



Multidimensionale Risks in the XXI Century

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Paper Title- *Hazards in Risk Society: A Comparative Study on the Ecological Disaster of Chernobyl and Covid-19 Pandemic*

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Abstract

This paper provides a comparative analysis of the Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster of 1986 and the Corona Virus Pandemic of 2019. The two calamities have caused and continue to cause a global crisis that have, in a risk society, unleashed a state of *ontological insecurity*. Placing Ulrich Beck's understanding of social life in risk society, the paper begins at interrogating hazardous substances as symbols of culture. I compare strontium-90 and coronavirus as substances and analyse the cultural ways in which it manifests itself as risks within the individual realm. This creates a sense of ontological insecurity affecting the self. What happens to these substance-induced bodies; the ones that are affected and the ones that survive? Corporeal embodiment of risks produces a calculus of ontological insecurity. Using Merlau-Ponty's idea of body as *phantom limb*, *as-object* and *as-subject*, I demonstrate the dismemberment of the affected and surviving bodies. Beck's ideas on *anthropological shock* offer a critical insight into locating memory and perceptiveness of individual in a risk society. Bourdieu's idea on the forms of capital aid in understanding the future of individual survival in the 'new normal'. While at the individual level such social and corporeal negotiations are carried out, where in this 'new normal' is the State? A risk society is one where the State works together with science and economy to produce an idea of development. Chernobyl and the Pandemic are products of the failed *techno-economic* interests of the State. How did States deal with the 'new normal' when their idea of development failed? I answer this by taking a closer look at the policies and decisions of the USSR and the Indian State, in dealing with the 'new normal.' Finally, I conclude the essay by locating the ways in which risks get institutionalised into continuity and hence, restores ontological security and State power.

Keywords: Hazards, Ontological Insecurity, Corporeal Embodiment, New Normal, State Power.