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# Covid-19 Syndemic, A New Concept in Public Health

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*Patrick Berche*

The Covid-19 epidemic emerged in late 2019 and spread worldwide. It is a pandemic defined by the sudden, worldwide occurrence of the same clinical disease in many patients. On March 11 2020, the WHO officially declared the Covid-19 a pandemic that evolved in seasonal waves. The lethality rate (number of deaths/number

of symptomatic patients) was estimated at about 0.5% in western countries and more than 1-2% in several southern countries. As a result, the pandemic has already killed at least 4 million people by June 2021 according to the WHO. The coronavirus SARS-Cov-2 was identified as soon as January 2020, allowing diagnostic tests to be developed and to design very effective vaccines and new therapeutic approaches. No pandemic in the past has benefited such an extensive epidemiological follow-up. This approach is classic during pandemics but it is a restrictive view that does not consider the socio-cultural and political factors that turn out to have a crucial influence on the course of the pandemic and on its mortality.

In the 1990s, the American anthropologist, Merryl Singer introduced the innovative concept of syndemics, which opens new and global perspectives in the epidemiological approach to pandemics such as AIDS (1). A syndemic disease is characterised by the intertwining of diseases, biological, sociocultural and environmental factors that can aggravate the consequences of these diseases and influence the mortality of the pandemic. This concept was first used for major pandemics such as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (2,3). It emphasises that the management of a pandemic cannot be efficacious without taking into account

the health status of populations, living conditions, cultural contexts, mentalities, behaviours... but also the social, political and economic forces at play during a major health crisis. In terms of public health, this means that a major pandemic cannot be reduced to the interaction between a virus and a population contrary to the classic approach.

The concept of syndemic applies to Covid-19 (4). First of all, the Covid-19 pandemic is superimposed on other contagious diseases (AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis) and also to *non-infectious pandemics*, such as those due to non-communicable chronic diseases, such as diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, cancers, and also malnutrition. These disorders are genuine, silent pandemics, since the same illness can affect millions of people worldwide. All these chronic diseases contribute to the high mortality rate of Covid-19, which mainly affects the elderly people and high-risk patients with co-morbidities that are intertwined with nutrition, race, and social determinants of health. Non-communicable chronic diseases (diabetes, obesity, heart diseases...) are the result of nutritional factors and poverty, and interact with Covid-19.

The concept of syndemic also includes sociocultural determinants that play a major role in the development of the pandemic. To combat the pandemic, it is necessary to consider not only the health status of populations, but also their living conditions, cultural contexts, mentalities, behaviours... Covid-19 suddenly highlights the social disparities and the inequality of exposure, particularly the promiscuity linked to cramped housing and precariousness (5), but also the importance of at-risk behaviour and of modest jobs that are essential for population survival. Moreover, the emergence of this new and unknown coronavirus creates stress and fear that can lead to the stigmatisation of infected people and their contacts, denial of the pandemic, rejection of science, disinformation and fake news that create an irrational suspicion that can lead to violence. Fear is also related to social isolation induced

1. Singer M, Introduction to Syndemics: A Systems Approach to Public and Community Health., San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass, 2009.

2. Singer M, Bulled N, Ostrach B, Mendenhall E, Syndemics and the biosocial conception of health, Lancet, 2017, 389:10072, 941-950.

3. Velavan T P, Meyer C G, Esen M, Krensner P G, Ntoumi F, PANDORA-ID-NET and CANTAM consortium COVID-19 and syndemic challenges in 'Battling the Big Three': HIV, TB and malaria, Int J Infect Dis. 2021; 106: 29-32.

4. Horton R, «COVID-19 is not a pandemic», Lancet, 396, 10255, 874, 2020.

5. Islam N, Lacey B, Shabnam S, Erzurumluoglu AM, Dambha H, Chowell G, Kawachi I, Marmot M, Social inequality and the syndemic of chronic disease and COVID-19 : County-level analysis in the USA, J Epidemiol Community Health, 2021 ;75 :496-500. doi : 10.1136/jech-2020-215626.

by barrier measures and lockdown, with consequences for the mental health of individuals. Indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic has a strong impact on mental illness (6), including children, and an increase in suicide rates.

In addition, the robustness of the health and social assistance system, which depends on long-term political decisions, also plays a role in the consequences of Covid-19. At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, political leaders were incredulous and surprised by the magnitude of the phenomenon. Subsequently, the importance of political decisions during this major health crisis was unfortunately

illustrated by the disastrous mortality rates observed in some countries whose leaders denied the existence or seriousness of the pandemic.

