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## THE PANDEMIC IN CHILDREN’S BOOKS: TOWARD A HYPER-MODERN SOCIETY? THE ITALIAN CASE\*

**Introduction:** The paper analyses some children’s books printed in Italy in the last two years in order to tell and explain to children the COVID-19 pandemic, assuming that the national case could be compared or generalized to the publishing markets of other countries. The starting hypothesis was that our time is characterized by a deep change in grounding values.

**Research Aim:** The research aims to identify the recurrent themes offered to the attention of children during the pandemic, trying to understand on which ideas of society and human co-existence they are conceived.

**Method:** The research has been carried out by reading the main children’s books published on the pandemic issue and considering the national simultaneous political and cultural debate on the measures adopted to contain the virus spreading.

**Results:** With some remarkable exceptions, children’s books were strictly focused on health aspects and on the contagion prevention, rather than on more educational matters, often ignoring the youngsters’ sufferance of the two last years, when children were not allowed to go to school, to meet friends and to have a normal social life.

**Conclusions:** The analysis seems to confirm the starting hypothesis of a deep change in common sense and in the main values. The pandemic is maybe the turning point of a historical process which started on September 11, 2001, that I suggest to connect to the concept of “hyper-modern”, introduced in the early hyper 2000s to signaling the running out of the post-modernist point of view.

**Keywords:** children’s books, COVID-19 pandemic, Italy, hyper-modernity, science.

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## INTRODUCTION

If our lives are changed for a long time by the pandemic event of COVID-19, children will be undoubtedly the most struck. Their everyday routine has been violently shaken and subverted: they have been torn away from their friends and schoolmates, obliged to attend school at distance, and often they were not allowed to meet their grandparents. School classes were replaced by online lessons, during which attention was often scarce and the solitude heavy to bear. Statistics notice a remarkable increase in suicide attempts and in self-harm practices among the teenager youth.

Children will never forget these two years and so we will do, of course, with different degrees of awareness. But we must admit that we cannot foresee how children will elaborate this experience as adults, in their future political and social decisions, and how they will judge the way the pandemic was managed. I sincerely fear a radicalization of our youth in the next decades, as a consequence of the impoverishing of democracy in these two years and as a reaction to the actual injustice with which their childhood has been treated.

Beginning to write this paper, I must confess, as a pledge of honesty, that I share only a little of the procedures adopted in Italy to face the pandemic emergency by the two governments led by Giuseppe Conte (September 5, 2019 – February 13, 2021) and Mario Draghi, the last still in charge while I am writing. I think that the damages caused to economy, but above all to democratic life and even to our psychological health, will be largely worse than the benefits achieved, if any. According to Agamben (2021), one among the very few intellectuals that have raised their voices against the rules implemented by the Italian authorities, I believe that health, *per se*, is only a relative worth, for which we should not sacrifice our fundamental freedoms, on which we built our societies. Agamben recently wrote:

The first thing that the panic wave which has paralysed the country clearly shows, is that our society does not believe any more in anything but in bare life.<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that Italians are ready to sacrifice almost all, ordinary life conditions, social relationships, job, even their friendships, the loved ones and religious and political beliefs for the danger to get sick. (2021, p. 17)

Politics in Italy, because of the state of emergency officially declared on January 31, 2020 (and at this moment, in January 2022, lengthened at least to March 31), is undergoing a dangerous suspension of the normal democratic process, and ordinary freedoms are seriously restricted, without the possibility to foresee when the situation will come back to normality. Agamben writes:

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<sup>1</sup> The Italian original text says *nuda vita*, literally “naked life”. The texts are translated into English by the author of this paper.

A society living in a perpetual emergency cannot be a free society. [...] What that worries is not at most and not only the present, but the further. As wars left as legacy to peace a variety of ominous technologies, from barbed wire to nuclear power stations, it is very likely that they will try to continue some experiments that governments did not reach to achieve also after the sanitary emergency. (2021, p. 18)

There is no more contrast among political parties, that support the government almost unanimously, no more parliamentary debate, very few critical positions in media and press, that use to comment the government measures, the most extreme too, sometime even with enthusiasm. When the distance from the events, in some years, will permit to consider with more serenity the experiences, in which we are now plunged, analysing media and the cultural production of our days, historians in the future would notice the anomaly of the uniformity in communication, that, instead to educate to critical thinking, aims to melt the individuals into the mass and to involve them in a great project (Canetti, 1960) that today is the fight against Sars-Cov-2, but that could change in the next years, defining new political aims. Probably the climate change and the defence of the environment will represent the emergencies in the next future.

