

Editorial

Young people, students and infinite worlds

Michele Corsi, Massimiliano Stramaglia e Adrian-Mario Gellel

This copious issue about *Education Sciences & Society* collects three “groups” of contributions.

Some of the reports were held on the occasion of the Third *Week of Excellence*, which took place in Macerata from 21st to 25th October 2019 and was organized and promoted by the Department of Education, Cultural Heritage and Tourism in the University.

That is a Department of Excellence, pursuant to subparagraphs 314-317, Article 1 of the law no. 232 of 2016.

And it had the same title of this issue as its thematic.

Together with a series of other articles obtained as responses to the *call*, which we launched about the same topic of the *Week*. And, finally, other contributions, which are in the *Alia* section, as usual.

Thus, a “tripartite” dossier, where the most prevalent thematic is the one which gives its name to the copy of this magazine and originates from the Third *Week of Excellence*. And it represents the *origin of the origins* for this “instalment”.

So, we decided to also talk about it in this *Editorial* anyway, in order to leave a brief report on what it was, what it represented and how much we wish it could be important for you in the future, even if it is minimal or “stenographic”. The pedagogical core, which is the heart of this magazine, was also the central or the driving factor of this *Week*, as well as the decisive element for achieving the result obtained as a “Department of Excellence”, at a level of the main positive statistical impact.

A third *Week of Excellence* which, in the face of the two ones which had preceded it, registered the participation of almost all the scientific-disciplinary areas in the Department, thanks to the colleagues who made themselves available. In a system of concentric circles among them. On this regard, the supporting element was undoubtedly the “Scientific Committee” that was created and made up of the teachers from Macerata, Simone Betti, Alessio Cavicchi, Rosita Deluigi, Patrizia Dragoni, Alessandra Fermani, Catia Giaconi

and Sabina Pavone. They worked with unquestionable institutional generosity for its effective realization, from March to October 2019. And then, they saw the adhesion of many other professors, researchers and collaborators in the Department, as well as some national and international colleagues, with some of whom this structure also has research relationships and whose contributions are also here. They were coordinated by Massimiliano Stramaglia, who was the diligent, intelligent and indefatigable guide in this enormous scientific and practical effort.

Therefore, this combination of academic presence and collaboration was an undoubtedly rare “number” in the normal life of Italian universities.

Therefore – entering more closely into the subject –, the thematic of this *Week of Excellence*, as well as the *call* in this regard and this issue, is: *Young people, students and infinite worlds*.

With the university which, *finally*, wondered about itself *and its fundamental mission* in view of its present and future.

Since their birth back in the Middle Ages, Universities were and have remained *universitates studentorum*, even in their “substantial habitus”. With the students at the centre of their birth and their work, until they have been their “Rectors” for a long time.

And, now, here is the so-called “student’s centrality”: *University for young people*.

Young people as students coming from our national universities. But also from the international ones. At least, for most of the registered people. Young people and students as an *audience* for this *Week* and this *call*. The “spectators” towards whom they addressed. The subject of their content and their argumentative deployment.

Young people and students called to cross *infinite worlds*. Particularly, in the present and, more, in the future. As they are characterized by continuous and often unforeseen and unpredictable changes, these two temporal dimensions run with the speed of light. Like their current and futuristic complex articulation.

The *infinite worlds* (of Leopardi’s memory) for a difficult and not slight “uphill” existence, in any case.

Like a professional life suspended between an uncertain occupation and work activities which are not known yet and, sometimes, “all to be built” at the moment. With courage, without doubts, but also with creativity and prophetic foresight. Therefore, *unknown*; just as nebulous as a large part of their future appears in general. So much to border on *infinity*.

And, sometimes, around the world. With adults and parents' displeasure of not having them within the "national borders" anymore, but "citizens of the world".

Furthermore, this last consideration is in favour of a school and a university, which should *really* take more care of foreign language teaching: from primary education to graduation. *Anyway and everywhere*.

A *Week of Excellence*, like the related *call* and many of the articles here, which also made the *generational handover* a sort of another *focus*: a *focus in the focus* of the wider and chosen topic.

So that the entire heuristic deployment of the *Week of Excellence* duly started with two study seminars – authentically *of excellence* – and, in the first two half days of the "Conference" – in the sense of *meeting up* and *gathering*, it was precisely addressed to 127 students of excellence in the Department, who had applied for it and were selected and "welcomed" from here.

To continue with a third study seminar – *equally of excellence, as well as due* –, addressed to Ph.D students in the third half-day of the beginning of the works. And, therefore – as it has just been written –, to a later age bracket or "generational world".