This new syndemic approach opens new perspectives in the management of a major health crisis that must be considered globally, not just at the level of a country. It highlights the importance of socio-economic, behavioural and environmental factors, including climate change and air pollution, on the evolution of the pandemic.

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6. Shim RS, Starks SM, COVID-19, Structural Racism and Mental Health Inequities: Policy Implications for an Emerging Syndemic, Medical Psychiatric, 24 Feb 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.202000725>.



## Edgar Morin's Theoretical Revolution

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*Giuseppe Rocco Gembillo*

Edgar Morin turns 100. A thinker of a century, he was able to make us understand the meaning of the scientific revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, just as Kant made us understand classical science.

In seven volumes dedicated to the Method of Knowledge, starting from 1977 he contrasted the mechanistic and reductionist vision of Nature, elaborated by Galilei, Descartes and Newton, with a concrete and historical vision, which also includes the role that all living beings have on their inside. He showed how everything that exists is the result of a historical process of self-formation, deriving from the interactions between entities that disintegrate and aggregate, structuring themselves in forms that last for a certain amount of time. From the interactions, novelties emerge that activate a process that, in an unpredictable way, develops in all directions. He stressed that in the real world there are no isolated objects but events articulated in systems that interact with other systems. He showed that every system is an organism characterized by constant interactions of living parts. In conclusion, he demonstrated that it is a "dissipative

structure" with a temporal connotation and that it lives thanks to the interactions it establishes with the surrounding environment. As such, it is not a definitively "ordered" system, but an organized system that thrives on the continuous regeneration of its own organization.

Morin showed that all that is real is complex and is made up of parts "woven together" that interact productively. For this reason, each existing being does not correspond to the sum of its parts, but is the result of their active interaction. Interaction that produces novelties that are not found in the parts taken individually. To give a very simple example, water is the result of the interaction between parts that are gases characterized by flammability, but which, when interacting, produce a liquid.

Morin also highlighted that the complex approach to reality requires a total revolution in the vision of it, from the genesis of the universe to its most conscious product, the man, who has the ability to rethink himself and the entire path he has led to the surrounding world.

Overcoming the reductionist, mechanistic and deterministic vision of Nature, Morin followed a methodological path which led him to assess the fundamental problems that characterize the presence of the man in the world from a new point of view. He began the journey by emphasizing that the universe of which we are a part is not a defined cosmos but it is in constant evolution and is divided into

parts that are the result of continuous interactions that feed on disorder and inequalities and produce temporary order. Thus, no object can be understood without the interactions of which it is the result. This means that the image of a Nature as a repetitive mechanism, consisting of parts that do not undergo changes, is not real. That is, the vision of a Nature compared to a human artifact in which a piece that changes "fails", makes no sense. While it is true that the pieces of a mechanical watch work until they undergo modifications, on the contrary the parts of an organism, if they change, die, causing the entire organism to die. In this regard, Morin accepted Humberto Maturana's perspective, reiterating that every living being, as well as on a biological level, also expresses itself on a cognitive level, evaluating, for example, whether the food in front of him is nutritious or poisonous. Thus, Morin transformed the idea of the Cartesian cogito into that of computation by declaring that the cognitive act is limited to the human attitude of representing the world, but it is extended to every living being that evaluates the best solution to keep himself alive. Even more at this level, so that the relationship with nature becomes vital and interactive.

Of course, it is up to the human being to become aware of the meaning of everything that exists. In this regard, Morin invited us to distance ourselves from the illusion of possessing certainties and to turn our attention to the truth-error link. He noted that from a theoretical point of view the most problematic aspect was the one consisting in the habitual inattention practised by the knowing subject towards knowledge. Morin, in this regard, posed the problem of examining the "knowledge of knowledge" and, in particular, ideas, on which he made very original reflections.

In fact, since 1959 he has understood that ideas have a double aspect, with opposite effects. On one hand, mankind has made everything starting from ideas. Thanks to them, he was able to invent, from nothing, all the laws and social institutions that regulate human relationships; on the other hand, however, at times, they have conditioned those who produced them so much to become obsessive to the point of pushing those to the most ignoble actions. Therefore, ideas can be either demons that inspire us, or demons that possess us.

