

# EQUILIBRI

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La globalizzazione ha spinto ad affrontare questioni nuove e, in certi casi, ha indotto diversi campi del pensiero a reinterrogarsi sul loro stesso statuto. È quanto si è manifestato, in particolare, nei mutamenti di prospettiva introdotti nella ricerca economica, negli studi e negli strumenti giuridici e finanziari, così come nelle relazioni internazionali. Meno evidente è l'influenza esercitata dalla globalizzazione in campo storiografico, dove l'attenzione è stata orientata sia sulla storia di altri mondi – mettendo in crisi il paradigma eurocentrico – sia sulle interazioni e sulle connessioni tra regioni del pianeta e popoli tra loro lontani, in una prospettiva di lunga durata. Ciò ha contribuito in modo significativo anche a far comprendere le profonde differenze tra le direzioni dello sviluppo attuali e quelle passate, e le ragioni del ritardo economico di alcune aree del mondo. La liberalizzazione del commercio internazionale e l'apertura del WTO a gran parte delle economie del mondo che ne erano escluse hanno fatto «riemergere» le antiche reti commerciali di lunga distanza, molto strutturate, che negli ultimi secoli – l'epoca della «occidentalizzazione del mondo» – erano state messe in ombra.

Gli artefici di questa «storia globale» – più esatto sarebbe dire «storie connesse» – sono studiosi europei (in Italia pochi, ma giovani, con un interesse dell'accademia e dell'editoria gravemente scarso) e americani, cinesi, indiani, che si sono formati nelle università locali e poi specializzati in quelle americane ed europee, e hanno appreso molto dalle lezioni di Braudel e di Wallenstein. Con interessi e competenze non solo storiografiche, hanno saputo andare oltre, dimostrandosi aperti all'ampia strumentazione delle scienze umane. Nelle più prestigiose università e in alcuni importanti istituti internazionali, alla formazione scientifica si è aggiunto l'utilizzo di archivi poco frequentati o finora chiusi. Questi strumenti hanno permesso di iniziare a pensare diversamente la storia del mondo, evidenziando le «impurità» delle civiltà, gli scambi culturali che hanno facilitato la circolazione di credenze e idee, le differenze che si sono consolidate in resistenze e lasciti dimenticati, che possono però essere recuperati.

Nel mondo unificato dalla tecnica e dalla finanza, lo studio delle connessioni e delle differenze culturali è diventato di primaria importanza. La ricerca

storica di cui necessitiamo è indirizzata dal presente e deve consentire di moltiplicare i punti di vista sulle «trasformazioni» economiche, sociali, culturali, politiche, tecnologiche di una o più aree del pianeta, con una visione specifica e d'insieme. Una visione che metta l'accento sui fenomeni di interazione tra civiltà – commercio, religioni, migrazioni – al fine di valorizzare le connessioni con gli spazi non europei precocemente aperti al Mondo (la prima globalizzazione, con la messa in comunicazione stabile dei quattro continenti, possiamo datarla 1571 con la conquista di Manila da parte degli spagnoli).

Molte sono le questioni che la nuova dimensione della ricerca storica solleva e che invitano alla riflessione. Ci limitiamo a indicarne tre e siamo convinti che il lettore curioso e cooperativo ne troverà altre.

Una conoscenza strategica, orientata da una visione globale di molteplici modelli culturali, può renderci forse più attenti nel «calibrare» politiche internazionali verso popoli la cui storia «statuale» non si è mai sostanzialmente emancipata dalla figura del clan e della tribù, in un'epoca, come l'attuale, in cui lo Stato-nazione è entrato in crisi (con l'aumento delle sue competenze funzionali e il declino della sua sovranità).

Gran parte della storia umana si è svolta in società in cui l'efficacia economica, cioè la massimizzazione della produzione, non costituiva il riferimento centrale dell'attività sociale, almeno fino all'avvento del capitalismo, al cui successo hanno contribuito l'accumulazione primitiva e l'applicazione della scienza nel processo produttivo. La contingenza storica del capitalismo emerge da questi studi, a partire dal celebre dibattito sollevato da Kenneth Pomeranz nell'Ottocento, sul perché a parità di condizioni, l'Europa – al contrario della Cina – abbia imboccato la strada dello sviluppo.

Infine, la «storia globale», per chi si occupa di relazioni internazionali, è senz'altro la lettura più proficua per sfuggire agli effetti devastanti, nella pratica, della teoria di Fukuyama sulla «fine della storia». Una storia è finita, come dice l'autore di uno degli articoli del numero, la Storia globale, la sola storia possibile, ha inizio.

