

## What is happening today?

The historical period that we are living today will be studied by the future generations as a period of great chaos, in which every single person's routine has been upset by a terrible (and almost unknown) pandemic called "Coronavirus" or, more specifically "Covid – 19". Among all the "issues" that we have been forced to face since the beginning of the year (we remember the "almost WWII" and the terrible fires that damaged the Australian territory), this is absolutely the worst one because its diffusion cannot be controlled and many people, especially the old ones, live with the constant risk to get sick and not be able to recover.

This period of "anxiety", in which everyone does not know how to behave, could be compared to the one that English citizens lived right after the end of the Victorian Age and the following destruction of the values that this period had instituted in people's daily life; this is the period of the "yellow nineties", a period of madness and instability where everyone felt lost and was forced to eliminate every single aspect of a life that was considered just perfect, a life based on the supremacy of the English "race" over the underdeveloped ones and their commitment to educate them (the white man's burden). Even though these two historical periods might be connected for what concerns the fact of being constantly in a puzzled mood, the causes of the general troubles are completely different: in the yellow nineties people were not affected by a global illness and the government didn't demand them to stay home; what they had to face was a "simple" change of mind (that led to some important new theories about time and space), a simple change of their attitude toward a completely new life in which the single individual was not the "main character" anymore, but he was only a member of those groups that will be called "masses".

We are living in a kind of "paralysed" world (as James Joyce would say), a world which is focused on what he was able to do before but now seems to have stopped; it is interesting if we think about the change in everyone's mind: we have moved from a desperate desire to stay home and relax (without going to school or to work), to the primary need to go out of our houses that start appearing to us as a kind of jail. If I had the chance to add another chapter into Eliot's work "The Waste Land", I would describe one more contrast: the one between the people we used to be and the people we will be after this tough period of time.

What is happening these days is a period of complete isolation of every single country in the world: no more physical contact, no more crowds and, most importantly, it has been revoked the possibility to go out, unless you have a special permit. Is it right to forbid people from going out for a walk or from having the possibility to meet their friends or even to meet their own relatives? The answer is definitely yes: all of us must follow those rules created for our own safety and it is not acceptable that someone decides to behave differently. What we have been demanded to do is necessary to protect our parents, our grandparents and all those people who are extremely vulnerable in front of a disease; according to the daily updates, we are just at the beginning and we still have to wait both to get comfortable with this situation and to find other ways to spend our days without meeting anyone. In my personal opinion we shouldn't be selfish and we should just apply that sense of solidarity and care that everyday is taught to us at school or during our daily experiences: a sense of solidarity that Pope Francis himself has been talking about for a long time since he was first nominated as the head of the Church, but a solidarity that has disappeared at the very first beginning of this situation, when the illness had not arrived in our country yet and all foreign people were seen as enemies and as dangerous "elements". Where is the sense of responsibility in those people who prefer living their young lives and decide to ignore every kind of advice with the goal of appearing

superior to the illness itself? Maybe they are just convinced that this big enigma in which we are living since a few weeks cannot hit them or it is only a “big lie” created for an unknown reason, but the truth is that we must confide in the ability of all those doctors and people educated for these kind of situations and follow all their suggestions, even when they say that, for a quite long period of time, we should not have any kind of contact with the external world.

If we think about this “apocalypse” (as called by some kind of “extremists”), it will be possible to find some good aspects besides all the negative ones that today are damaging our lives and our country’s life which, since the closure of every kind of activity is having many problems from both the economical and social point of view. In this period characterized by the lack of activities and a common sense of loneliness, it seems obvious that we have more time to reflect on ourselves and on those people that surround us everyday but that, in the end, we were not used to see so much; I am talking about families that used to be real families only at dinner or on vacations, when they had free time from work and they were free to spend some time with their beloved sons or daughters. How many things do we discover everyday about the people who live with us? Of course, maybe not everyday, but there are always some aspects of the others that we discover only by living with them and this fact does not mean that what we discover is only pleasant, but, most of the time, it is the opposite and it leads to several arguments that strengthen our relationship with the people we love.

