



Call for papers

Words of the "city" in times of pandemics

*Discussion forum on being citizens in "normal times" and in times of "emergency"
(drawing on the languages that articulate both conditions)*

This call opens a space for discussion on issues linked to the exceptional and ongoing experience of the **pandemic**: on its human, psychological, political-institutional, legal, social, economic, ideological, and ideal repercussions. All these aspects are intertwined with the plots that "**narrate**" our experiences.

How does the experience of these days affect our conscience? What are the words and the ideas through which we believe to be able to express this experience?

What problems arise within the organisational models we live in, and how do they affect the habits that almost as a second nature regulate our daily lives? How can we profoundly revise the entire system that governs our behaviour, rights and duties, and why should we?

At present, the "narration" of the human condition finds tonal extensions, ranging from the elaboration of individual and collective pain to the complex representation of increasing problems. Moreover, it largely involves social strata and generations, from the elderly to young children.

Different languages, which are technical and scientific, coldly statistical, poignantly painful yet extraordinarily human, seem to work side by side to create a perception of solidarity and compact unity, despite the difficulty of making controversial choices. The – textual, visual and acoustic – media that convey them simultaneously "contaminate" them.

The war against the enemy is too demanding to face the challenges of "dialogue" in order to enhance the performative content of diversity. We now limit ourselves to adopt irrelevant, "common" words derived from an "ancient", acquired culture (in its widest range: ethic, legal, political, religious).

However, the question has been raised whether the current state of exception – required by the emergency situation – is in line with the elaboration and historical development of the modern-contemporary paradigm of power: whether the "exceptional" feature of the current exercise of legislative powers and emergency decrees will promptly end, as soon as the emergency becomes less urgent, and what we believed to be democratic certainties will be restored.

By contrast, a vocabulary of the crisis (or rather, of *this* crisis) emerges, entering the linguistic game that intersects "city" and "citizenship" with the new perception of the global that has been induced by the pandemic.

Some words are in vogue again, becoming almost "viral" (e.g. community, emergency, responsibility, homeland, solidarity, etc.), others enter common discourse with caution (e.g. constitution, individual rights), while still others have almost disappeared (e.g. humanity, which is paradoxical, considering the poverty of the concept as treated in the Treccani's list of "worthwhile words").

We could think of the following words, without however connecting them in an order that might suggest interpretative paths:

Fear/Anguish; Normality; Solitude; Isolation; Solidarity; Community; Homeland; Nation; Home; Neighbourhood; Cooperation; Adequacy; Political Opposition / role of political opposition; Truth; Communication; Science; Technique / role of technicians; Constitution / dialogue between government and parliament; Emergency; Complexity; Rule; Exception; Discipline; Debt; Freedom; Free movement; Autonomy; Responsibility; Individual rights / fundamental rights; Heroism; Safety; (Civil) Protection; Volunteering, Poverty, Hunger.

Finally, we could add "Farewell" to the list: that farewell that was denied to the many who died in isolation / loneliness, those we know and those we don't know, so that if we mourn the sad reality of the crisis today, tomorrow we will forget it, the moment we are no longer faced with the painful counting ceremony.

And then there are other words, as well as the clusters that they generate in each particular language:

see / invisible; know; power; equality; vulnerability; generation; mourning; quantify / numbers.

Dialogues will emerge with asperity from the cluster of meanings.

We must also investigate a fundamental dichotomy, namely that between full life and bare life; according to Agamben, this is a biopolitical dichotomy, as reconsidered in the debate on posthumanism, which has at its centre the renewed challenge between "hard" sciences and human sciences.

We welcome testimonies conveyed through different languages: analytical, literary (in its various forms), video-photographic, and any other expressive forms in which all this is revealed as something that is part of a "public" discourse, invested by that private – very private – sphere that is constituted by disease, death, bare life; and vice versa, as part of a "private" discourse heavily conditioned by public regulations and needs.

All these issues will form the starting point for an elaboration of interpretations and projects, aimed at comparing know-how and paradigms available on the knowledge market.

Participation

The call is addressed to the age group that constitutes the Study Centre's target (up to 35 years old). We invite:

- Essays/monographs on specific topics;

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- Papers;
- testimonies, short texts, personal accounts of witnessed or directly experienced events and related emotions, also conveyed through different expressive forms (e.g. poetry, theatre, video, narrative, various types of graphic works).

Deadline for submission of contributions is 15 June 2020.

Contributions must be accompanied by a short CV, and should be sent to:

centrostudicultgiov@gmail.com

Texts must be submitted in double format, Word and PDF, Font: 12pt Times New Roman. For formatting and bibliography please use Harvard Style.

Photos should be sent in JPEG format, high definition.

Videos should be sent in a format readable by basic video players.

Admitted languages: Italian and English.

Publication and Forum

A scientific committee will communicate its critical evaluation to the authors and may decide to publish the contributions in a special section of the Centre's Digital Library (<https://www.centroculturagiovanile.eu/library/>).

The selected authors will be invited to take part in the discussion forum via videoconference, with participation of exponents from the world of culture, experts, and technicians.

Scientific Committee

Prof. Gabriella Valera (Direttore scientifico del Centro)

Dr. Dario Castellaneta (iSDC)

Prof. Avvocato Guglielmo Cevolin (Università di Udine)

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