At the moment, we can be surprised that, although the great success of Foucault's theories (1975) on control society and biopolitics, long-lastingly worldwide discussed in universities, almost nobody, either in academic milieu, seems to be worried by the reduction of freedom spaces and by some authoritarian impulses. It may be useful to read again Esposito's *Immunitas* (2002) (and also its precedent *Communitas*, 1998):

When politics takes on life as object of direct intervention, it ends to reduce it to a state of absolute immediacy. [...] That is like if politics, in order to face life, would need to deprive it of any qualitative dimension, to make it "just life", "plain life", "naked life". (Esposito, 2002, pp. 17–18)

This paradigm could have decisive implications in pedagogy and education: "The relationship between me and the other – between the immune one and the common – is represented in terms of a destruction, that in the end tends to involve the both into the conflict" (Esposito, 2002, p. 21).

Starting from their Latin etymology, Esposito explains how the two terms – *immunitas* and *communitas* – are in opposition: a suggestion that may be important to have present. In the following pages I will try to show how the educational paradigm, that the pandemic may have produced, seems to be more concentrated on hygiene and health safety, rather than on social bonds or, we could also say, more focused on "immunity" rather than on "community". And it is maybe an axiological paradigm that concerns not only the emergency months of Sars-Cov-2, but the next future decades.

## RESEARCH AIM AND METHOD

I think that a fruitful perspective to analyse how the emergency has been perceived and, above all, which values and practices have been particularly promoted, is to read books and magazines addressed to children, because of their intrinsic and necessary clarity and conciseness. A book conceived to be read by a child (or with a child) must avoid complexity and it expresses unambiguously the message the author means the most urgent, with simple words, convenient examples and with persuasive narrations. I have reviewed some of the main works published in Italy in the last months, with an analysis approach of qualitative type, in order to classify the primary elements of what we could name the “social pedagogy” of the COVID-19 pandemic. I have identified the most sold books and the ones printed by the main national publishing houses and then I have observed who the authors are, on which aspects they focus, which style they adopt, trying to sum up the “pedagogical code”, that seems to be promoted among the youngsters facing the medical emergency, but also in a more general perspective. In facts, we can infer that some suggestions do not seem to respond just to the present conjuncture, but they hint to long-term horizon, that implies a wider change in everyday habits.

Probably the book that got the highest success among the audience, due to the reputation and the notoriety of its author, is *Ti conosco mascherina* (Capua, 2020a), written by the well-known scientist, specialised in veterinary medicine, Ilaria Capua, formerly member of the Italian Parliament (2013–2016) and currently a researcher at the University of Florida, almost permanently present on Italian TV channels in the early months of the pandemic emergency, because of her past researches about the avian influenza, for which, at that time, she became popular to the largest audience.

The title is hard to translate: literally it means “I know you, little mask”, but “ti conosco, mascherina” quotes a famous Italian nursery rhyme about Carnival, and it is often used to joke around children, affirming the knowledge of their real hidden nature and what they actually think, even whether they pretend otherwise and to keep some secrets. Capua, of course, here refers to the surgical mask.

It is a colourful hardback book with holes, levers and windows to open, published by La Coccinella (“The Ladybird”), the first publishing house to produce this sort of books in Italy since the 1970s. The book, of which the main character is a young girl, begins explaining in an easy but incisive way, coronavirus nature and how it spilled over from animals to human beings (that concerns the author’s main competence, by the way, Dr. Capua is a veterinarian): this was the most accredited hypothesis, before the speculation about its artificial origins in the laboratory of Wuhan. Then there are some pieces of advice for preventing the spreading and protect oneself and other people, especially the weakest ones.

The book is, overall, a valid object, both on the editorial and on the pedagogic side, but with the limits I have already reported, which are the same for all the publications I saw. Its main concern seems to be simply disciplinary and precautionary, as if the biggest challenge for children would be just hygienic and not existential. However, in my frank opinion, *Ti conosco mascherina* has been above all a sly commercial operation that exploited the reputation of a well-known personality present for a long time on the main Italian media, in whom ordinary people trust more for her political and television fame rather than for her scientific competence, that, of course, is not questioned. Capua has also written a book for adult people, *Il dopo. Il virus che ci ha costretto a cambiare mappa mentale* [*Afterwards. The Virus, Which Forced Us to Alter Mental Map*] (Capua, 2020b).