Morin also, in controversial contrast with the abstract rationalistic tradition, stressed that ideas are not the result of the "pure reason" that produces them outside and above any historical-environmental context, but have their own precise historical genesis- social. As they are produced by men, they are linked to their plural identity, made up of the language, culture, religion and history of the people to which they belong. Identity that is also reflected in the inherited ethical principles.



Edgar Morin

## Edgar Morin 100 years old

David Nahoum was born in France into a family of Sephardic Jews expelled from Spain in 1492. They had found refuge in Livorno and Thessaloniki. He was turned forever into Edgar Morin, a partisan of the French resistance. His family was a Mediterranean family, he too a man of the Mediterranean, the unifying sea.

He has celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with a lecture at a meeting of UNESCO. Sociologist and philosopher he has fought all totalitarianism and contributed greatly to the idea of Europe. He introduced complexity as a tool in science and teaching. He has been celebrated worldwide. For this event Professor Giuseppe Rocco Gembillo, President of the International Centre on Complexity Edgar Morin at Messina, with collaborators have produced a book, in French, "*La Méthode VII*, Arnando Siciliano, 2021" (Figure 1), and a book, in Italian, "*In cammino with Edgar Morin*" (Figure 2), both published by Armando Siciliano in Messina. He also contributed to "*Cento Edgar Morin*" (Figure 3) edited by Mauro Ceruti for Mimesis (Milan) and including thoughts of a hundred Italian intellectuals.

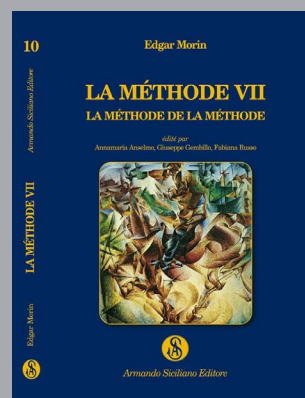


Figure 1

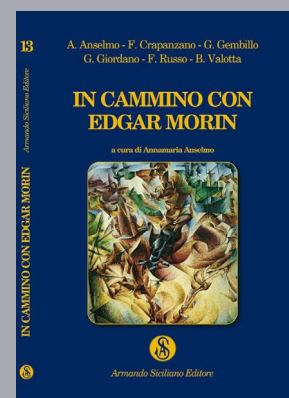


Figure 2

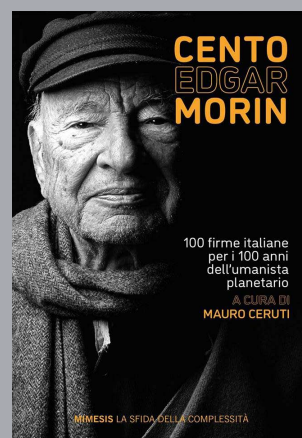


Figure 3

Also, with regard to ethics, Morin has carried out a great work of complexification, completely redefining it. First of all, he made it "historical", emphasizing that it cannot bear the reference to universally valid principles, if not at the cost of becoming abstract precepts external to the subjects who should implement it. Secondly, reiterating the fact that every action is an interaction with countless men and the surrounding environment, he invited us to go beyond the identification between ethics and human behaviour, in favour of an extension of this concept both in

the direction of a bioethics aimed at all living beings; both in the direction of an "ecoethics" that includes our planet in its entirety. A planet that he invited us to recognize as a common homeland, which connects us in a "community of destiny" to which we have no alternatives.



## Professor Garabed Eknayan, the Great Nephrologist and Man

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*Prof. Janusz Ostrowski*

Last year's opening issue of the Bulletin of the European Association of Professors Emeriti (EAPE), edited by Professor Natale De Santo, came with the news from our dear friend, Professor Garabed Eknayan, in which he informed his family and friends about total and irrevocable withdrawal from professional life after a splendid 51 years of academic

activity. In his moving letter Garabed brilliantly and humbly recapitulated his working days and conveyed the message to us for the years to come. Dated 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020, the letter traditionally included Happy New Year wishes (1). Little did we know then that the Professor's sincere wishes for the future would not come true. It did not take long for the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic to be in full swing, virtually crippling the whole globe. How unpredictable and ironic life can be!

