

Editorial.

Young people, institutions, and territories

*Michele Corsi, Massimiliano Stramaglia,
Grazia Romanazzi, Tommaso Farina and Paula Guerra*

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The subject of this issue has the same theme as the 5th Week of Excellence promoted and organized by the University of Macerata Department of Education, Cultural Heritage, and Tourism Sciences in October 2021.

These weeks are cultural events of invaluable heuristic workmanship and specialist education, targeted both at the world of academia and research, but also at the department's best students, in order to continuously and progressively reinforce the community of the budding and established scholars. After all, this is in keeping with the finest tradition, particularly during the initial period, of European universities: the forebears of all those that subsequently be established around the world. The first were founded almost 900 years ago and immediately afterwards, from Bologna to Oxford, etc., in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and onwards from then. At the time, the elected rector was the most deserving and accredited student.

The secondary title of this Week of Excellence, which we are repeating implicitly for this issue, as evidenced by the contributions featured here, was "Networks for Innovation and Inclusion."

"Network" or "networks," within which research cannot fail to be nourished in a reticular fashion, feeding its context, its dimension, and its vectors. This is particularly true of scientific research, both pure and applied.

With two perspectives or trajectories, as mentioned above, which are always present in the DNA of the department in question, upstream of the faculties and scientific structures that preceded it prior to Italian Law no. 240/2010: namely, innovation and inclusion.

Inclusion is a civil, democratic, institutional, and yet intelligent process, typical of any serious and authentically dynamic organization. It is reinforced by the community ideal to which we have just referred.

Inclusion, however, should not be confused with submission to a set of values or an uncritical view of the now. Inclusion should be critical, challenging, in short, resistant. It is only through political, cultural or

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educational resistance that exclusion can be annulled. Free space for the development of ideas and practices or, as another way to put it, “a haven in a heartless world”.

Meanwhile, innovation is the backbone, the good gasoline, the vital impulse, the indispensable horizon of any organization that does not want to die from its roots upwards over the next day or so, but instead wants to last, improve, challenge time and contingencies, grow, and soar higher and higher.

How could university facilities give up on this goal, or indeed the previous one?

An innovation, today, as yesterday (and always), for those who have a shred of memory and intellectual honesty, that demands internationalization.

An innovation that was not a quirk of the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research Systems (ANVUR) over the last two decades or a requirement of the university reforms closest to us, etc., but that was the almost daily custom of our greatest lecturers and the most prestigious component of the Italian academic world.

However, it is also a question of inclusion and innovation in order to bring institutions and territories more and more into the system, giving priority to young people.

Young people are our future, when not also our present, and represent the purely verbal figure of the Italy’s current National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

How else can we rebuild the future we want, if not by leveraging young people and starting with them?

As a result of this, a department of excellence and an assembly organized by it could not fail to adopt this approach and this perspective, articulated within the dimensions indicated above.

Departments of Excellence established, fairly recently in Italy, by Article 1, c. 314-337 of Italian Law no. 232 of 2016.

The 180 Departments of Excellence, identified nationally in 2018, include Macerata’s Department of Education Sciences, Cultural Heritage, and Tourism.

It is indeed a unique Department, in that sense, of this particular stamp, with teaching as its real strength. Its leading role in Italy was recognized when it received this “award.”

This journal, *Education Sciences & Society*, is one of its three editorial mouthpieces. This one focuses specifically on education and didactics, with reference to educational sciences in general. However, it is duly open to dialogue and comparison with all forms of humanistic and social knowledge.

Macerata is, not least, a seat that has been the national chair – with one of the editors of this journal, and one of the signatories of this editorial – of the Italian Society of Pedagogy and of the University Conference of Deans and Directors of Faculties and Departments of Education in Italy.

And so we have this instalment, which is the first of 2022.

Physiologically speaking, it contains contributions from pedagogical colleagues who have spoken during the Week of Excellence, but also other articles by colleagues who responded to the call for entries launched by the journal around the world, both in keeping with its tradition and as required of category A journals. All of them have undergone double-blind peer reviews.

On the one hand, we can sum up these papers in the three nominal coordinates of this issue, which also share a common Cartesian plane, while on the other hand, they are all original, bibliographically and/or empirically supported depending on the adopted method or school of reference, and of evident international openness. Some are even by non-Italian scholars.

