like I have lots of tasks, but they are all very disorganized so I get overwhelmed and just give up quickly. I scroll on the screen of my computer to check the news. All media is talking about the same, of course, but they don't seem to answer so many of my questions. I guess no one really knows the answers, although in daily conversation everyone is suddenly an epidemiologist. How long will this last? Are we doing enough? Or, too much? What is going to happen after? Is the virus going to mutate? Then, what?

For me personally, the hardest part of the confinement is not to know how and when it will end.

> "I have just finished my studies, I had plans, but none of them is plausible now."

My parents don't have a job and my sister will join the war of gloves and masks soon. And I feel so useless.

Thursday, 19 March 2020

Fourth day of lockdown, or so I think. We are just at the beginning and the time scales are already so different from the ones we were used to. Everything is moving much slower. There is nothing urgent anymore; the only urgency is to find the vaccine. And that makes nothing else matter. I have realized the amount of time and effort I spend on organizing myself and organizing the future. Now, when the future is so uncertain, I make the effort not to think about it. "Think about the present, the daily routine, small daily goals. Make that cake you've always wanted to do, do yoga, write that article." This is a time to take things slowly, enjoy the moment, have long conversations and try to avoid the constant persecution of productivity.

In the end, it is obviously a matter of privilege. For many, this is probably the most stressful time: working without financial and health guarantees, losing community support and caring for children who have been left without a school. My anxieties about seeing the future plans blur are completely irrelevant, right? I look at this crisis and see a class conflict, which should force everyone to assume and reflect on our privilege. Do we no longer have class-consciousness?

Living the lockdown with families is also, I suppose, one of the symptoms of our times, in Spain, Italy, Greece..., where the futures were already uncertain for many and are now probably completely destroyed. Precariousness, again, should not be romanticized. I read Fitzgerald's texts when he was quarantining for the Spanish flu and everything seemed more romantic, alas, so I imagine we always make the same mistakes.

In my particular case, this situation adds to the feeling of uprooting that I had been dealing with for a couple of years. Feeling cornered at home, feeling that I miss things, that here in Valldoreix the time stops, adds to the anguish of confinement. The thoughts of wanting to escape and run away the farthest I can complement the pleasure of stopping, breathing, and slowly building my day-to-day life. The literary romanticizing of these times will make us remember how life, savored slowly, seems more real than we are used to. Rationality will tell us that the race to survive is still there, but even bloodier now. And I imagine my place is, as always, in the comfortable discomfort of the midpoint between the extremes. Over there, still, looking around, doubtful, wanting to do a lot but not knowing exactly how.

I try to keep in touch with that world that made me feel so alive in Amsterdam. I call Kate, Joan, Tom, Jack, in the Netherlands the measures are not that strict, they are scared that the virus will spread like in many other countries, but I envy their possibility to go out for a walk. Also with Maria, Yolanda, Ivette, Lisa, and all those women who came from Latin America and who give me a new life lesson every day. Now I also keep in touch with Tamara Pèls, head of the Latin American section of

Mama Cash, we share anxieties and talk about potential projects.

Friday, 20 March 2020

Today I woke up with more anxiety. I miss my friends. I miss the freedom to think anything can be possible.

I haven't read the news. I can't stop thinking about future plans but maybe I should stop doing so. The hardest part is to accept that perhaps nothing will ever be the same again.

My sister finished medicine a couple of months ago, she traveled to Colombia after the last exam for holidays and managed to come back just a day before they canceled all the international flights. She will be starting to work soon, maybe in a couple of days, to support the public health system. She is looking forward to doing it, even though now they are saying they are unable to pay the inexperienced doctors. I am glad she is doing it and we are not very concerned since it seems that the virus is not a real threat for young people. They also say it is mutating now and that it can get stronger... but they say so much... and the more you know the less informed you feel, there are so many doubts. I am glad she can help, but, selfishly, I'll miss her at home, the loneliness will be worse.

When I talked to Latina women on the phone, they didn't seem to be that worried about this quarantine. They are still going to work to clean houses and care for elders; they don't have any other option. They risk the legality since now the police is asking for supporting documents if you are out in the streets, and most of them don't even have the Spanish legal residence permit. Also, most of them live in very tiny flats sharing rooms with family or friends and the common areas with 6 or 7 more people. I will really try to keep a daily contact with them. The bubble we generally live in just gets thicker when in quarantine...

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The numbers keep growing, and funeral homes are overburdened...