However inspirational Garabed Eknayan's letter of wisdom may have been, it lacked detailed information about his private and professional life. And what a life it has been! Immensely interesting, eventful and brimming with professional achievements in medicine, not least in nephrology. Hence, the EAPE Bulletin seems to be the perfect place to present a brief sketch, merely scraping the surface of Garabed's stunning professional life. I am fully aware of the fact that most of the facts mentioned here

will be far from new or surprising for some readers of the Bulletin, especially our friends in nephrology. That said, I am also sure that those representing other fields of science may find this information new and will discover the Great Man.

Garabed Eknayan was born on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1935 in Syria's oldest city, Aleppo, whose history dates back to 1800 B.C., and which suffered inconceivable atrocities during the last war.

He completed his medical studies at the American University of Beirut in Lebanon in 1961 and continued with postgraduate education at his home university in Beirut, at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, at Boston City Hospital in Boston, and as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, USA. Subsequently, already a fully-fledged doctor, Garabed Eknayan started his career in American hospitals. In 1966 he became Chief of Renal Section at the Cincinnati General Hospital which was to be the first of his managerial positions at the Veterans Administration Hospital, Harris County Hospital District and the Methodist Hospital, all in Houston, Texas. It was in 1969-1974 when he obtained a specialisation in internal medicine and nephrology.

His career as a doctor did not thwart his academic activities which commenced in Cincinnati, Ohio at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine where he became Assistant Professor in 1966. Then, he moved to Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, where having climbed the professional ladder from Assistant Professor through Associate Professor up to Professor, he became Distinguished Emeritus Professor in 2020. The University of Houston College of Pharmacy and the University of Texas Health Sciences Center in Houston also had the privilege to have the remarkable professor on board.

1. Eknayan G. Letter to family and friends. Bulletin of EAPE. 2020; 1(5): 79-95.



Professor Garabed Eknayan, Taormina 2012 (photo Janusz Ostrowski)

I, in turn, have been privileged to attend numerous lectures given by Prof. Eknayan over the last 15 years. They have invariably been tremendously interesting, clear and immensely popular. However, it must be said that Garabed Eknayan himself is always an involved listener to lectures given by others and a splendid debater.

He is the author of nearly 400 publications as well as chapters in numerous books and handbooks. His works have been published in prestigious medical journals including *Journal of American Medical Association*, *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, *Nephron*, *New England Journal of Medicine*, *American Journal of Physiology*, *Kidney International*, *British Medical Journal* and many others.

The scope of his clinical and research interests is very wide. Starting his publishing activity in 1962, he has written on renal physiology, clinical nephrology, metabolic disorders in kidney diseases, renal replacement therapy and even urological complications. An important part of his work is devoted to the history of nephrology with the recent publications "*A forgotten chapter in the history of the renal circulation: the Josep Trueta and Homer Smith intellectual conflict*", and "*A historical appraisal of lupus nephritis*" (2020). A point that must not be omitted is his involvement in the publication of "*The Kidney in Systemic Disease*" and "*The Kidney*" - two notable books published under his own editorship and by other great scholars such as Suki and Brenner.

Garabed Eknayan has been a member of many scientific committees of renowned journals such as *Seminars in Nephrology*, *American Journal of Nephrology*, *Contemporary Nephrology*, *Advances in Renal Replacement Therapy*, *American Journal of Kidney Diseases*, *Clinical Nephrology*, *Nephrology Dialysis and Transplantation*, *Revisita Nefrologia* and others. Needless to say, he is also a member of numerous scientific organisations and associations, the first of which was Alpha Omega Alpha. The reader might be interested to know that that society is home to many future Nobel Prize winners. Other associations include American Physiological Society, American Society for Artificial Internal Organs, American Society of Nephrology, International Society of Nephrology, American College of Physicians, American Heart Association, American Society of Hypertension, The Richard Bright Society and International Association for the History of Nephrology (IAHN).

That said, it is the Professor's activity in the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) that deserves special attention. As early as in 1992 he became Member of the Board of Directors only to take on the position of the President of the organisation in 1998-2000. In 1995-2000 he was the founding co-chair of the NKF - Dialysis Outcomes Quality Initiative (DOQI), and in 2000-2005 the founding co-chair of the NKF-Kidney Diseases Outcomes Quality Initiative (K/DOQI). It was during his activity in the NKF (K/DOQI) that the *Garabed Eknayan Award* was established. In 2003, he became co-chair of Kidney Disease Improving Global Outcomes (KDIGO), the activity that gave rise to the new classification of the stages of kidney failure.