There is also a clear awareness that the international dimension is not a provincial chauvinism or worse.

Is someone international if they are not from the “bel Paese” or publishes a foreign author or writes in English or Aramaic?

Not forgetting that some research risk not rendering all of their meaning when written in a linguistic code different from the original one. Furthermore, the constitution of English as an academic “lingua franca” created a hierarchy and an undervaluation of knowledge outside the Global North in general and the Anglo-Saxon world in particular. We all know the difficulties of writing an article for English or American journals and besides having to translate, having to insert a thousand and one notes explaining the particularities of our country, to show that we are interesting. Ironically, an exoticization of much of academia.

Meanwhile, internationalization is conveyed to a certain degree when one lives and frequents that dimension for relationships, culture, readings, and so on.

Otherwise, a French citizen would not be international at home, nor would a British citizen or a German.

These constructs are very clear to a journal aspiring to enter ISI and Scopus and to its editors.

In *medias res*, now: the issue contains twenty-eight articles, signed by authors of other European nationalities.

In this editorial, we intend to bring them together – as we have already mentioned – around the three central focuses of young people, institutions, and territories. One of these key words will be taken as the prevailing vector, albeit within the obvious logic of a theoretical and practical system incorporating the other two, in the various texts too. And in the due cultural and operational interconnections between these semantemes of great sense and meaning in their entirety, with additional “openings” for each of them, as we will set out now, covering the various authors in alphabetical order.

Young people

In an obvious evolutionary extension that extends into adulthood.

Francesco Bearzi and Andrea Tarantino: starting from the UNESCO document, *International Commission on the Futures of Education*, 2021, the authors report on a focus group (supplemented by subsequent interviews) involving high school students aged 16-18, carried out on the day Ukraine was invaded and the next day, from which topical dynamics of adolescent restructuring emerge. The influence exerted by live streaming on Tik Tok proved particularly relevant in terms of the processes of identifying with the Other and the development of awareness of the tragedy and the horror inherent in every war. All this should be converted into an opportunity and valued as an indispensable prerequisite for the construction of a peaceful and democratic global citizenship.

Francesca Buccini, for her part, analyzes the phenomenon of educational and occupational segregation which, even today, represents an indisputable educational crisis. In greater detail, while, on the one hand, there has been a clear transformation of the female experience in terms of greater possibilities and opportunities for education and training over recent decades, on the other hand there are still areas where the gender gap is more evident. These asymmetries are based on the existence of gender stereotypes as well as cultural practices and models that tend to define and reproduce different opportunities and destinies for women and men. Hence the need to free the various teaching disciplines, especially as regards technical and scientific subjects, from gender connotations, with a view to allowing everyone to freely choose their educational and therefore professional path.

So we have an article by *Roberta Caldin*, in which the author addresses the issue of young people with disabilities with respect to their educational settings, starting with the situation faced by young people in Italy and taking up a theme that is very dear to special education: relational, affective, cultural, and institutional belonging, which is often lacking or non-existent for people with disabilities. In these situations, the family, the school, and the community of reference represent the educational “contexts” of greatest interest, with a responsibility for initiating young people’s identity processes and limiting the risks arising from “adhesive identities” and “false selves.” In this way, they can contribute to reducing situations of poverty and marginality that actually prevent access to the opportunities for improvement that life can offer.

Noemi Del Bianco examines the mindsets of 124 university students from Macerata, using the Attitudes to Disability Scale (Power et al., 2010). The results reveal how, although many of the participants do not perceive having a disabled family member to be a burden on the family, they consider it to be a burden on society.

Then we have *Tommaso Fratini*, who puts forward a series of assumptions in the form of a statement, as a potential conceptual framework of bullying and preliminary to an educational study whose potential coordinates are expressed and outlined. The research will seek to testify how bullying constitutes a

ubiquitous phenomenon, which has always existed, and yet has been the object of study of different disciplines, of which it is possible to achieve an adequate clinical understanding also as regards the phenomena of social exclusion. Furthermore, he establishes some cornerstones for an educational study distinct from the psychological one, which goes from the prevention of the phenomenon to socio-affective learning, the connotation of values, etc.