I keep listening to the Spotify playlists Fernando Trueba is doing lately, musica para estos días. Uncertain days.

Constant contradiction between safety and repression. What's the balance? Will the consequences be worse than the cause? Will we be able to recover from it all?

Saturday, 21 March 2020



Photo taken by the author.

Today we've been working in the garden the whole morning, the whole family. I don't remember the last time we spend a whole morning doing something together. Doing the garden to harvest, yes, but mostly distracting ourselves from the

already 6 days of quarantine. More than anything, distracting ourselves from the fact that this is just the beginning. The number of cases and deaths keep rising. And they say next week will be the worst. Probably the confinement will last at least a month. So, again, time and future become such different measures from what we were used to.

I still can't manage to remember that I don't need to be productive. I keep making lists on jobs I want to apply for, articles I want to write or professional projects I still can do from home. But then I am seating on the sofa with my sister, just talking, laughing or arguing, with a tea or a beer, and I ask myself why? Why am I going to stop this moment to write a cover letter that I don't even know if it will get anywhere. Are our lives going to be the same? All the projects, future perspectives, will they still be there?

Our neighbors both have the coronavirus. Carlos, one of my best friends' dad is in the ICU because he needs assistance to breath. Cecile, his wife is isolated at home, but without symptoms. The Covid-19 is supposed to affect much more men than women... who knows why.

My older sister has risked her very low economic situation today to go and visit my grandma. She lives alone; she is healthy and doesn't worry about the virus. She says there are too many old people in this country and that she prefers the visits to not being alone at least. So my sister went and no police officer stopped her, although there are lots in the streets. The fine now raised around 600€ if you are pulled over and not doing one of the things that are allowed to do: grocery shopping, going to the pharmacy, going to the gas station, or going to take care of a dependent person, like my grandma, I guess. I wonder if this authoritarianism will be worth it. I have signed up to volunteer to help older people of my neighborhood who live alone. Curiously enough, I can't go visit my grandma...

The economic measures seem to not be bad, a lot of people are covered but they say

we will need to pay all this money with our taxes in the future. My uncle who is on a lockdown in Boston was explaining me this today on a Whatsapp call. I will add some news on such measures. Las medidas del plan de choque económico: https://www.elperiodico.com/es/economia/20200317/medidas-economicas-coronavirus-gobierno-7893836

Thankfully, it is sunny outside and warm. Although next week it is supposed to rain. Thankfully, we have enough space to live.

Monday, 23 March 2020

Today it was my mum's birthday. I could tell she was sad to spend it like this, without being able to go out for dinner. She enjoys very much the small moments of self-indulgence. We decided with my sister to take the car and go to buy some wine and food to make something nice for her. Without even thinking that much about the fact that two people are not allowed to leave the house together. The police has stopped us and opened a file to us. They said they still don't know how much the fine is going to be... they said they have so many cases like this and that maybe when all of this is finished they will proclaim amnesty for the lower infractions. "The population is already very screwed", said the policemen.

We are all trying to be responsible, but remaining at home without even being able to go for a little walk on your own (we live in a very quiet village) seems like an act of faith if you have not been sick yourself. The numbers keep growing. The number of infected people and deaths are everyday higher... so the only thing that makes us believe this is all going to work out is China now. Today the number of deaths in Italy decreased for the first time but who knows...

Then the responsibility of locking yourself at home is in the most cases an act of solidary, of community in the weirdest of the senses. But the violence is also

growing, the exemplary citizen that never leaves the house under any circumstance seems entitled to scream and insult others and, as we could imagine, the police brutality is also raising. Again, the balance… solidarity or repression?

We were all having dinner, my parents my sister and I, celebrating my mum's birthday. We were happy, we forgot for a moment about the unusual circumstances, my mum cried a bit, shyly, because of a letter we wrote her. Of course, we can't buy anything so, without even knowing it we all wrote and painted things for her. While having dinner my friend texted me her father was put into a coma… he has been in the hospital for two weeks because of the coronavirus. She said he is stable.

Reality is so fragile.

Tuesday, 24 March 2020

My sister and I, we focus on daily tasks, we run around the house, do yoga, work on the garden, clean the house, and do grocery shopping. All that added to our daily tasks of our careers. It feels like there is no time for everything we want to do, even amid a pandemic. The house has a humdrum atmosphere after this week and a half. We seem to be adapting ourselves to the confinement, and maybe the outside world, the streets full of cars, the stress of jobs, and the dirty air, start to appear a bit scary. My dad feels better every day and…

> "… the news are noisy and overwhelming, so the sense of unreality is every day bigger."