I take here the opportunity to highlight that the great majority of the book characters I met are girls. Girls, I believe, are more and more often the protagonists of numerous novels and films written and produced in the last years. The main reason, probably, could be that this is a sort of compensation for the absolute traditional male predominance in the past decades, but maybe this happens also because girls are perceived as more trustworthy and more compliant in accepting new rules, and are considered more naturally social than boys: so they can be presented as models. This idea can be true even if very often female characters are shown as rebels or nonconformists, odd and eccentric, usually refusing the traditional roles that the society set for them. Nowadays heroines are no more princesses or fairies, who accept passively to be rescued by knights and to marry a prince, but they act directly in order to realise their dreams and to achieve their own targets. But precisely in this refuse of tradition and in the subversion of the old rules lays the new educative paradigm, which is arranging a new normality, a new obedience, a new need for compliance. So, if boys were the vanguard of 20<sup>th</sup>-century ideologies, sometime tragically, girls are the pacers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and Greta Thunberg seems to be just the most known character of this new epic.

I can confirm my hypothesis, reading, among others, *Il Dottor Li e il virus con in testa una corona* [*Doctor Li and the Virus With a Crown on Its Head*] (Cavallo, 2021), written by Francesca Cavallo and illustrated by Claudia Flandoli in a vague manga style. The text was originally freely available on Cavallo's personal website and then published, by the well-known progressive publisher Feltrinelli, after a crowd-funding action. Cavallo had already achieved international fame thanks to *Storie della buonanotte per bambine ribelli* [*Bed-Time Tales for Rebel Girls*] (2018), which sold hundreds of thousands of copies worldwide. She wrote it together with Elena Favilli, drafting a kind of feminist encyclopaedia which collects a hundred short biographies (per volume) of different women (the third book [2020] is specially dedicated to migrant women, the fourth to "Italian extraordinary women", 2021). The selection is really wide and various, including, at the same time, Serena

Williams and Rita Levi Montalcini, Malala Yousafzai and Frida Kahlo, Margherita Hack and Michelle Obama, all proposed as different models to emulate. Some of mottoes with which the books have been advertised were: “Once upon a time there was a young girl who dreamt of... marrying a charming prince? No, of going to Mars!” and “To the rebel girls of the world: the story you cannot find out in the book, is the one you are already writing”. Elena Favilli (2021) has recently published *Guida per bambine ribelli. Alla scoperta del corpo che cambia* [A Guide for Rebel Girls at the Discovery of Their Altering Body], a progressive handbook about puberty and growth. “Rebel girls” hence became a rich brand to exploit, with a great deal of audience understanding, and were the sign of a profound change in common sense.

Coming back to *Il Dottor Li e il virus con in testa una corona* – this book, similarly to *Ti conosco mascherina*, clearly points at trust in science as the only way to go through the emergency. This book is addressed to an older audience (aged 8–12 years), so the attention is not focused just on prevention and rules, but also on some civic values to enforce. Dr. Li Wenliang, the Chinese scientist from Wuhan, who was the first to denounce the virus spreading, is frankly presented as a martyr of the scientific new worship, almost a secular saint for our days and similarly other scientists (*scienziate*, “women scientist”, mum says) at work in order to find out the origin of the virus, a vaccine and a therapy.

The author insists also on the possibility of an active role for children, apart from the pandemic, desiring a “fairer world”. It is properly a call to action, where the pandemic seems to be just a pretext, an excuse to do active politics. Dr. Wenliang and Greta Thunberg have very few in common, but in this vision they fight on the same side, for science and against obscurantism, prejudice, economic liberalism and the exploitation of the planet resources. Therefore, doubting the measures adopted against COVID-19 becomes fatal next to questioning scientific progress, but also environmental concerns and even social justice, peace and international cooperation and security. In this way, a new system of values is emerging. And values, by definition, are not questioned, values demand faithful adherence and obedient compliance.

Less ambitious and much less ideological, addressed to children in pre-school age, are the two little books by Nicole Vascotto published by Scienza Express, *Laila e il coronavirus* (2020a) and its sequel *Laila, il coronavirus e la mascherina. Torniamo a scuola!* [*Laila, the Corona-Virus and the Mask. Back to School!*] (2020b). Also here, the main character is a girl. In the first volume, mummy explains to Laila, a four-year-old child, why she cannot attend the infant school, because of the coming of a new mysterious disease. The second one just clarifies how to restart everyday life safely, keeping distance and wearing masks. The idea of publishing the first book came after the author, an architect and designer, actually a mother of a young girl, posted some sketches on Facebook that soon became viral and



appreciated among infant schools teachers. The contents are very simple, but the drawings are colourful and joyful.

