

Living the catastrophe of breathing, between utopia and dystopia

Vivere la catastrofe del respiro, tra utopia e distopia

Viver a catastrofe da respiração entre utopia e distopia

How are we to live in times of crisis? And how can philosophy and the social sciences help us to navigate times in which we are acutely exposed to death, individually and collectively? What kinds of attitudes can these disciplines help us to develop in the face of fear and the risk – always present when fear becomes a collective phenomenon – that society will be completely destroyed? How to develop a critical attitude in a moment of great personal and social incertitude, especially in the face of phenomena – well described by Foucault – where a power or a specific scientific discipline seeks to take conducting society upon itself, outside of the established rules and in the context of an emergency?

These are questions that are prompted by the recent pandemic crisis, or rather they are questions with which, in the end, mankind is inevitably confronted in the face of catastrophes (whether ‘natural’ or manmade). In addition, these are questions that have long be posed to us by the dramatic ecological and political crisis faced by our planet. In this sense, the 2020 Pandemic seems to have functioned as an apocalyptic catalyst for the many crises already affecting our globalized society, revealing the weaknesses, the hidden lines of conflict, the «lack of breath» that have long affected the world as we know it. When this world enters a new age, an entire cultural horizon must deal with itself, with its techniques for surviving and rethinking. How are we to conceive, for instance, of the relation between «economy» and «ecology», starting with the moment at which the domestic sphere, the home – the *oikos* – increasingly becomes a space in which the uncertainty of existence is contained, and the moment at which the public sphere is also ultimately contained?

Our ways of reflecting on the future have immediate effects on the present. Utopia and dystopia (or negative utopias) are in this sense two ways of imagining anew – in the areas of philosophy, the social sciences and the arts – and of reshaping our collective and individual conditions of living.

The *Thomas Project* seeks to trace the pandemic through a map of readings and a map of questions. Starting from these two heterotopic archives, which allow us to follow different

knowledges that are confronting each other in the current catastrophic moment, in this issue we aim to reflect on ways of living that are unlike our previous modes – new paths that allow us all to breathe. The starting point for this task involves questioning the role we can imagine for the humanities as instruments of research directly connected to the concrete experience of life, as producers of techniques of life, and as generators of questions that are able to bring us together beyond the uncertainty of the present.

In behalf of *Thomas Project's* Editorial Team

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