### **FOCUS: GLOBAL HISTORIES, CONNECTED WORLDS**

#### **The Origins of World History, *Giovanni Venegoni***

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*World history* is considered one of the most innovative approaches to the analysis of the phenomena that affected mankind since the fifteenth century. However, its first theorizations were proposed in the aftermath of World War I, and the recently founded United Nations developed the first editorial project at the end of the Second World War. This article shortly analyzes the origins of the *world history* theories and the first attempts, in America and in Europe, to synthesize the history of the planet in one text.

**Keywords:** World History

#### **Considerations on the Relationship between Economic Historiography and the Social Sciences, *Giulio Sapelli***

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Historians, whether scholars of economic history or of the oral and written culture, are first and foremost social scientists, even when they affirm they record an aseptic and distant timeline of historical events. Every chronology implies a philosophy of history. This is the question: what is the philosophy of history underlies the relationship between historiography and social sciences?

**Keywords:** Historiography, Social Sciences, Philosophy

#### **Imperialism and the Rise of Modern Europe: A New Research Programme, *Richard Drayton***

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Who were the protagonists of the European expansion in the XV and XVI centuries? As is well known, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, France, and England played key roles. However, all the European states contributed to

that expansion, both directly and indirectly. While the vessels left Europe from the Atlantic ports with their crews, the inter-oceanic connections took root deeply in the Old World, involving actors belonging to regions that were not directly connected with the expansion process.

**Keywords:** World History, Old World

**History, from Mexico City to High School in Roubaix, *Serge Gruzinski.***  
***Interview by Giovanni Venegoni***

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This interview reports a dialogue with Serge Gruzinski, professor at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris. By focusing on Gruzinski's personal outlook on the world and history, the interview offers an insight into Gruzinski's experience as a historian, citizen of the world, and «*maître-à-penser*». It is an intriguing and fascinating discussion with one of the most innovative historians of his generation.

**Keywords:** World History

**A Balanced World. The Connected Histories of the Iberian Empires (1500-1640), *Sanjay Subrahmanyam***

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Portugal and Spain created, within a few decades, two empires on which «the sun never set». The closeness and the sharing of the experience of the Reconquista are just some of the elements that Subrahmanyam presents in order to highlight the long phase of mutual influence. From America to Asia, from Mexico to India's shores, the historian of the University of California points out how the constant dialogue between ruling class and operators of the two empires has encouraged the development of similar institutions of political choices.

**Keywords:** World History, Connected History, Reconquista

## **China's Regionalism and Trans-systemic Societies, *Wang-Hui and edited by Gaia Perini***

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This essay continues the author's critical research on modernity, the nation state and the concept of China redefined on the basis of its «internal horizons». The keystone of the analysis is the concept of *minzu*, which in Chinese means both nation and nationality, i.e. the many ethnic groups that live on the Chinese territory.

**Keywords:** China, Nation, Nationality, *Minzu*

## **The Start of History, *Bertrand Badie***

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The «end of history» is the concept used in intellectual circles to define international relations. It is based on the idea that since States no longer wage war against each other, or at least in the same way or as frequently as before, we have arrived at the «end of history». This is where globalization has led us: loss of States' sovereignty, triumph of economics over politics, less wars, closure of the world arenas where the States played the role of gladiators, and therefore the end of history. The author shows that, in contrast with this dominant interpretation, we are entering a new era of world relations, an infinitely denser, more universal and human history dominated by the tectonic movements of societies. We are not living the end of history, but the end of a history.

**Keywords:** World History, Globalization, International Relations

## **Seven Theses on Global History, *Franco Farinelli***

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«Global history, before being the history from the perspective of globalization, is the history that starts from the assumption of the revolutionary material structure on which globalization itself is forced to model itself: the

Earth». The author identifies other six main theses for an articulated and in-depth debate around global history.

**Keywords:** Global History, the Earth

## SURPLUS

### Beyond Nature and Culture, Philippe Descola. Interview by Stefania Ferrando

Philippe Descola is one of the most important living anthropologists. He is noted for his studies on the Achuar, a people of the Amazonian region. In this interview, he criticizes the dualistic opposition between nature and human society, which lies at the basis of anthropologist theories and the modern Western view of the world. He explains the four conceptions of the relationships between society, things and animals (the ontologies): animism, naturalism, totemism and analogism. At the end he suggests the different political practices and ideas linked to these conceptions.