Alessandra La Marca, Federica Martino and Ylenia Falzone propose, for their part, a model for the development of vocational maturity, starting from the contents of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, which is based on the three pillars of “engage, connect, empower”; and as a framework for a collaboration between universities and schools based on the active participation of young people. Their research aimed at increasing accountability training by engaging teachers and students together. They also evaluate the degree to which technologies, during the COVID-19 pandemic, have favored the construction of additional and better teaching strategies, which is essential for understanding not only how to implement them, but also to structure a future able to face other possible crises.

With *Pierluigi Malavasi and Simona Sandrini*, the cultural legacy of civil societies and the future of education of the younger generations become the focus of the two authors, moving through the guidance towards the good life, “with and for the other” in just institutions, and sustainable development that calls into question awareness of just what a serious condition the environment is in. From the student strike of March 15, 2019 to more than 2000 protests in 128 countries regarding climate change and in favor of a planetary turnaround leading to a post-carbon era, Malavasi and Sandrini argue about the systemic and global nature of environmental challenges, long-term sustainability goals, the deep structural changes needed in charge of social systems, youth and ecological transition, etc., starting from the interdisciplinary studies CLIC-PLAN and PMI RISK ADAPT backed by Catholic University of the Sacred Heart.

One of the above authors, namely *Simona Sandrini*, has also written an independent article about peace as a guarantee of human and environmental protection and as a binding desire for *sustainable development* strongly threatened by wars and ecological/social injustices, with particular regard to climate change and youth participation. In particular, the article highlights how, behind this youthful adventure, there is a need for the creation of formative ecosystems oriented towards the value dimension of *fraternity*, calling upon universities, and other educational organizations, to *form fraternal generations* in every sphere of life and work.

In the contribution by *Maria Grazia Riva*, constructed vectorially as an in-depth study, that becomes more and more analytical in its orientation, highlights the fundamental role played by the older generations for young people, rooted in the founding categories of educational culture that has always

known the ways subjects develop in their constitutive and co-belonging relationship with the contexts of reference, while also preparing approaches, methods and tools for guidance, support, facilitation, and advice for individual and collective growth, welfare, and social justice. With an educational intentionality careful not to exclude the implicit and unconscious components, these devices make it possible to support the construction of formative trajectories and histories of formation in an awareness of the paths that orient them. In greater detail, pedagogy understood as a theory of education – and, in the clinical-pedagogical perspective, as a theory of critical and clinical education that investigates, explores, and brings to light the explicit and subtextual dynamics that unfold in the complex events of the educational happening – can give depth to the orientation models and practices that accompany the unfolding of the stories of subjective education. Pedagogy itself is understood as that intentional and conscious intellectual work which aims both to illuminate the dynamics that are realized in the practices of education, training, and education, and to indicate the horizons at which to aim, in a close mutual correlation, anchored to the plane of reality, but without standardizing it uncritically.

With the article by *Francesco Paolo Romeo*, the focus shifts to our accelerated and hyper-connected society, metaphorically “liquefied” as regards its emotional ties, still forgetful especially when it is called upon to reconstruct the collective memory of the extermination of frail and disabled people perpetrated by the Nazi regime. Even in ordinary conditions, ours is a society that struggles to treasure memories of experiences of “high affective intensity” that can punctuate life: a degree, a marriage, the birth of a child, the achievement of a professional goal. Then, when faced with difficulties outside the ordinary, the cultural tendency of Westerners seems to be to store “boxes” of negative memories in symbolic “warehouses” of memory. Lastly, with regard to the debate on inclusion, the article explores the pioneering reflections of Karl Jaspers and other studies of a biological stamp, with regard to the “life project” of SEN students, proposing methodological criteria to hold together the mnemonic-reflexive and narrative skills necessary to reread the past, understand the present, and explore an existential perspective free from repetitive compulsions that would prevent change.

This section closes with the article by *Sofia Sousa, Tommaso Farina and Paula Guerra*: it is the result of a trans-disciplinary partnership oriented towards social intervention through art. Using a multi-site ethnographic methodology (Barbosa et al., 2020), the authors present two distinct empirical cases: one that took place in Portugal and the other in Italy, both targeting young people from different backgrounds and with different experiences. They seek to understand and emphasize how sociology and critical pedagogy can be integrated with artistic practices, promoting more effective means of intervention and perception of social reality, as experienced by different social actors.