His remarkable achievements have won him a number of awards and titles such as the Award of Excellence of the American Association of Kidney Patients, the Award of Exceptional Leadership of the National Kidney Foundation, Sandor Korayi medal of the Hungarian Society of Nephrology, the Medicus Hippocraticus Prize of the Foundation Internationale Hippocratique, Master Clinician Lifetime Award and Alumni Distinguished Service Award by Baylor College of Medicine, and honorary membership of the IAHN and the Polish Society of Nephrology given in 1994 (2).

What I personally find worth mentioning is Garabed's input in the creation and development of the International Association for the History of Nephrology (IAHN). Not only was he one of the founding fathers of the Association and its President in 1996-1998 but he is still one of its most prominent leaders. He has taken an active part in each one of the Association's congresses to date and has always offered his invaluable advice and help in preparing the scientific programmes and post-congress publications in nephrology journals. Therefore, it borderlines on the impossible to imagine the next 2022 IAHN congress in Turkey without the participation of our dear friend, as announced in his letter (3).

In conclusion, Professor Garabed Eknayan is undoubtedly a unique figure in the medical world, especially in the field of nephrology. He is known all over the world for his scientific and didactic achievements, respected by everyone for his openness, sense of humour, enormous knowledge and experience. On 1<sup>st</sup> April, Garabed Eknayan celebrated his birthday. We wish him health and fulfilment of the plans he mentions in his letters to us, with the hope that we will meet again during future scientific events.



2. Eknayan G. Curriculum vitae. 2020.

3. Ostrowski J., Rutkowski B. International Association for the History of Nephrology. *Nephrol. Dial. Pol.* 2009; 13: 179-182.

# 800 Years from the Foundation of the University of Padova: Daniela Mapelli Elected as First Female Rector

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The University of Padova, one of the oldest in Europe, will celebrate its 800<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2022. During such a long lifespan it attracted and educated multitudes of students from every country, regardless of their religion and political ideas, according to its motto *Universa universis patavina libertas* ("worldwide full freedom of Padova"). Just a few names of illustrious scholars are sufficient to document the role played by the University of Padova in the progress of knowledge and advancement of science, especially during the Renaissance: Galileo Galilei, who, according to his own records, spent in Padova, the "best 18 years of his life"; Fabrici ab Acquapendente, the inventor of the "stable anatomical theatre"; the famous Flemish physician Andreas Vesalius, who obtained a doctorate and became Professor in Padova in 1537; William Harvey, who in Padova studied the blood circulation; Reginald Pole, Canterbury's archbishop; Erasmus of Rotterdam; Giovanni Battista Morgagni, the founder of anatomic pathology, and many others.

Another memorable milestone in the history of Padova's University was the first graduation granted to a woman: Elena Lucrezia Corner, who in 1678 achieved a degree in Philosophy.

Given this premise, we must say that time was more than ripe for the University to have, at last, a female Rector: Daniela Mapelli, Professor of Neuro-Psychology. She was elected on June 18<sup>th</sup> 2021.

Despite her relatively young age, the new Rector is neither a new entry nor an outsider, since she was already vice-rector for teaching affairs during the previous rectorship.

Born in Lecco (Lombardy), a small town close to the Alps, she spent her adolescence hiking as scout with the "spiders" of Grigna and Grignetta mountains. She later



*Lorenzo A. Pinna*

*Bernhard Schrefler*

*Gaetano Thiene*

enrolled at the University of Padova, where she graduated in Experimental Psychology in 1991, with full marks and honours, soon passing the Board Examination.

She made a quite linear academic career: PhD student at the Experimental Psychology PhD School in Trieste, including two years stay at the Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, US; post-doctorate scholarship in Padua with Prof. Arrigo Umiltà as supervisor; assistant professor in the Faculty of Psychology; Associate Professor and since 2016 Full Professor of General Psychology.

She has been President of the Neuroscience and Neuropsychiatry graduate School, coordinator of the Ph.D. course "Brain Mind and Computer Science" and chief of the Neuropsychology Laboratory.

From 2015 to 2021, Daniela Mapelli, by covering the post of Vice Rector for teaching activities, became familiar with the management of the Academy.

Her main fields of research are Cognitive Neuroscience, Clinical Neuropsychology, Neuropsychology and rehabilitation, non-invasive transcranial stimulation, attentional process, spatial representation, as documented by an ample scientific production covering her whole academic career (see e.g. ref. [1-6]).