Like we are living in a bubble. Meanwhile, I read these WhatsApp texts;[1] the

pandemic is an opportunity to work more for those who do not have legal papers:

> [15:29, 24/3/2020]: Girls good morning, today I have my free day, what a pity that most of the group does not have the documentation in order, staff is needed for residences, in which I am, they are not going to work for fear and some casualties that are already there because of suspicions, they can not be tested, they will have to wait to be called, but they do quarantine at home. They cannot go to work. I only ask that if it is not for something necessarily important, do not leave your homes ... I love you very much, take care!
>
> [15:36, 24/3/2020]: Carola do you work in a nursing home?
>
> [15:39, 24/3/2020]: I don't know, if it is possible to borrow the documents I can let you mines
>
> [15:41, 24/3/2020] Jajajja no! this is personal documentation.
>
> [15:41, 24/3/2020]: Aaah ok
>
> [15:42, 24/3/2020] But thank you this is a sweet gesture of you.
>
> [15:50, 24/3/2020] Carola, I hope God takes care of you and yes now nursing homes are desperate to find people to work, people are not dumb, they are asking the leave to not get infected.
>
> [15:51, 24/3/2020] Beautiful, what a nice gesture, I would do the same if I could, but it is not possible. Don't lose the faith in our God.
>
> [15:51, 24/3/2020] Be really careful, we need the job but it is like being in a time bomb, I don't know about you, it is my opinion.

> [15:57, 24/3/2020] Good afternoon girls, please think very carefully about this decision to go to work now.

Today, my friend Jack has send me the first article I have read that deeply reflects about the fragile balance between responsibility and authoritarian measures: *Against Agamben: Is a Democratic Biopolitics Possible?* (https://www.viewpointmag.com/2020/03/20/against-agamben-democratic-biopolitics/?fbclid=IwAR1UWxuB6r-E4mPangFyf84DBt0v2Kqs-UFW43XzpwUJGtA64-7JtnIRy4g).

Thursday, 26 March 2020

My friend Joan who is also Catalan but lives in Amsterdam is worried. We had a long conversation on the phone today. He said the lockdown is not strict at all in The Netherlands, but instead is longer, until June. He wanted to come home at the end of April but he won't be able to. I have a friend who is confined at home in Milano on her own. She is not allowed to leave the house under any circumstance so the ambulance brings her the food she needs. British friends have been urged to go back immediately, tomorrow I will talk to them, they seem worried.

I decided to visit my grandma yesterday. We kept talking on the phone and she kept insisting she doesn't want to worry about this, "if this is my time, it is about time!" she jokes. She is isolated at home because she can't walk and the care workers go often to cook and take care of her. We can't stop thinking that they can have the virus just as much as we do. So with all the caution, mask, gloves, washing hands and keeping the two meters distance from her we go and visit her individually once in a while. It makes her so happy to have her family to talk to her for a bit. And she doesn't want to talk about the virus, she keeps talking about other things, she also doesn't talk much about the civil war. I think she has suffered so much; her strategy

to survive is to not dig in the bad moments and focus on the good things. We feel responsible to be doing this, and I don't even want to share it with friends, they would say it is not the right thing to do, that it is selfish. But the concepts of generosity, solidarity and selfishness seem very blurred to me. Is this a competition? Is there nothing worse than coronavirus? What happens with loneliness? Depression? Anxiety? Among many other mental illnesses. I feel we shouldn't be showing off who is quarantining better, but instead really collaborating in understanding everyone is doing it in the best way they can.

> "To me, yesterday, my grandma's look of joy when seeing me was worth more than public health, even though I knew I was putting her health at risk."

My sister has been hired by a hospital, finally. She will start working in a couple of days, caring for mild coronavirus patients. My grandma is worried for her; we all are a bit. Despite knowing, most young people don't present symptoms you can't keep out of your head the serious cases. Apparently, there are also young people who die every year due to the common flu. But of course the paranoia gets you.

My neighbor is still on a coma, he seems stable.

Friday, 27 March 2020

I signed up to volunteer helping older people doing their groceries and buying their medicines, but I can't do it because they are still processing my digital authorization.