Institutions.

This framework also includes contributions of the most exquisite theoretical and disciplinary epistemic stamp, considered by us as the quintessential “institutional” arrangement for any study on the subject, from those addressed here to all other possible studies.

This section opens with the contribution by *Massimo Baldacci*, who examines the history of the Italian school in its journey towards the democratic model, proposing a division into three phases: traditional, reformist, and neo-liberal. He highlights how the school today is at a crossroads between a democratic perspective and a neo-liberal orientation.

Next is the article by *Paola Bastianoni*, who analyzes the fundamental right to subjectivity. The epistemological background, consistent with the methodological approach adopted, is hermeneutic. Constructionist theories take on an important role in this area, as do narration, and particularly self-narration, as educational strategies capable of defining subjectivity as the experience that individuals have of themselves as actors and co-authors of the system of meanings available to them, offering a grid for understanding the self-in-the-world.

Raffaella Biagioli, Michela Baldini and Maria Grazia Proli, for their part, draw attention to the need to promote training opportunities for teachers and managers, able to provide added value that has a considerable impact on the life of educational institutions. They talk about the Master’s degree in “Organization and management of educational institutions in multicultural contexts” established by the University of Florence with FAMI funds and reserved only for school and technical managers operating throughout the country, which also offers distance learning activities.

Then we have an article by *Antonio Brusini*, in which, on the basis of the Magna Charta Universitatum of 2010 and with a view to the creation of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA), as also envisaged by the Bologna Declaration of 1999, the author duly argues that education, and therefore university autonomy, the indissolubility between teaching and research, as well as freedom of teaching, represent the highest value capable of influencing the future of humanity. He is therefore in favor of further connections between the various degree paths currently available in the Italian higher education system, and defines guidelines and future prospects, including on a legislative level.

The heart of the contribution by *Fabrizio d’Aniello* moves from the “Great Resignation” that exploded in 2021 and has since become a worldwide phenomenon that particularly affects the US, but that even affects Italy, where it is predominantly observed among young people. Some studies point out that this is a widespread working malaise that inevitably intercepts the interest of the pedagogy of work. Therefore, the article aims to investigate what is behind the “Great Resignation,” making educational proposals for the resolution of

certain critical issues. In greater detail, it focuses on the neo-liberal logic of competitive performance and on the lack of care for human relationships at work as fundamental problematic factors and, relying mainly on the theory of relational goods, goes on to indicate viable trajectories to promote a pedagogical culture of work starting from young people, centered on the establishment of educationally meaningful relationships.

Luigi d'Alonzo, for his part, focuses his contribution on the process of inclusion of people with disabilities, which in our country has reached very high levels of quality in both the educational and training fields. Thanks, in fact, to the promulgation of excellent laws, Italy has succeeded in adopting an advanced model of scholastic inclusion, also giving dignity to these persons through the planning of social and work integration paths. In January 1999, with Law no. 17, Italy completed the institutional regulatory framework by safeguarding the right to inclusion in universities and making it mandatory for each university to set up a service specifically designed for this purpose. Lastly, the article presents the results and the elements emerging from the "Accessibility" project carried out by the "Integration Services for Students with Dyslexic Disabilities" of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, aimed at breaking down all the existing barriers in the social and didactic life of the university that actually restricted the full inclusion of these students.

The aim of *Paula Guerra and Ana Matos Fernandes's* article is to bring the artistic perspective into dialogue with the scientific perspective, linking them to a particular form of critical pedagogy. Mainly through the writings of Ana Matos Fernandes, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on artistic, cultural, and creative work are explained and understood here, looking at how these moments could make way for a further form of critical pedagogy. Moreover, the article also proposes to overcome the conventional barriers between different social sciences, which still tend to be perceived as arbitrary. Lastly, they argue that one of the main mistakes made by social sciences today concerns the uncontrolled relationship maintained by the researcher with the object of study, overlooking everything that the vision of the object is able to offer the researcher within the social space and the scientific field itself.