*Prof. Daniela Mapelli*

In addition to 51 papers, she has published 6 books, 8 book chapters and 70 meeting abstracts and proceedings.

She acts as reviewer for 13 major international journals.

Last but not least, she devoted time for clinical counselling of outpatients in the Department of Medicine and clinical wards in the Department of Cardio-Thoraco-Vascular Science.

As vice-Rector for teaching activities Daniela Mapelli crucially contributed to the process of "internationalization" of our university.

In particular she promoted an advanced type of internationalization directed towards African countries: formation of the local leadership on the spot instead of in European Universities, by creating local Universities of European standard. Beyond the obvious mutual advantages for the involved countries, such as increased economic and cultural exchange, this will also help to relieve the migration pressure on these countries by helping to speed up development locally. In the case of the University of Padua this has been achieved in Cameroon by transforming the local *Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Travaux Publics (ENSTP)* of Yaoundé from a Technical College into a genuine Technical University of Italian standard. This has been achieved with the strong help of our teaching staff commuting between the two Universities since 2010, selecting the best available students, teaching, and also supervising Master theses. The same curricula as at the Engineering School of our University have been adopted. It was a successful enterprise, crowned on March 19, 2016 by a ceremony with the participation of the President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella. During that event the incoming Rector, at that time Pro-Rector for Teaching Affairs, handed over the Master Diplomas to the first 76 engineers who graduated in this new Technical University (see Figure above). Needless to say, these engineers were immediately hired locally and by Italian companies working in Cameroon. There is now an increasing exchange of students between the two universities and some of them are enrolled in our doctoral schools, until a local doctorate is created, as already planned.

As *Rettore Magnifico*, Daniela Mapelli will soon have to face many challenging tasks, with special reference to reorganizing and optimizing teaching after the "pandemic storm" and



Daniela Mapelli with the Italian President at the graduation of the first engineers of ENSTP (Yaoundé, Cameroon)

further improving the scientific level of our university. Under her guidance, moreover, the University of Padua is going to celebrate its 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary, coincidental with the beginning of the first female Rectorship. We are also confident that Daniela Mapelli, given her cultural background, will not overlook even "minor" issues, such as, from our standpoint of EAPE members, the still

neglected exploitation of the "human capital of age". At present emeriti professors are entirely ignored in the website of the University of Padua, a list of their e-mail addresses is not available and, more important, these academicians, often still eager to transmit their knowledge to younger generations and able to raise funds for making excellent research, are neither allowed to take part in the schools of doctorate nor to perform scientific projects as part of their academic duties. We are confident that the new Rector will annotate also these "marginal" issues in her busy agenda.

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# Creativity of Aged Composers, Soloists and Conductors

## Camille Saint-Saëns, a Great Master of Intellectual and Creative Longevity

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Enzo Viccaro

Camille Saint-Saëns (Paris, 1835 - Algiers, 1921), *grand maître* of French music, was the protagonist of a creative course of incredible duration - about 80 years! - always rich in constructive strength and formal beauty, in a happy balance between passionate impulses and mystical elevations: a classic perfection preserved even

into the fiery climate of the avant-garde of the early twentieth century.

100 years after his death, here are some brief notes on this very long and fruitful life as an artist and, in particular, on some works of his last years, to discover a creative resilience and longevity that have found their nourishment in a multifaceted activity as a musician, critic, cultural organizer, and in an inexhaustible intellectual curiosity.

A very precocious talent - his first little sketches for piano would date back to 1839! - he studied organ and composition in Paris. In 1853, at just 18 years old, he wrote his first Symphony, of amazing perfection and which already showed his typical ease of construction combined with an infallible taste for the seduction of form and sounds.

A great organist and improviser, and from the age of 40 also a pianist acclaimed worldwide for his clear and noble touch, Saint-Saëns certainly had Liszt and Wagner in mind when, in 1871, in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian conflict, in a climate of national *revanche*, he is one of the founders of the *Société Nationale de Musique*, which intends to promote the French music of its time; a sort of

competition/emulation with Germany which reveals the composer's own personality: German in the solidity of the form, French in the nuances of harmonies and timbres.

He was an authoritative music critic and essayist, often wavering between traditionalism and positivist progressivism; the versatile Camille cultivates interests ranging from myth to archeology, from literature to physical and mathematical sciences: he writes poems, comedies, even astronomy essays!

