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5th International and Interdisciplinary Conference

Happy Homes, Happy Society?

The Contribution of Domestic Life in a Time of Social Changes

Care, Flourishing, Happiness: The Challenge at Home

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The central place of work during the twentieth century, and maybe also the nineteenth, has marked our era as the "civilization of work" or as a "work-centric culture". The thesis that I would like to propose here is that the value of care should be recognized as a property of all human work, and as the key to humanizing a civilization that has made technology and environment into its gods. Only a civilization focused on care can promote human flourishing and, consequently, happiness, and care should be the most significant thing learnt at home. Therefore home, care and happiness are essentially related, and all these three notions have our innate human vulnerability as their connecting thread. To humanize our civilization means to tackle one of the most dangerous taboos: our fragility.

It is no secret that if this conference about happiness had taken place in 2019, maybe some of the above ideas would have appeared too naïve. The lessons we have learned during this pandemic have helped wake us up from a dream. We are not self-sufficient; we are not as autonomous as we imagine. We need others, and we are needed by others. And the reason is the fact that we are fragile, we are dependent, we fail and even die. From that perspective, the topic of this paper is a little bit easier, but still challenging; not only because personal happiness is always a challenge but also because the topic has become stereotyped. But let us start.

*Full papers are being prepared for publication. Further details to be announced.