The contribution by *Silvia Maggolini, Elena Zanfroni, Maria Concetta Carruba and Luigi d'Alonzo* draws attention to a culture of rights and processes aimed at ensuring full social inclusion of people with disabilities within the fabric of the community, which has seen a significant increase in recent years, partly due to the transformations that have characterized demographic development on a national and international level. The progressive aging of the population and the increase in life expectancy have also affected people with disabilities and their families, posing cultural and social challenges that must be faced, not only to continue to guarantee the fundamental rights of inclusion

and participation, but also to implement organizational and management processes. The authors believe, therefore, that it is necessary to promote further reflection on the subject, developing new project ideas and initiating practical experimentation with a view to building the adult identity of the disabled person. On the basis of these considerations, the article presents some of the elements that emerged during research aimed at the creation of a day service for people with disabilities in an area of Lombardy, which was able to respond, within a logic of innovation and sustainability, to the different needs of its users.

Pierluigi Malavasi, on the other hand, conducts an emblematic survey of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan from the perspective of the education of the younger generations in his contribution. A reflection on the plan in the field of education, *iuxta propria principia* and without any claim to being exhaustive, cannot, in fact, exclude education and research, social inclusion and territorial cohesion from among the themes worthy of attention, with particular reference to the plan's fourth and fifth missions. Between pandemic and humanitarian emergencies, it is therefore *fundamental* to recognize and promote the relational dimension of development in order to nurture the virtuous circle between *training* and *entrepreneurial activity*, *enhancement of territories*, and *expansion of job opportunities* by means of which truly active citizenship and an inclusive society can really be achieved. The National Plan for Recovery and Resilience will be more generative – maintains the author – the more it succeeds in interpreting the interests and needs of the various parts of society, transforming the mobilization of young people, the life of families, and the functioning of institutions into relationships of peace and visions of the future.

Franco Passalacqua's article, for its part, aims to illustrate the results of the process of participatory evaluation of a project carried out jointly by public and private entities in the north of Milan and aimed at preventing the phenomenon of early school leaving among secondary school students. This project, called "SpazioArteeducazione," involved seventy students aged between 11 and 14 in artistic activities and workshops outside the school setting. The objective was to identify the most effective elements, as well as the most critical, that characterized the project in relation to three areas of intervention: the involvement of students and families, the relationship between workshop methods and project objectives, and the pedagogical coordination of the various activities. This qualitative study consequently involved the establishment of a participatory evaluation device that has involved the various figures in the project with a view to producing a multi-perspective evaluation of the educational process put in place. Data were collected between March 2020 and October 2021 through interviews and focus groups conducted with teachers, educators, service coordinators, managers, students, and parents, which subsequently underwent thematic analysis. The results showed a high degree of

consistency between the objectives and teaching methodologies adopted and the need to develop actions for improvement in relation to the ways of collaborating with parents, the role of students in decision-making processes, and the level of pedagogical supervision of the team of educators and teachers.

Martina Petrini analyzes, on the other hand, the formative-educational processes in contemporary society, particularly during the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which follow unprecedented and unpredictable trajectories that emphasize the state of doubt, indeterminacy, and precariousness as symptoms of an ongoing social, political, economic, and pedagogical crisis. The article explores the relationship between technology and corporeity in education, focusing on the relational dynamics that make a decisive contribution to the success of teaching-learning processes and the construction of personal identity. In the unavoidable alternation between reality and virtuality, proximity and distance, physical presence and digitalization, the essential nature of the relationship is reaffirmed, guided by a precise educational intention. An authentically human education – argues the author – is based on daily engagement in cooperative confrontation, which can be fully achieved by integrating innovative technological-digital tools with traditional teaching methods.

Territories.

This is the shortest section, both in theory and in practice, although in actual fact this is only because territories have also been covered by previous contributions.

Here, we have chosen to bring together those articles that have chosen this theme as their main, fundamental area of focus.

Maria Czerepaniak-Walczak's article opens the “line-up” and represents an excellent attempt to describe the meaning of interculturality, taking into account the contemporary factors of openness to dialogue and respect for cultural differences. The criteria used for distinguishing cultures are indicated here, going beyond parameters such as ethnicity and religion. According to the Polish scholar, contemporary culturalism includes specific characteristics of individuals and groups such as age, gender, cultural capital, place of residence, and more. On this basis, factors of openness to otherness and difference are analyzed, indicating the role of emancipatory pedagogy in the process of experiencing dialogicality and using one's voice to question inequality. Lastly, the author proposes selected educational practices in and for interculturality.