The musician transfers the Parnassian poetic ideal of aesthetic purity of '*l'art pour l'art*' into the incessant daily chisel work of his compositions: about 170, belonging to all musical genres.



Camille Saint-Saëns

In the field of opera, his recognized masterpiece remains *Samson et Dalila* (performed in Weimar in 1877 thanks to the interest of Liszt). There is at least one late-maturity masterpiece to be rediscovered, *Déjanire* (1911): at the age of 76, Saint-Saëns, recalling the myth in the footsteps of Sophocles and Seneca, gives us a sort of concentrated secular oratory, marked by an "archaizing *dépouillement* ('spoliation') of the means of expression" (1).

In sacred music, on the other hand, the religious inspiration seems to exalt rather than contain the voluptuous aestheticism of Saint-Saëns as, for example, in *Le Déluge*

*op. 45*, French oratorio for solos, choir and orchestra in which he mixes Berliozian and Wagnerian influences with fugues of Handelian strength. But it is in the copious instrumental production that Camille expresses all the energy of his inspiration, which grows over the years and which we find in the sensual and celebratory '*élan*' of the splendid *Third Symphony op. 78 with organ* (1886),

1. Gorla L. *Déjanire* in *Dizionario dell'Opera* (edited by Piero Gelli); Milan: Baldini&Castoldi; 1996, p. 290.

masterpiece of "musical fervour, controlled by masterful symphonic skillfulness" (2).

And while musical Europe gradually slipped towards the avant-gardes, he remained anchored in tradition: for him musical research was not a revolution, it was a refined and sometimes ironic game, as in the famous *Carnaval des Animaux*, 'Grand Fantaisie Zoologique', divertissement with a Rossinian spirit and, at times, very modern atmospheres that almost foreshadow Erik Satie.

Saint-Saëns is undoubtedly one of the most relevant cases of resilience and longevity in the history of Western music: in the catalogue of the last three years of life (1919-1921) we still find 14 compositions. Among the works of 1919 we find the *Third Fantasy in C major Op. 157 for organ* (the beloved instrument of a lifetime) and *Prière in G major Op. 158 for cello and organ*. The *Fantasy* is a rhapsody of sonorous images that appear and dissolve – now impressionistic now neoclassical – that has nothing to envy to Debussy. In *Prière* the organ accompanies the religious and passionate singing of the cello: a melody with refined nuances that seem to resonate with the verses of Verlaine's *Art poétique*: "*Car nous voulons la Nuance encor, Pas la Couleur, rien que la nuance!*" ('For we still desire the Nuance, not Colour, only the nuance!' transl.: R. Hull).

A delightful page from 1920 is *Odelette for flute and orchestra Op. 162*, with the luminous evolutions of the soloist suspended on the transparent texture of the chamber orchestra (strings, two oboes, two bassoons): a small masterpiece of classicism, never contrived, relived with a moving adherence of feeling and form.

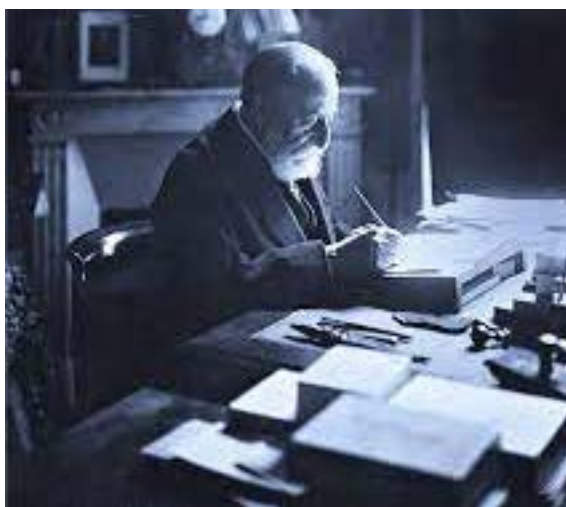
Then, in 1921, the last year of his life, the eighty-six-year-old Saint-Saëns miraculously gives us three masterpieces in the genre of the Chamber Sonata, respectively for oboe (Op. 166), clarinet (Op. 167), and bassoon (Op. 168), all three with the piano as their ideal partner. Here the form is both free and perfect, the style is plain, essential, very

clear, the invention flows with the ease and happiness of a Mozartian spirit that has reached the finish line intact.