The Chinese have contained the virus through digital control:

https://elpais.com/ideas/2020-03-21/la-emergencia-viral-y-el-mundo-de-manana-byung-chul-han-el-filosofo-surcoreano-que-piensa-desde-berlin.html

In Catalonia, they are already proposing measures for digitally following the citizens. There seems to be an app that tells you where infected people have been. It is so scary.

I have also signed up for an online anthropology-reading group. I have at least one or two video calls every day. And I am starting to offer Skype tutoring lessons for teenagers to make some money.

> "Will we get used to living digitally? Will we hug again when all of this finishes?"

Sunday, 29 March 2020

When I woke up my mother told me she had a call from the neighbor, her husband passed away yesterday. This is another neighbor so it makes already two serious cases around my house. She called to make us know that she has been screaming. She is not allowed to do a funeral or to see her children because she is also infected. So she will be quarantining on her own mourning her husband. My parents are very scared.

At the beginning they were not taking it very seriously, they even were a little sick and thought they might have already gone through it. But now they are seeing people of their age that are not healthy due to the coronavirus and I can see the worry in their faces, even though they try to act like everything is ok. They are even considering testing themselves through private health care. My mom called my other neighbors, and she explained her husband is in a coma but stable and seems like he

will be ok. She did test herself and was positive so she doesn't even leave the house to buy food.

My sister will start working this week in a hospital and she is seeing in which ways to disinfect herself every time she comes back home. I have just applied for a job as a social worker in a pavilion (fair hall) they have set in Barcelona to grant homeless people a place to stay during the confinement. If I get the job I consider moving to a friend's flat to not be in contact with my parents. I am also very worried for them now.

The teacher of *Mujeres Pa'Lante*, were I met all the migrant domestic workers I am in contact with now, informed us that her dad also passed away and thanked the women for all the work they are doing in caring for our elders. The attention centers for elders are a nucleus of deaths; they are all dying.

It seems like the number of infected and deaths in Spain might be starting to decrease. I think that would entail a boost of optimism to all after these weeks of confinement. As of tomorrow, the confinement will be complete, that is, only essential jobs for basic needs will be allowed to be carried out. I think we all need to see some sort of improvement after all these measures.

Moreover, the Netherlands, my host country, in agreement with Germany are blocking the European economic measures Spain and Italy are demanding to be able to survive this crisis.

Wednesday, 1 April 2020

The stricter measures have been implemented. Only essential suppliers will be able to work now in Spain. Even though this is a labor measure, it has affected everyone. The few exceptions people did are not feasible anymore, because of the fines and

because everyone is already very scared and tired of this. They say we shouldn't think of going back to normal because normal was the problem. However, what's the alternative? People are dying to go back to normal... to go to work and earn money, to hugging and kissing, to seeing friends, to walk on the streets, not to be in fear. That is also the normal.

I am still surprised however on how fast the human being adapts to the new circumstances. I talk to friends on the phone who have started playing trumpet, doing yoga, etc. Everyone has adapted to socialize via video calls (will they last after all this? I hope not). The world keeps functioning in a very weird way.

On the reading group today, even though we tried hard, the conversation kept turning back again, to the pandemic, it is true the reading was very much related, but it is also true everyone's minds are focused on the same thing. We decided to read something different for the next week to try to reflect about other topics.

I have started wearing gloves and a mask when going out of the house for groceries. I would have never said I'd be "one of those". But I am, almost everyone is, we all look like an army of freaks scared of bacteria, but that's exactly what's happening. We are afraid of nature, as we should have been for a long time.

I tried to propose a weekly assembly in my family to organize tasks and to talk about our feelings while in quarantine. It didn't work put the way I had imagined. My dad said it was too unnatural, that he prefers to talk things in the moment. But the truth is that everyone is very susceptible, so talking things without making the space for it doesn't really work. My mum is more relaxed than my dad is; I think she might even be secretly quite happy to spend some time altogether without much to do. My dad worries because he sees that the theatres will be one of the last spaces to reopen. I think he is right.

The measures seem to be working and the curve is starting to flatten.

I am about to finish an article I've always wanted to write. I am starting Arabic class next week and I'd like to go back to playing piano. But it still feels like the day does not have enough hours to do everything!

Friday, 3 April 2020

The atmosphere at home is becoming everyday more and more normal. Zoom calls with friends in the evening are an important part of our daily routines. My sister and I sit on the garden, get a beer, lit a cigarette and chat with different groups of people. "If we can't go to the bars we will create our own!" she said.

> "We are little by little achieving all those quarantine 'goals' we had."