**Keywords:** Anthropology, Achuar People

### Risk and Security in Today's World, Eric Landowski. Interview by Silvia Viti

Risk is one of the key concepts of the contemporary academic debate in modern society. It determines the way we deal with the chances and insecurities generated by modernization and technological innovation. Eric Landowski, one of the main scholars of the Ecole de Paris semiotic center and founder of the Socio-semiotic approach, has dedicated his thirty-year-old research to elaborate a methodology to analyze social and political discourse, to describe the relationship we build with the other, to observe the affective and passional dimension of signification. In his last essay, *Les*



*relations risquées*, he faces the role played by risk in everyday interactions. Interviewed by «Equilibri», Eric Landowski explains his innovative theory of risk and offers an original analysis of the Syrian crisis.

**Keywords:** Risk, Security, Modernization

## GEO & POLITICS

### **Australia. Let's Not Choose, *Roberta Giaconi***

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United States or China? It is not an easy choice for Australia between her best ally and her main trading partner, in a moment of geopolitical rebalancing in the Asia-Pacific area. As military tensions intensify, Australia – which has always complained about being on the wrong side of the world – has now realized to be in the right place at the right time: the Asian region in the Asian century.

**Keywords:** Australia, Geopolitics

### **South Korea. The World's Greenest Country?, *Andrea Goldstein***

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South Korea's growth story has been nothing short of exceptional. The same country that in the early 1960s was poor and dependent on American financial and military aid is now at the vanguard of technological development and a proud member of the exclusive club of donor countries. Yet accelerated growth was very dirty, as the environment was sacrificed at the altar of catch-up. The author analyses the recent transformation that is turning South Korea into a global green power.

**Keywords:** South Korea, Growth, Green Power

### **Scotland. Independence Is an Electoral Struggle, *Chris Wright***

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In September the people of Scotland will vote on whether to separate from the United Kingdom. Alongside a range of issues, one factor will help to decide the result: the impact of North Sea oil on Scottish and English finances. The conversation about independence, then, will inevitably raise big questions about energy, the environment and the cost of living.

**Keywords:** Scotland, Independence, North Sea Oil

### **Colombia. The Boom Reaps a Good Crop, *Sandro Malavasi***

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Colombia grows and has signed a number of trade treaties in recent years, a veritable economic boom. Now the debate is focused on how to use the fruits of this boom to improve the life of its people and to prevent a return of social tension that would jeopardize growth. Growth and the country's new energy have had a positive effect on the country's image associated with drug trafficking and FARC guerilla. The drug cartel has been maimed and the country looks forward to concrete results from the negotiations with the FARC ongoing in Cuba.

**Keywords:** Colombia, Economic Boom

## **VISIONS**

### **A Little Theory on Ruins, *Bruno Pedretti***

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The concept of ruin in its modern meaning was born from the awareness that human experience takes place within an historical context, civilization, and culture. From Mantegna to Diderot, Füssli, Winckelmann; from Chateaubriand to Van Gogh, Duchamp, Camus, Kiefer: many artists,

writers and philosophers attest that ruins have become the symbol of the struggle between cultural permanence and natural disappearance.

**Keywords:** Civilization, Culture, Ruins

### **The Theatre in a Suitcase, *Andrea Bellati and a comment by Davide Gorla***

Our shows fit in a suitcase, a big and heavy trolley that trails behind us like the shell of a snail. The reason is practical, and it also stimulates our creativity. We cut what is redundant and we opt for the essential. The suitcase always ends up on the stage and becomes part of the show. It is the cart of Zampanò, the wagon of the Fire Eater.

**Keywords:** Theatre, Suitcase

## **THE WORLD OF PAPER**

### **Making Cities, *Franco Farinelli***

Is a city just a group of buildings? Has this always been the case? And is it still the case? No, replies the author, reminding us that until the end of the 1500s the city was a way of life, i.e. a style of relations and not a set of «objects». Things change between the 1600s and the 1700s, when in the *Encyclopedie*, Diderot defines «city» as «a group of houses situated along the streets». What about today? Based on a map of the city of Milan published in «Il Corriere della Sera», the author explains why we need to find another definition for the term «city», because our idea of the city no longer corresponds to what it really is.

**Keywords:** Cities

## LETTER TO «EQUILIBRI»

### **The United States Grow and North Africa will Surprise Us, *Paolo Scaroni***

Energy and geopolitics have always gone hand in hand: United States, Russia and North Africa are key players of this historical period. The shale gas revolution in America has changed the dynamics of global competition, with non negligible repercussions on Europe. Good ideas and capitals always end up where conditions are the most favorable, especially as far as energy costs are concerned. If Europe aims at industrial rebirth, it must invent an energy «new deal». The author identifies possible solutions in this direction, emphasizing the fact that the trump card could be to reinforce the political relationships with traditional gas suppliers such as Algeria, Libya and Russia, with an eye on the evolution of the energy scenario in North Africa.

**Keywords:** Energy, North Africa