About topics such as interdisciplinarity and internationalization; degree thesis, or "initial research" – which is really the "first job" of excavation and methodological impact carried out by university students –, and contemporary youth culture; innovation and territorial development.

With *research* that is *able to produce innovation* and, therefore, how *research and innovation are later in a position to benefit territorial development, in its totality and, nevertheless, infinity*.

All these are "words" or terms, which systematically summarize in a cybernetic key the present we live in and which we should intelligently favour, due to an interactive and hopefully connected future.

Like in De Rosnay's telescope or in Thom's *positive catastrophe*.

These analyses are also in many contributions published here.

Thus, three further *con-text* notations.

The first "number" of this issue is about the proposal to definitively set aside a disciplinarity completely closed in itself: limited, grey and dull, in keeping with an obsolete and distant university age. Not only in favour of the interdisciplinarity already practiced by many of the wisest colleagues and universities, but also the richest and the most consistent and far-sighted alter-disciplinarity: from the first year of three-year degrees to Ph.D courses and *so*

on. That is the high and noble hybridization of knowledge and didactics for the education of a head, which is not already full, but well done, as in Morin's style.

The second one concerns the "reference scheme" of the entire *design* for this *Week and call*: the close and synergic connection among the 5 backbones of the "relationship" between professors and students with place, society and culture. In a kind of a significantly "music" *pentagram*. Or, as a model of a finally complete *prism* with numerous faces. Epistemologically, culturally and historically.

If it is translated into a pedagogical key and the object of investigation for this discipline, it considers the relationship between professors and students as a human and personal foundational relationship.

On the "environmental" background – as in De Giacinto's style – of many places (from micro to macro) and society. With a culture which represents its communication *medium*, *raison d'être* and "typical" *sub-stantia*. From the Thales of the origins to Kant, from Hegel to the entire philosophy of contemporary science, from Kuhn to Feyerabend etc.

So that the current centrality of a student must be pedagogically overcome by the centrality of the interaction between students and professors. Otherwise, the first ones would be inert and almost "silent" monads. And the second ones dumb and passive spectators.

In an empty scene, which is a-finalistic and de-responsible for both of them.

Third notation: – All that is in the name of an evident, unavoidable, necessary and unstoppable *change*.

Infinite worlds was also the slogan of a recent registration and enrolment campaign for the University of Macerata.

Therefore, this expression chosen here was adopted to highlight the close relationship of cultural and political bond, which links this Department to its University once again – if it was needed –, in addition to its hermeneutical positions and the prophetic suggestions it bears. Department and University are like two eyes of a person. A departmental organization, which cannot fail to take *care* of itself on the one hand, and, indeed, it *must* with an assiduous and diligent everyday life. But, at the same time, it cannot fail to look at the University as another epicentre of its own academic commitment.

In fidelity to the "programs" of its academic bodies and in total synergy with at least the last three Rectors who accompanied the birth of the two Faculties of Education and Cultural Heritage and the Department to which they gave birth in 2012: Roberto Sani, Luigi Lacché and currently, in particular, Francesco Adornato. Pursuing their policies for territorial, national and international growth, development and rootedness.

So, the “body” of the Third *Week of Excellence* (in particular, from 23rd to 25th October 2019) was, nevertheless, coherent with the title of the “winning project” of this “Department of Excellence” – the only one in the field of Education in Italy –: *Innovation, Internationalization and Inclusion for University (3I4U)*.

Starting with the extraordinary “Lectio Magistralis” held by Sergio Salvatore, who “inaugurated” it and whose intervention is widely represented in this issue. With numerous scientifically important reports *to follow* in these three days, carried out by both Italian colleagues and the others coming from other countries. In this way, this *Week* is *unquestionably* considered as *the biggest cultural and convention event* that the Department and the two former Faculties have ever organized up to now.

Like the “closing” events which marked it: the presentation of the volume by Massimiliano Stramaglia, with an intelligent, exciting and very strongly attended round table: *Pop cultures. Alterdisciplinary transgressions*.

And with an *overbearing* and central alterdisciplinarity once again.

And, then, two “Workshops”: the first one from Cultural Heritage, carried out by Patrizia Dragoni, and the second one, led by Adrian-Mario Gellel and Patrizia Calefato and coordinated by Massimiliano Stramaglia, belonging to the high specialization on an important “piece” of our life and our present and future research: *the symbolic expression of the youth condition in the three temporal segments of 1977, 1997 and 2017, occurring every twenty years*, (carried out by Gellel) and *fashion, anti-fashion, mass fashion: youth cultures and covered bodies* (held by Calefato).