My dad is calling friends he hasn't talked to in a very long time. My mom is painting, which she has never done before, my sister is doing workout routines daily and I have signed up to Arabic and piano lessons. Everyone is a creative hipster these days; they say Instagram is terrible. My mum send us yesterday this article:

https://amp.diaridegirona.cat/catalunya/2020/04/02/bonaventura-clotet-lhospital-testas-ofegant/1037594.html.

An important Spanish doctor, Bonventura Clotet, confirms that in about 6 weeks there will be a drug to prevent coronavirus infection. I hope so. Otherwise, we will really get to the abyss of having achieved all our hipster goals.

Tuesday, 7 April 2020

Michael Kiwanuka was playing on my Spotify while I was reading Marius Serra's article about Carlos. One of my all-time friend's dad passed away this past weekend. Our families are neighbors so we all share memories from a long time ago. He was Argentinian and the day he passed away my dad decided to do an asado, just the way Carlos taught him. Lia has been living in Paris for 4 or 5 years, but she managed to fly the same day it happened. She is in quarantine with all her family now. Before that, her mum was alone at home living with the uncertainty. They are all just a few meters from us but I still haven't managed to see them. We first said with Lia to do a long distance walk with her dog so we could talk. But they are immersed with mourning and paperwork. So I think a walk is not sufficient now. A hug would be better, but I can't give it to her. This morning having breakfast, Siri Hustdvedt reminded me that although we have the feeling that this is not the first time it happens. In an article called "living in fear" she uses the same sense of fear and uncertainty lived in the influenza of 1918:

> "Ha proyectado una sombra sobre la tierra, y ha golpeado a tantos que es imposible atenderlos adecuadamente, atestando todos nuestros hospitales; y ha demostrado ser mortal en tantos casos que ha sido imposible cavar tumbas con suficiente rapidez para enterrarlos a todos. Nuestra hermosa ciudad ha sufrido enormemente por ello, y ha hecho necesario como medida de precaución cerrar las escuelas, los teatros y las iglesias, y prohibir a toda la población reunirse tanto en interiores como al aire libre". Así hablaba el reverendo Francis Grimké a su congregación de la Iglesia presbiteriana de la calle 15 en Washington DC, a raíz de la pandemia de gripe de 1918 que mató a unos 50 millones de personas en todo el mundo.
>
> (https://elpais.com/cultura/2020/04/03/babelia/1585933284_651296.html)

Carlos was only 64 years old and had no previous pathologies. My parents, besides the sadness, felt the immediate threat and fragility of their own existence. I saw it in their actions of the next days. They were way more careful in all their choices than before. However, they decided to keep living, in the broader sense of the word. It has been really sunny weather lately, so we decided to eat outside, all together, and play games and drink wine, and talk about our friend.

Some days ago, we had an intense talk with the whole family, were some of us ended up crying, a fruit of living together for so long. It seemed so stupid now.

I am desperately trying to find a job to save some money and be able to do an internship I really want to do "when all of this finishes".

> "When all of this finishes... we are all using this sentence lately."

Even talking about the ways in which we will slowly "go back to normality". Another statement we should put in brackets. Yesterday I was seeing this webinar with Naomi Klein and Angela Davis were they discussed and put into question all these expressions. I have sent it to all of my friends.

Another shine of hope and happiness for these days, the band Stay Homas, a group of three Catalan musicians who are confined together. If someone ever reads this, I would really recommend listening to their music as a lockdown soundtrack.

I have to go now to buy groceries for a couple of elders who have decided not to leave the house under any circumstance.

Wednesday, 8 April 2020

> "The forever unachievable to-do list seems for the first time manageable."

I find myself doing all those things I have always said I would do but never actually did. Yesterday I did my first piano lesson via Skype since I was like 12. Today I am starting with Arabic lessons, also online, of course.

Yesterday at dinner, intense family conversation. We are getting out things that were always there but we never actually discussed. Then I call Jack and comment about it with a glass of wine. We laugh and, of course, talk about the situation, this time in more of a philosophical tone.

I try to call my grandma often. She is worried for us, more than for her. She doesn't hear right so phone conversations are quite hard. I would like to see her. And if I see her I would like to be able to hug her. I would also like to hug Lia.

I keep looking for jobs I can do while in quarantine, mostly in hospitals doing administrative work. Nothing.

The spring is coming, every day with more strength. But we are all still locked.