After the success of these two little books, the character of Laila has been the protagonist twice more in *Laila e gli orsi* [*Laila and the Bears*] (2021a) and in *Laila scopre l'Italia* [*Laila Discovers Italy*] (2021b), both published again by Scienza Express, a small publisher based in Trieste, focused on science divulgation, in the series "Piccoli scienziati crescono" ["Little Scientists Are Growing Up"].

Another very simple work, but released by one of the biggest Italian publishing houses, Rizzoli, which owns the most-read newspaper in the country, *Corriere della Sera*, is an illustrated e-book freely available on the Internet, *La nostra partita* [*Our Game*] (2021), written by the sport reporter Marco Cattaneo. Indeed, Rizzoli publishes also the Italian most popular sport daily magazine, *La Gazzetta dello Sport*. The fight against coronavirus is compared by Cattaneo to a football match, using joyful concepts and happy and trustworthy words. The subheading says: "Tireremo un calcio anche al virus, e vinceremo noi!", and can be translated into "We will kick the virus too, and we will do win!".

In its second part, the book requires the direct involvement of the young reader, who is encouraged to paint and draw his team to win the match. In comparison with other publications, I particularly appreciate this one because it is less pedantic and more positive. The sacrifice theme, however, is heavily present, even though in a less ideological way.

Very different is the perspective adopted by *Guida galattica al coronavirus! Per bambini e bambine curiosi* (officially translated as *A Curious Guide for Courageous Kids*, a non-literal translation), written by Erika Nerini and Daniela Longo and promoted by the Children's Museums of Milan, Verona, Rome and Genoa, freely downloadable from the website of the last one, published simultaneously both in Italian and English. It consists of twenty-four very colourful pages, in which prevails, in an almost obsessive way, trust in science as the key to leave the emergency: over nine pages the word "scientists" repeats four times in the pamphlet. Other two pages (19–20) report six rules to prevent the contagion. Actually it is hard to categorize it as a real book, as it is more like an informative brochure produced by the communication offices of the museums (that may constitute an explanation of the particular concern for science).

The *incipit* says: "This story starts in a distant city, near the banks of the Blue River, in China. The city of Wuhan". Suddenly the character of Dr. Wenliang is introduced, specifying that he discovered the new disease because he was "very curious". Consistently with its ambition to offer a "scientific" product, the book describes for a while Sars-CoV-2 specifics like the virus size and its possibility to spread, telling, for example, that "a sneeze is enough to make it travel almost 2 meters". There is no more space for narration: the pamphlet is indeed a "guide", a simple handbook, that at most can say:

Not being able to go out with your friends is kind of sad. But it's important that you don't, because a sneeze, a hug, or even a handshake could be enough to get you sick. Scientists say the virus spreads very quickly in closed quarters and crowded places. It really gets on well with everyone, no matter what language you speak, where you come from, or how old you are. (Nerini and Longo, 2020, p. 15)

Among the various publications circulating in Italy at the time, I think that the one deserving special attention is the short novel *Noemi nella tempesta* [*Noemi in the Storm*] (2021) published by De Agostini and written by Alberto Pellai (a doctor and researcher in hygiene at the State University of Milan, but also a psychotherapist and a well-known author for children and about children and teenagers and his wife Barbara Tamborini, a psycho-pedagogist. In addition to *Noemi nella tempesta*, Pellai also wrote *Mentre la tempesta colpiva forte. Quello che noi genitori abbiamo imparato in tempo di emergenza* [*While the Storm Was Hitting Hard. What We Parents Learnt in Emergency Time*] (2020).

Pellai and Tamborini are quite famous in Italy for their successful educational books, among others, *Letà dello tsunami. Come sopravvivere a un figlio pre-adolescente* [*The Tsunami Age. How to Survive to a Pre-Teen Child*] (2017), *Il metodo famiglia felice. Come allenare i figli alla vita* [*The Happy Family Method. How to Train Children to Life*] (2020a), *I papà vengono da Marte, le mamme da Venere. Perché mamma e papà fanno le stesse cose in maniera differente* [*Dads Come from Mars, Mums from Venus. Why Mum and Dad do The Same Things in Different Ways*] (2019b), *Il primo bacio. L'educazione sentimentale dei nostri figli pre-adolescenti* [*The First Kiss. Our Pre-Teen Children's Sentimental Education*] (2019a). Because of the success of their books, Pellai and Tamborini are often invited to educational seminars and conferences, also by parishes and catholic circles that approve and support their attitude towards promoting family life. Among their works there is also *Sono Francesco* [*I Am Francis*] (2020b), a short novel in which they imagine Saint Francis of Assisi as an 18-year-old boy living nowadays.