And, in conclusion, the psychological study seminar on *Emotions on stage. Stimulating emotional intelligence through theatre*, which saw our colleagues Canestrari, Riccioni and Sehdev as “actresses”.

In addition to the online exhibition on the thematic: *Art and objectives of sustainable development*, which was carried out by students and had the colleague Gianluigi Corinto as a tutor.

With students, therefore, as *central* protagonists in this Third *Week of Excellence* from the beginning to the end. During these days, several reports and interventions which involved *the future and the futurity in the “history” already realized* (on the morning of October 23rd), followed by specific parallel sessions in the afternoon of the same day, in line with the morning’s thematic and in a complex trans and alterdisciplinary articulation: in the field of psychology, sociology and socio-politics, museology and inherent to cultural, agro-food, tourism, geographic and ecological heritage and sustainable, biological, historical, artistic-historical and archival-historical, pedagogical-

didactic, technological, artistic, discographic, juridical, economic and heuristic development in its entirety etc.

In agreement with the technical-administrative staff at the University of Macerata and, in particular, with the “Orientation and Disability Office” and the structures working there and in the local territory, such as, for example, ANFFASS.

We hope we have not forgotten any sectors and we could “save us” with the expression *etc.*

So as to admirably and wholly represent both the Department of Education, Cultural Heritage and Tourism in the extraordinary articulation of its areas and scientific-disciplinary fields, as well as the variegated and multiform national and international research lines which animate and feed it and the intelligent and perspective polyphony of many topics dealt with and reported here.

And, now, we are going to conclude.

With some “conclusions” which are actually “meta-conclusions”. And, in particular, two.

The first one: a *re-launch of perspective*, with a forthcoming *Week of Excellence*, which is probably even more unanimous from a departmental point of view and, if it is possible, more polysemantic in view of the thematic to be declined.

And this is the second meta-conclusion–: we do not have to close the “theatre” – to resume one of the “fields” dealt with –, we do not have to lower the curtain and, nevertheless, to have other “shows”, on Calefato, Gellel, Stramaglia’s basis etc., and other *calls*, which could also create one of the next issues of *Education Sciences & Society*.

On this regard, we immediately address to professors and researchers in the Department, in order to keep on working and, moreover, increasing what has been achieved so far, so that it can take its root further and we can increase the levels of cultural comparison and friendship – because the *sofia est filia*: from Plato to Comenio etc. –, not only inside, but also with national and international colleagues to be re-invited for other occasions, without forgetting to spread the invitation to other voices and scientists. From engineering to physical-mathematical sciences and so on – to quote only some of the other possible scientific areas –, in order to more closely examine even that space-time dimension, which has already proved to be so important even in many interventions and reports in this *Week*, as well as in this *call*.

And, now, these *students*. Really *excellent and extraordinary*. Included and participating, numerous, devoted and diligent. *Thank you!*

With an invitation which was constantly addressed to them during all the works of the *Week*: “do not live in the suburbs” of the Department and the University. They must rather attend them in all their manifestations and ask for more. That is, they must pretend that Department and University (the one of Macerata, of course; but even the entire national and international university system) invest more on the centrality of the relationship between professors and learners, so as to make it progress further, giving more *chance* to students and organizing other *infinite* moments for them.

Finally, with three fundamental merits for the extraordinary success of this initiative, as well as for this copious and highly qualified issue of the magazine. We cannot and do not want to omit it.

To Massimiliano Stramaglia, in particular. And, then, together with him, to all the colleagues of the “Scientific Committee” for their extraordinary profuse cultural level and the unremitting zeal of their effectiveness.

With the *intellectual university education* – in the wake of the above-mentioned Sergio De Giacinto – which becomes a central place for students and professors’ reflection and growth, even in the forthcoming *Weeks of Excellence*, and a multifaceted crystal whose brightness is given by the contribution and the symphony of an almost *infinite knowledge*. So that if the pedagogical field is obviously a backbone for this Department – it is useless to deny it –, as well as for the success obtained in 2018 with the achievement of the “qualification” as a departmental structure of excellence, pedagogy is not an autarchic discipline, even if it is *special or specialized*, but it “feeds” on the news and the information coming from numerous other sciences with which it relates and it is adapted to the object of investigation or the class of educational relationships to which it applies – which are never the same ones, so constantly “different” and changeable – and in respect of which it is “called” to carry out its “actions” of diagnosis, prognosis and therapy.

Finally, three reviews are also in this issue.

And, now, “enjoy the reading”.