Friday, 10 April 2020

My mother had a cough yesterday and I got very worried. She was okay mentally; she has decided not to live in fear. Today she feels better thanks god. But the fact that my sister is every day going to the clinic makes us all more vulnerable. She is careful but somehow she does not worry too much about disinfecting herself when coming back home, etc.

On the other hand, now the news are starting to talk on how we are going to get out

of the houses little by little. And it seems unlikely. It seems like going back to normal will never be possible. It is incredible how one can so quickly adapt to new ways of living.

I have just finished an article where I wanted to talk about the solidarity actions migrant collectives in Barcelona are leadings. Resistance collective funding to pay rent and food for those who have been left in very precarious circumstances, collection of food and hygiene items: it is the complete opposite to the war language we are surrounded by these days. It is about reminding ourselves that social distancing is a measure for communal care not to enhance individualism and violence.

I mentally feel more settled, more stable, less stressed. The family dynamics are better, more affectionate, less aggressive. The spring has definitely come and we spend a lot of time outside, working in the garden, doing yoga, eating. And then everyone back to their routines.

Saturday, 11 April 2020

Evening: Skype call with my father's entire family. Of course, political discussions. "Politicians do not know how to do things, they will kill us all!" "We should cancel all debt at one!" "That is nonsense!" Spain, Catalonia, who is doing it better. Does it matter? Then all the cousins, including my sister and I, explain our plans for quarantine. I am the only one who is not working. I am working in lots of things, and I have my job at Cal Temerari, but it won't last long,

> "...and even in quarantine I fell that pressure of succeeding in doing your

work.”

Morning: Ping-pong tourney with parents, sister and boyfriends. Easter holiday felt like a real sunny holiday. The town is silent.

Afternoon: Lea asks to do a “distance walk” with me with the excuse to walk her dog. We see each other, and we smile. “We can’t hug” she said. “I know.” We make the gestures of a deep hug and it almost felt like it. We walk towards a little clearing we know where no one will see us. We sit, light a cigarette. And she talks, very softly, about her dad. About the way he passed away and how due to the virus they were not allowed to see him, to do a funeral or have his pertinences. She read the lasts texts he send to his wife, he felt this thing was going to kill him, he couldn’t breath properly. We both cry. Tomorrow they will bury him, only three are allowed and no reading, music or any kind of mourning is permitted. We then talk about how things have to change, without being exactly sure, which things we are talking about. But she will leave Paris, she needs to move back to where she is from, her town, her community, and work from that layer first. I think it is the only layer, from which we can notice any difference in changing the brutal system that has caused this one and so many other deaths.

Sunday, 12 April 2020

Someone send me this quote, right when Enric is back, sharing life with me.

> “Knowing how to be solitary is central to the art of loving. When we can be alone, we can be with others without using them as a means of escape.”

– *bell hooks*

At night, the neighbors do a big party; it definitely feels like a lot of people. But the music is loud and we can't really tell. And no one has said it is not allowed to party in quarantine. My dad does not agree. "People are suffering a lot." It is disrespectful to do such a big party when everyone is doing big efforts or alone at home." I see his point. I think we are all very susceptible, sad and scared. However, is it not good, precisely to cope with those feelings, to have a dance with whoever you are confined? He eventually called the police. I didn't agree. I think we need to care for each other and protect each other in these times, instead of fighting and letting strangers from your neighborhood decide who is behaving and who is not.

Tuesday, 13 April 2020

Assembly with Cal Temerari, they ask me to work for them some more time. They are a cooperative so they are facing a big economic crisis.

Evening, piano lesson. Afternoon, beer in the sun with sister.

Thursday, 16 April 2020

I got an internship for September. God knows what will be happening then. They are starting to say that, on the one hand life will go back to normal in the summer. On the other, they are saying having passed the virus once does not give you complete immunity and they are assuming there will be another rise in autumn. Some are saying we will live in constant lockdown forever, to avoid new pandemics. Two months in quarantine, one out. And no hugs, ever again. My dad and I are starting to give up. What kind of life is this if we can't touch each other, socialize and gather

with lots of people and friends. We think it might be just worth it to risk it if the thing is going to determine our lives like that.

Saturday, 25 April 2020

The weekends have become our little holidays. Otherwise it is true one can't work but also can't have fun really. Once the self-indulgent and self-cultivating activities are done, there is not much more "fun, leisure time" without other people to hang out with that is for sure. So when the boys come home I keep my to-do lists in the drawer and we just enjoy the real free time. My to-do lists, by the way, are full of things, articles, conferences, lessons, job hunting, and cover letters. Plus with my current job it is impossible to have fixed schedules. So this is starting to give me anxiety, managing your own time with all the activities done from home, virtually, is not easy.