This time for reflection could also be spent thinking about those people we cannot see anymore and that we are missing. This is a chance to understand how much we care about a person and maybe also to understand if we are loved in the same way; how many calls, messages or even letters are we receiving these days? How many hours have we already spent talking about nothing or remembering things happened in the past? A lot. And it is exactly this simple answer that makes you aware of how difficult it is to stop doing everything you were used to, that makes you reflect on some past experiences about which your only thought is “I would like to have enjoyed that moment a little more than I actually had”; because what we really have to do is to learn from this “unusual experience” that sometimes we do not live the moment enough and we just make it pass or, even worse, we just hope that it passes as soon as possible.

If we give another look to the past it is possible to see all the many “ages of anxiety” that our grandparents or just our ancestors have experienced during the course of their lives; imagine living in their historical period, without having the chance to hear from our friends or our relatives, who live far from us, for very long periods of time. How would we feel in a context in which we cannot send messages or call those people, but we can just write letters and hope that they will receive them as soon as possible? It would be such a completely different situation that we could not possibly imagine it and, according to this, we only should thank for what we have and, of course, maybe in the future there will be teleportation, but until that moment we should be glad for what we have, especially for having the chance to have immediate news of people we love.

According to the news that everyday we hear on TV or we read on the newspaper (at this point exclusively online), there are different thoughts and discussions about the origin of this illness that is scaring almost every single person in the world; many people believe that it derives from an old illness called SARS that hit our countries some years ago, while others (once again the extremists) are convinced that it is only a kind of chemical weapon created to destroy China’s economy. Without discussing about the truth of these statements, it is impressive and really inspiring to see those people that everyday go to work with the aim of saving human lives, even while risking their own safety: I am talking about doctors, nurses and also cops who, everyday, use all their knowledge and “power” to defeat the illness. My personal thought goes to the families of every single doctor or nurse that everyday see their loved ones go to work running all the risks linked to it; how many of them have stopped touching their sons/daughters or their wives because scared to infect them (also

because the lack of hygienic equipment necessary for the protection of the person)? This action might be considered not necessary, but that is what many doctors do with the purpose to protect the others from a possible infection. So imagine how stressful the lives of those families have become, not only because of the commitment to stay at home, but also because of a possible illness that may attack them anytime; these are the people, in my opinion, that mostly have to follow the rules and stay home until the end of this quarantine we are living.

Everyday, since the command to stay at home, thousands of people keep going out without a reason or just without a primary need (among those given by the government), but they decide to be selfish without caring about those people who might be affected by them. This period is complicated for all of us and sometimes a short walk in the park situated just below our house is what we need, also because living close with the same two/three people everyday may become very difficult, but we have to stay strong and accept these tough conditions of life.

In conclusion I would like to talk about the differences between our country and the other ones during these days of isolation; there are many news about the total closure of the airports or about the impossibility for Italian people first and European ones then, to be accepted in other parts of the world, because dangerous for the safety of people. How many Italian tourists have been sent back to their native country? And how many of them, once arrived abroad (maybe just for a few days of vacation) have been forced to do some days of quarantine even if they were not infected? So many. This fear of the unknown that the other countries have shown towards Italian (or European) people is fully understandable, but in some cases it should have been less rude and less discriminating.

Acts of discrimination happen everyday and our country has been the place of some shameful events that have been immediately condemned: I am talking about prejudiced actions led towards Asian people at the very beginning of the chaos that is now diffused all over the world. All these people who commit such terrible actions, must be immediately punished since it is not acceptable anymore that a person should be discriminated because of their native country; we still have to learn that not every action can be controlled and sometimes the only thing we can do is to reduce its effect as much as possible and the violence is definitely the worst way to do so. But our country has also been one of the first of the whole world to understand the possible danger connected to this illness and it has been the first one (in Europe) to demand a total closure of all the facilities, except for the ones that are extremely necessary. Following our example other countries have decided to apply the same safety measures too, in order to limit the diffusion of the virus; countries (like France) that made fun of our initial condition and that now are in the same exactly conditions except for what concerns the treatments since we are a little more prepared.

We have to understand that there are not differences between countries anymore: we are all living in the same way and we have to be able to find new hobbies like cooking, painting or reading that could reduce the boredom of our new daily life; a life that will soon return to be a normal one thanks to everyone's commitment to stay at home and respect all the necessary rules.

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