Differently from the other works we presented, the authors of *Noemi nella tempesta* do not focus on the disease and on its prevention, they do not give a list of rules to follow or simple scientific information, but they offer a really educative story, even if frankly conventional and somewhere a bit stereotypical. The story is told using the first person, like it was written in a diary by Noemi, a young girl attending the primary school in a town in Northern Italy, and by her brother Luca, attending the middle school. The plot is plain but effective: Noemi does not want to work in a school project together with her Chinese mate Li, so she makes the wish to see him never more, using a little mirror given her by the grandmother, that is supposed to be magical. In the same evening, on February 21, 2020, the government announce the suspension of classes and of almost every economical activities in the region. On that day, as also the book recalls, was actually discovered the first case of COVID-19 in Italy, in a 38-year-old man of Codogno, a little



town in Lombardy, province of Lodi. The so-called “red zone” would be enlarged in the following days to other several provinces in the North and to whole Italy from March 9, ceasing almost all the economic activities and citizens’ social life. Italians reacted to that extremely severe measures with unexpected obedience, strictly respecting the lockdown rules. Noemi and Luca’s parents live separately: she is a nurse and he is a computer programmer. Mum is consequently obliged to live in isolation and to face exhausting shifts at the hospital, while the children stay at home attending classes at a distance with their father, who does not go to the office anymore. Li, the Chinese schoolmate, gives up attending his classes. Feeling guilty, believing that all the situation is caused by her selfish wish, Noemi, with the help of Luca and the girl he likes, Francesca, tries to find Li and to fix the situation. They discover that Li’s family runs a tobacco shop, so they go to talk to his mother. The happy end comes, however, it is neither obvious nor silly: the parents reconcile themselves but without getting together again, Noemi and Li do not become really friends, Luca and Francesca do not become a couple. Above all, the pandemic remains a worrying threat, we – and readers too – have not yet overcome it.

The moral is explicit and it is explained directly by the authors:

We will learn the lesson that this experience taught us, that we cannot live without friends, that school seems to be a struggle, but its absence drives us to madness. And that life is the most beautiful thing we received and that we must celebrate it every day and live it intensively without wasting anything that it can give us. We also learnt that we cannot control everything. But when you see a gigantic wave running toward you which is going to submerge you, you have to run to find out a board and surf on it, finding new balances and trying to do what you have never done before. (pp. 231–232)

I must admit that I particularly like this concern, that unfortunately is missing in other books or is not highlighted enough, the concern for what makes life worth living, beyond the basic biological data, beyond health aspects, beyond the obsession that we are the victims of during these two years.

## RESULTS

With some exceptions, we must acknowledge that the great majority of these books are concerned at best with preventive measures, especially the importance of the correct way to wear the surgical mask, on maintaining the hands clean and keeping social distance, justifying and confirming the restrictions that have prevented the young readers to go to school, to meet their friends and to see their grandparents. We can say that a number of these works look more like handbooks containing pieces of advice, and in some case like good manners pamphlets, rather than like imaginative tales written to comfort the youngest readers in difficult times. These

books are usually filled with subtle optimism and overall with the fundamental confidence in the power of science. A recurrent issue is, in fact, the “scientific” basis, that tries to explain what coronavirus is, its origins, how it spreads and, of course, how it can be defeated and how children can play their part in this big historical challenge. Optimism, indeed, persuades that the pandemic could be treated as a historical challenge to accept and not as a catastrophe to cope with. A challenge to win all together.

Of course, it is not a bad idea to promote cooperation and confidence. It can be seen that this message seems to be possible in all the publications I read, through the pledge of a sacrifice, through the proof of personal surrender, in order to achieve a higher collective well-being in the future. Conceptually, there is no difference between such a discourse and, for instance, the call to enlist in the army to fight the enemy in the trenches, as our forefathers did a hundred years ago, and how children’s books actually told about it in the 1920s (see e.g. Gotta, 1926). The individual life can be sacrificed for the higher collective benefit: nowadays no more for the nation, of course, but for humankind.