I call Imogen who is still in Amsterdam and we talk about the "giving up" theory we have at home, and she seems to agree. If this lasts, lets die having a big feast all together.

Enric and Carlos are very relieved when they come home, they live alone and work and study from home, so they don't see anyone in the whole week.

Tuesday, 21 April 2020

My mom send me a stupid video about someone who is supposedly an epidemiologist and said a bunch of bullshit. This has created a new argument at home. But little by little we are learning to not only respect each other but to appreciate how lucky we are to have each other in these times. I dance with my

mother a few times a week, we do ballet bare together, it brings her back to her twenties, and she looks so beautiful when dancing.

I am planting seeds, the seeds of quarantine, hopefully when they grow, this will all be over. *Girasoles, calabazas, quinoa, maíz…*

Virtual meeting in the afternoon for work. I find myself quite lost, I had only just started to work and after two weeks, the lockdown came so I haven't had the opportunity to really learn how everything works. But I enjoy the job, very much, it is so sad it is only temporary. Choosing between precariousness and unemployment…

It has been raining for days now. In the evening, I went to do a walk in the little forest we have close to our house, under the rain. It felt so good to breathe the wet ground. I thought I wouldn't find anyone, not even people with their dogs. But I crossed twice with individuals that, like me, were enjoying the rain on their own. Anytime I could sense a human figure among the branches, I held my breath and then they appeared with a scared face, because they also thought they had been caught. Then we looked at each other with complicity, we let each other a few meters of space, and we kept walking on our own.

Thursday, 23 April 2020

Today the sun is out again, the birds sing stronger than ever. The earth is healing. From my house, I can hear the water flowing in the typically dry forest.

Today is *Sant Jordi* and, despite the quarantine, there are still thousands of initiatives in all Catalonia to give books and roses and tell the legend to little kids. Also everyone is very pissed with people buying books from Amazon. Local bookshops depend very much on this day economically.

Martina Madaula Munt

Work call with Marta: we are reshaping the podcast. Brainstorming on how to tell migrant stories while in lockdown.

Then skype call with Marta and Clara, years without talking to each other. We manage to skip quite well the thousand theories about the coronavirus and talk about each other.

My sister suffers from lots of stress at the hospital; she is doing a job she is still not qualified to do. She had just finished the studies and now she has life or death cases for her to decide on her own. That makes her quite irascible and tends to affect the family dynamics. My dad considers she need to endure and not complain cause this is the career she has chosen and she is "being paid for it", that makes my sister very angry who blames the system for not having enough resources and having to exploit students to do jobs they are not qualified for and extra hours.

My parents are no longer worried about quarantine, they are tending towards the neoliberal Darwinian theory that whoever is stronger, will survive but life needs to go on. I think I will soon be there.

> "If this is the way we have to live now, I'd rather risk it, I think. I don't know, my mind changes every minute, like everyone else's it seems. And sometimes I don't even want to think about it anymore."

The kids will soon be allowed to go out for small walks, unfortunately in our family there are no dogs, nor kids.

Job-hunting is so maddening.

Friday, 24 April 2020

I literally don't have much to say... writing diaries in quarantine can be very hard. When writing ethnographically during fieldwork my fingers move fast trying to print in the paper all the information my eyes have received during the day, new people, new gestures, new relations, new ways. Here, there is nothing new, there is a lot and there is nothing at the same time. The world around us is in a major crisis, our lives are in a major crisis, in health and economic terms, but still from the house, everything remains the same. My dad with his obsessions, my mom always active, doing things constantly, my sister and I, sometimes the best friends sometimes hating each other. The dreams of each of us haven't changed much either, we keep working to bring our future plans closer. However, on that note, yesterday for the first time my dad accepted he is going to be a whole year without working. Once he accepted it, he became calmer about it. It is crazy they are doing so much investment in all sectors and they keep forgetting about the culture... My older sister, who directs in the theater is even considering switching to another career, "maybe teaching", they said with Dani. Now I am thinking and their dreams are indeed changing, not ours, my parents are too old for it and my sister and me too young.

Today I got an offer to babysit in the summer two kids. The mother was explaining me how she manages to work and care for them at home, she was very tired. This thing affects each of us in a different way. I try to keep reminding myself I can't complain.

