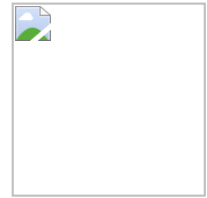




# Quaderni Online



## Quaderno II

### The Languages of Revolution

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#### Foreword

The title of this volume may be read in a number of ways. The simplest and most immediate way is to understand it as indicating English and French, the two languages in which the people engaged in the events thought and spoke about what they were doing and conceived the images that crystalized it all. Languages in this strict sense each have ways of being and forming that are unique and fix the shape of what may be thought and how it may be expressed. Language is next the way in which the thoughts are made available to others.

And this is another way to read the title: languages of revolution propose the new in many ways within each of the two systems that are English and French. Social, religious, cultural and regional experience; age, personal history, character, all the collective and personal moments of a long or a short, a complex or a simple, past, come together in many languages forming the multiple strands of what somehow still retains a unified form. In this direction, we can go a step further and encompass not only the languages of revolution of those who consciously make theories, propose institutional schemes, organize politics as leaders, but the languages of those who are not part of high culture, yet express views, aspirations, critical evaluation.

Beyond all of these verbal forms of languages, on the other side of the cry that “ signifies ” however simply, are, finally, many other forms of language engaged in the senses: expressing concept through the organization or use of space, through clothing, in the choice, cooking or presentation of food - and in the ways it is shared or denied; in colors and symbols, allegory and metaphor both conscious and intuitive; in the presence or absence of the body physical in the body politic. In these languages participate the cultivated and the uneducated, for the languages of revolution, verbal and non-verbal, are far more universal instruments than most of us who pursue scholarly endeavors have been used to believe.

The essays gathered here begin, we hope, to open some of these languages to view and, in so doing, they deliberately place the traditional next to the innovative and invite the differences to stand side by side suggesting the need to explore at last the several-sidedness and the interplay of high and low, verbal and gestural. The results are not so full-dimensional, of course: that full dimensionality, the possibility of “walking around” the reality of a moment as though it were a living creature, is very distant, if indeed it is other than a standard to measure by. There is, as well, no single voice and, indeed, no general harmony. But there is the busy hum of purpose and there is opinion and conviction; and conflict. And there are recurrent themes inviting, we feel, varying itinerary; and some unexpected protagonists.

Perhaps this mode of structure is, in some minute sense, itself metaphorically engaged in the title, inasmuch as revolution proposes a break towards a new whose construction needs must use what tools and materials one has to hand.

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