



# Gastvortrag

## Vincenzo Matera

*We are all contemporaries. Time and cultural diversity*

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Trained at the University of Rome "La Sapienza", **Vincenzo Matera** is Associate Professor of Linguistic Anthropology and Cultural Anthropology since 2005. His main research interests are anthropological theory, anthropology of memory and identity, anthropology of imagination and linguistic anthropology. He has recently been carrying out a research project named "Culturalmente", an ethnographic study of the practices of art performed by migrant communities and migrant artists living in Milan. Since 2015 is the scientific referent of the Summer School Project "Learning from the Local. Communities and Tribal People in Global Frame". Editor of anthropological book series, member of several scientific and editorial boards, author of several academic papers and monographs

In this essay I claim that the anthropological paradigm of contemporary is a necessary premise for understanding cultural diversity. Based on the general idea that it is no more epistemologically correct the "big divide" between modern and traditional social contexts, the paradigm of contemporary leads to the principle of "we are all contemporaries". Today there not exist (and probably they have never been existing) completely traditional societies, in every of their aspects, and completely modern societies, in every of their aspects. All societies are (and are always been) imbued into history, so into time, and change. Every society presents fields oriented to change and more rapid in transformation, for example the scientific research, and fields less oriented to change, even hostiles to any sort of innovations and transformations, for example religion. So every human being is, temporally speaking, a mix of tradition and innovation, of past and future, despite of the social and cultural context where he/she lives. This means that we are all immersed into the dimension of simultaneity. Can anthropology ignore the temporal dimension of simultaneity? It can, of course, as it did in the past, but the result is a distorted representation, and so an ideological understanding, of cultural diversity.