Monday, 27 April 2020

Today it was my grandma's birthday. Her wish was "*que se muera el virus*!". We were

all the family together on Zoom. She could barely hear us, but I think she was happy to see us. My older sister was there with her to help her with technology, with the whole uniform of mask and gloves. Who would have told us this was going to be the new normality?

A couple of days ago I was talking to a friend who was completely reluctant to be responsible with lockdown. Then I become the strictest person. But when someone is strict I tend towards a more relaxed posture.

The end of lockdown is coming closer. In the news, they are telling all the different strategies we will follow to go out in the streets. First kids (which is already happening and some streets of Barcelona where incredibly full...), then sport and small walks, then going together with your family in the car, then friends, visits, etc. We are all afraid of a virus' outbreak, but living daily you want to forget about the fear and just pretend all this did not happen, and won't happen again.

All the NGO's I contact to intern for in the summer are having to close or cut on personnel, so I see it as really difficult to find a job in my field after this pandemic. I try not to think a lot about it and focus on my daily activities, but it does give me anxiety.

Our garden is bigger and prettier than ever, despite the snakes. It is an activity we do together in the weekends, the six of us forgetting the little fights and grudges that we have been accumulating throughout the week.

Carlos and Enric say when we are back on the terrace of a bar, everyone will cheers together and it will be unforgettable. My sister and I are less optimistic and picture the image of everyone moving their chairs to be not close to their neighbors...

The couple of elders I used to buy groceries for have not contacted me for a while. I reached them to see if they were well and they were. So I think they have decided to leave the house to buy food. My uncle said the other day, "*som mediterranis, tenim*

fugues" meaning in a Mediterranean country it is impossible to pretend lockdown will be done perfectly. I have the feeling everyone is tired of this and just wants to go back to their lives even if that means to risk them.

Wednesday, 29 April 2020

The end of lockdown is coming soon. Spain is doing it its own way, in four phases that are flexible depending on the number of deaths and infected people (https://elpais.com/sociedad/2020-04-28/el-gobierno-evita-marcar-fechas-para-la-desescalada-y-se-concentra-en-fases-y-marcadores.html). No one expected such a fast process; they are even talking about cinemas and theatres opening in the summer. My parents are happy, but also quite astonished. They, who were the ones that complained the most, even think it is too early to open large venues. Now it looks like we are moving towards the disaster, which they have called the "nueva normalidad". Some people are in favor, many people are not and they question why we are not following other European countries' steps.

> "Some of the plans I had are starting to be plausible again."

I am really looking forward to seeing Marta and having a beer with her while we organize the podcast, also going to do bouldering, seems it will be possible soon, and gathering all together, no hugs though.

Martina Madaula Munt

Friday, 1 May 2020

Today I haven't slept well. I dreamt my sister had corona from being in the hospital working and…. To be honest I am not sleeping well in these last days of quarantine. Lots of anxious thoughts and feelings, being at home all day and not having a proper routine are all things that make it harder to sleep well.

Yesterday Lia came home. She needed to rest. She was tired of condolence looks with hands on her shoulder, of being at home with her family reading papers that meant nothing. She needed to not be asked about her father. So I didn't ask. We sat on the terrace, with enough distance. I still have not hugged her. It was not the first time we were doing something illegal. And now, that the measure will soon be less strict, it even felt we were doing the right thing. My mom later on asked. "We know for sure she has been in contact with someone that had the virus." But maybe we have all been in contact. She needed to get out of the house, and laugh, like in so many hours we've spent together like this in our lives. So we did. And her dad appeared in the conversation very naturally, without forcing it, just through anecdotes, stories, memories. Then I had to run, I had a Zoom meeting. My parents had just had a fight; I could see it in their actions, their words and their looks when I got back inside the house. It was because of Lea. I had dinner very quickly and ran upstairs. I did not want to be part of the argument. I talked for some time with my friends from Amsterdam. It was very nice. I really miss them.

In the morning, I had a training session for the EASA conference. People from all over the world trying to figure out how to live the conference experience through a program that is kind of a Zoom but more complex and allows many people. I didn't expect it, but I enjoyed it. I guess being it the first conference in which I participate it is a nice exercise doing it from home. In the afternoon, I have my lessons, Arabic and some piano training. I'll do some work for *Cal Temerari*, this is my last week. Then Enric and Carlos will come, like every weekend.

Martina Madaula Munt

[1] *Original communication in Spanish, translated into English by the author.*