In the last decades, we have educated children to think critically, to deconstruct stereotypes and social constructs – such as family, sex and gender, religion, nation. Today, I think, we are facing the *pars construens*: a new worship is growing over the ruins of our civilisation and it requires compliance and obedience.

## CONCLUSIONS

It seems that the book by Alberto Pellai and Barbara Tamborini, focusing only on the Italian scenario, constitutes an exception, because, as I tried to admit, the main concern of other authors was to adapt their little readers to new rules in which they are aware of the need for new social habits. I think that the pandemic could be considered the last stage of a transition which began with the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, and may be the definitive exit from the “post-modernity” and the threshold to a new era, which can be named “hyper-modernity”.

Introduced in the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by Lipovetsky and Charles (2004) and then again by Aubert (2004) and Ascher (2005), the concept of “hyper-modernity” acknowledges in the contemporary literature (but, of course, also in other forms of art) the need and the attempt to overcome post-modern (Lyotard, 1979) nihilism and lack of meaning, re-discovering the need for sense in human history, both personal and social, the need for a clear direction for an aim to achieve. This vague and laborious desire seems to be an instinctive response to the fear and to the widespread sense of insecurity of our century, started with the attacks in New York and Washington (and characterised by a broad terrorist activity all around the world) and then continued with the international economic

crisis in 2008. The spreading of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 may be the turning point of this process, which has already considerably changed life and politics in Western countries, with a new request wave for order, security and social control. With some obvious differences, this phenomenon presents some analogies with the political mood of the early 1920s, a decade marked by a severe crisis that happened after a long period of worthy growth and wealth illusions (the so-called *belle époque*). After the big shock of the World War, fascist regimes arose in Europe, promising a new deal and building a new system of values, often supported by the main media and intellectuals.

Nowadays we can observe in contemporary literature “new forms of realistic and modernist composition”, that are often expressed in a return to the autobiographical tale, even a fictional one: “If subjectivism and first-person storytelling became almost institutional in so much of contemporary Italian narrative, it is because the self, in its weakness, looks like the only remaining asset facing the shattered world” (Donnarumma, 2014, p. 90).

In the disintegration of our societies, perhaps the only thing that deserves salvation is in health, in our biological lives (*nuda vita*, as Agamben and Esposito say), and in nature, for which science is to be the only remaining source of meaning and therefore an object of new universal worship.

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## PANDEMIA W KSIĄŻKACH DLA DZIECI: W STRONĘ HIPERNOWOCZESNEGO SPOŁECZEŃSTWA? PRZYPADEK WŁOSKI

**Wprowadzenie:** Artykuł analizuje niektóre książki dla dzieci opublikowane we Włoszech w ciągu ostatnich dwóch lat wyjaśniające dzieciom pandemię COVID-19. Artykuł zakłada, że przypadek włoski można porównać lub uogólnić do rynków wydawniczych innych państw. Hipoteza ogólna zakładała, że nasze czasy charakteryzują się głęboką zmianą wartości.

**Cel badań:** Badanie ma na celu zidentyfikowanie powtarzających się tematów oferowanych uwadze dzieci w czasie pandemii. Starano się zrozumieć, na jakich ideach społeczeństwa i ludzkiego koegzystowania są one oparte.

**Metoda badań:** Badanie zostało przeprowadzone poprzez przeczytanie głównych książek dla dzieci opublikowanych na temat pandemii i rozważenie równoczesnej włoskiej debaty politycznej i kulturowej na temat środków przyjętych w celu powstrzymania rozprzestrzeniania się wirusa.

**Wyniki:** Z kilkoma wyjątkami książki dla dzieci były ściśle skoncentrowane na aspektach zdrowotnych i zapobieganiu zarażeniu, a nie na kwestiach bardziej edukacyjnych, często ignorując

cierpienie młodzieży z ostatnich dwóch lat, podczas których dzieci nie mogły chodzić do szkoły, aby się spotykać z przyjaciółmi i prowadzić normalne życie towarzyskie.

**Wnioski:** Analiza potwierdza hipotezę wyjściową o głębokiej zmianie w sposobie myślenia i głównych wartościach. Pandemia być może jest punktem zwrotnym procesu historycznego rozpoczętego 11 września 2001 roku, który autor proponuje połączyć z pojęciem „hipernowoczesności”, wprowadzonym na początku XXI wieku, aby zasygnalizować wyczerpanie postmodernistycznego punktu widzenia.

**Słowa kluczowe:** książki dla dzieci, pandemia COVID-19, Włochy, hipernowoczesność, nauka.