Laura Fedeli, for her part, highlights how service-learning and community-based participatory research can both be successful factors in innovation and inclusive practices. Reciprocity, shared responsibility, effective communication, and open decision-making environments seem to be fundamental concepts for establishing a partnership between universities and

communities in order to strengthen civic responsibility and shape engaged citizens who address social issues and contribute to the public good.

Antonia Rubini's article, on the other hand, opens up to the phenomenon of globalization, including migrations of people from many parts of the world, particularly towards countries that seem to offer better living and working conditions. Although hope for a significant improvement in their existential conditions sustains migrants on their journey, they face numerous difficulties and hardships due to cultural, linguistic, and religious differences. It is therefore the responsibility of the institutions in the various countries to implement appropriate strategies for their integration into the society they will become part of. Learning the language of the host country, understanding its customs and traditions as well as its cultural aspects and, last but not least, its rights and duties, therefore, become a strong point that will help migrants integrate properly and, at the same time, be a source of enrichment for the social aspect of the community.

The contribution by *Massimiliano Stramaglia, Grazia Romanazzi and Tommaso Farina* focuses, in particular, on the university institution, which can be defined as such, according to the authors, only if it is deeply rooted in the territory to which it belongs. This is the premise from which the article moves. Focusing on the educational proposal of the University of Macerata, constantly in dialogue with a local community that is undergoing slow and progressive regeneration, it investigates the possibilities of spreading academic knowledge and skills of an educational stamp in the heart of the urban fabric, investing in future generations of students in the human and social sciences, particularly male students as "new protagonists of care." Beginning with AlmaLaurea data on the employability of graduates in Educational Sciences, compared with ISTAT data on the demographic characteristics of the Macerata municipal territory, the authors outline a possible profile of future educators and teachers, who have the task of serving a diverse and multi-ethnic local community, in need of social and educational policies that are as inclusive as possible. What also emerges is the need for strong educational investment, as well as a heuristic reinterpretation of the role of men in caregiving, to strengthen the presence of an alternative educational model. On the one hand, far from patriarchal authority and, on the other, able to embody skills and professionalism inspired by a vision of educational roles, care, and support that are no longer exclusively in the female domain.

Meanwhile, the article by *Cinzia Turli* closes with an analysis, in a pedagogical key, of the political-cultural context relative to the changes in perspective on the intercultural theme, starting from a pre- and post-pandemic focus. She considers the extent to which it is possible to leverage the development of intercultural skills in the redefinition of the educational tasks

incumbent on all the places of learning of the new generation. She also reviews the concepts of integration and inclusion in the light of current socio-educational crises, dwelling on the value of reflective and shared thinking as the privileged object of a possible modern education system. Furthermore, she evaluates the hypothesis of an intercultural educational project aimed at all those who are immersed in the digital world and the virtual bearers of cognitive and communicative profiles that are far removed from the classical symbolic modalities. In this regard, the author writes of a pedagogical approach oriented towards building “fluid cultural identities” as people moved by a constant dynamism towards other cultural affiliations. She also reiterates the fundamental role of the person in a collective relational vision, recalling the concept of otherness as an essential factor in building socio-educational networks in which both the uniqueness of the individual and the inclusion of the other are recognized as processes functional to achieving a community culture.

The closing article by *Tommaso Farina* once again emphasizes the subject of learning. It starts by exploring interaction with the landscape precisely as a place of learning, while also reporting on an interesting case study in the Rimini area. This is an article which resolves the relationship between the three subjects covered by this issue in a circular fashion, also extending to certain institutions, to adults as well as to young people, within the perspective—to be consolidated—of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Here, the territory also becomes the natural and rural environment, as well as cultural, experiential, and landscape heritage, which are sources of education and of paths of learning and teaching.

We have, therefore, come to the end.

We would like to thank all the authors who have made this issue possible with their contributions and to those involved in the referencing and editing work.

Last but not least, our thanks go to our esteemed colleague Paula Guerra, who not only features in this issue with her specific and significant reflections, but who has signed this editorial alongside us Italians: a sociologist in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, the University of Porto, and also a professor at the Australian Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research.

Our heartfelt thanks.