



**HOME RENAISSANCE FOUNDATION
WORKING PAPERS
Number 87**

**The Home: A Creative Laboratory during Covid-19
Maria Chiara de Nardo**

Paper delivered at Home Renaissance Foundation V International Conference: "Happy Homes, Happy Society? The contribution of domestic life in a time of social changes",
Online due to Covid19 measures, 12-13 November 2020

The Home: A Creative Laboratory during Covid-19 **Maria Chiara de Nardo**

Abstract

Despite the numerous studies that explore the potential of dwelling, the impact of the home on quality of life, well-being and happiness of men justifies renewed and ever more in-depth research in this area.

This study aims to examine the domestic environment in relation to a particular existential condition: the crisis, in order to show how the experience of pain can become a means to creativity and generativity. In fact, borderline situations are known to often be the prerequisite for the flourishing of new ways of expressing oneself.

Based on several examples borrowed from the Covid-19 emergency, the first aim of this paper is to try and highlight the potential the home has to turn into an "art laboratory", while investigating the concept of art starting from the notion of creativity, and examining its multiple symbolic meanings. Secondly, this work underlines how these acts of creativity can become chances for renewed and strengthened relationships. Finally, we will focus on the inner response of self-discovery, experimentation and inventiveness that can arise from a period of isolation and suffering experienced at home. This study adopts a phenomenological approach inspired by Natoli's phenomenology of pain (Natoli, 1987), combined with Frankl's thought around self-transcendence (Frankl, 1977) and Recalcati's arguments about mourning and lack (Recalcati, 2016).

The analysis shows an exuberance of initiatives such as competitions organized by artists to raise funds, the conversion of companies to the production of masks, the organization of video calls to celebrate the birthdays of distant relatives, the availability of free online readings, lessons and tutorials, and more. These phenomena designate a generative response to lockdown: a creative flair open to solidarity. Behind this effervescent picture we can find an inner generativity, an existential process that arises from stasis, silence, and slowed daily rhythms. In the intimate experience of pain, man tends to develop new poetic skills that allow him to question and reinterpret existential dimensions such as everyday life, time, freedom and work.

The home, therefore, even if inhabited in dramatic and forced conditions, can be the fertile ground to creatively reconstitute one's identity, so that one can transform even the painful experience into a way of intelligence (Natoli, 1987), a

work of growth, of re-learning and rewriting oneself (Cyrulnick, 2007). Starting from a condition that requires staying at home one can, therefore, rediscovers his home, enhance his domestic life, appreciate new times of life, develop new ways of working and staying in touch with loved ones. The results of the following study may prove useful for education and care professionals dealing with people who suffered directly or indirectly from the isolation due to confinement at home or in the hospital. The aim is to provide them with a starting point to read and enhance the experiences of pain and crisis through a phenomenological perspective focused on creative experience.

***Full Paper awaiting publication**