

Call for papers

“Costellazioni”

*Debt and financial crises: literary fiction and economic discourse*

Monographic section edited by B. Ingrao

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century in European literature, notably in French and English novels, debt, bankruptcy and financial speculation are remarkable aspects of the fictional sceneries and plots. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, economic studies deal with debt and financial crises debating recurring fluctuations and monetary policy; prominent scholars contribute to the controversies on speculation and financial crises. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, indebtedment, bankruptcy and financial speculation appear in a number of novels, notably in American literature. Since the beginning of the century and through the years of the Great Depression, major economists explore the ‘mystery’ of banking, the fragility of the banking system and the risk of banking crises. If in mainstream economics the interest for such topics fades in the post-war years, they gain new attention among economic theorists at the end of the last century, and after the global crisis at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Along more than two centuries, articles in newspapers and the periodic press spread among a wide audience the perception of the risks of financial crises in a language rich in metaphors charged with emotional resonance. Rhetoric and ‘persuasion’ play a crucial role in economic policies, and in the way central banks manage monetary policy. The 2007-2009 global crisis places debt, credit, and bankruptcy at the centre of the public discourse, since they appear to nurture systemic risks of collapse in the market economies. It is still to be assessed to what extent these topics are assimilated in new economic theories, or to what extent they stimulate creativity in new literary currents.

The research explores the insights on the dynamics of debt, insolvency and financial crises to be gained looking at the encounter of literary fiction and economic discourse. It aims at deepening the epistemological reflection on the dialogue between scholars in literary criticism and scholars in economics, to rediscover both the richness of knowledge in fictional narration and the roots of economic studies in the humanities. The double look at literary fiction and economic discourse enrich the understanding of the social dynamics which nurture the crises of insolvency, going beyond the fiction of the rational agent with perfect foresight prevailing in economic models. The knowledge of financial markets and financial crises in history enrich the understanding of the context and sources of literary works. On the long-term perspective, they help avoid the demonization of finance, although maintaining a critical eye on the institutional and ethical issues the expansion of finance raises.

The editor encourages the scholars willing to contribute to submit interdisciplinary proposals within the general themes above, and notably on some of the following topics:

- the representation of debt and credit as forms of social relationships;
- the narration of financial crises in literary and economic texts;
- the symbolic echoes of debt and credit in literary works and economic texts;
- the metaphors of debt, credit and insolvency in narrative structures;
- the ethical meaning or the social stigma attached to debt and insolvency;
- the psychic and social dynamics of indebtedment, bankruptcy and financial crises;
- the ‘characters’ and the intermediaries meeting in financial markets;
- ‘rumours’, uncertainty and asymmetric information in speculative waves or banking crises;
- the social obligation to reimburse debts and the resolution of debt crises.

Colleagues, who would like to submit proposals for the monographic section, are kindly invited to send an abstract no longer than 450 words. The abstracts should be sent to the following addresses respecting the deadlines below:

[b.g.ingrao@gmail.com](mailto:b.g.ingrao@gmail.com)

[rivistacostellazioni@gmail.com](mailto:rivistacostellazioni@gmail.com)

02/03/20

**Deadlines:**

15.10.2020: deadline for sending the abstracts (no more than 450 words long, including the title)

15.12.2020: approval or rejection of proposals shall be notified within this date,

15.05.2021: deadline for sending the essays in their final form according to the editorial guidelines.

The languages accepted are Italian, English and French.

The editorial guidelines are available at <https://www.rivistacostellazioni.org/norme-redazionali>.

The articles selected by the editor will be subjected to double blind peer review.