In the *Oboe Sonata in D major Op. 166* the enveloping and soft dialogue with the piano of the initial *Andantino* is of a neoclassical purity. The cadences *ad libitum* of the oboe on deep arpeggios of the piano – glimpses of astonishing freedom – lead to the pastoral dance of the *Allegretto* and to the sparkling final *Molto allegro* (3). The *Clarinet Sonata in E-flat major Op. 167* begins with the nostalgic 'chanson' tone of the *Allegretto*, sometimes Brahmsian. To this follow the playfulness of the animated *Allegro*, then the serious accents of the *Lento*, which develop a swaying processional figure, almost like a night procession with

mysterious echoes; these are suddenly dissolved by the brilliant virtuosity of the *Molto allegro*, cyclically closed by the reappearance of the melody of the initial *Allegretto*. This piece is an enigmatic game of expressive contrasts, an original gem in the clarinet repertoire (4). The *Bassoon Sonata in G major Op. 168* begins in the *Allegretto moderato* with the crystalline arpeggios of the piano on which the bassoon rises with another very elegant chanson motif, perfect for enhancing

the soft and sensual timbre of the instrument. The first movement is followed by an *Allegro scherzando*, then by a *Molto adagio* of Bachian intensity, and finally by a short *Allegro moderato* that joyfully closes the last piece of this impeccable triptych of Sonatas (5): a fascinating chapter – all to be rediscovered – of European music of the early 1900s, written in the clear sunset of a great creative life.



Camille Saint-Saëns at work



3. Saint-Saëns C. Oboe Sonata op. 166. Albrecht Mayer oboe, Karina Wisniewska piano – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-6nlohJTQ>

4. Saint-Saëns C. Clarinet Sonata op. 167. Annelien Van Wauwe: clarinet, Lucas Blondeel: piano – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2iTzsS6iOo>

5. Saint-Saëns C. Sonata op. 168. Ondřej Šindelář: bassoon, Dušan Holý: piano; Prague, Suk Hall, Rudolfinum – House of Artist; November 2008 *Live recording* – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTwrFOusEOE>

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# The Culture of the Forest

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Orazio Ciancio

The forest is an essential asset for humankind. Today there is a general awareness that any disturbance which contrasts with the delicate and complex mechanisms that regulate the dynamic balance of forest ecosystems causes damages that can be only partially recovered.

Now more than ever the relationship between humankind and forests must be interpreted in an evolutionary and synergic manner. The need for rethinking this relationship depends on various factors: biological variability, forest autopoiesis, a changing environment, the interdependence between economic, social, and cultural processes. And because culture is part of the evolutionary history of the humankind-forest relationship, it is this relationship that inspires "forestry thought".

Recent progress in environmental and forestry science have promoted a change in the approach to the forest. This is based on how knowledge is conceived, i.e. epistemology, and on the value system, i.e. axiology.

The last years have seen the rise of a culture of development based on three Es: Ecology, Economics and Ethics. In this framework every effort should be aimed at conserving natural resources and protecting forests, which is an urgent global priority.

## Sustainable forest management and the scientific paradigm

Forest management has evolved over time, shifting from a mainly productive concept, which valued cultivation systems and methods in relation to wood production, to the current concept of sustainable forest management, which considers not only wood production but also ecological and social variables.

The notion of sustainable management is connected to biodiversity, shifting the focus from a quantitative problem to a qualitative one: sustainability and diversity are not independent but interrelated. The concept of biodiversity goes beyond the protection of single species or biotopes, it concerns ecosystems and their functioning and includes the coevolutionary processes among the different parts. Different ecosystems sustain different life forms, habitats

and cultures and their coevolution determines biodiversity conservation.

From the scientific point of view research has tried to demonstrate that complex biological systems can be understood only with a reductionist approach. This vision is strongly advocated by those who endorse "aesthetics" in science, and look for a rigorous, precise, and elegant science, such as Newton's mathematics.

Since the times of Plato, aesthetics has inspired an idea of science where everything is beautiful, symmetric, and deducible from a small number of fundamental principles. Our idea instead agrees with those who believe that aesthetics in nature becomes science because it originates from formidable complexities, which can be found also at the most elementary levels.

Recently, forestry science has demonstrated that the forest is a "complex biological system"(1). This is posing ethical problems which can be solved only by linking knowledge with wisdom. Maybe we should consider an idea: the *entire intellectual landscape* has changed, and the result is a different, wider, and more comprehensive vision of the forest.

To understand how a forest functions, we must look both at the single parts and at the whole. Holism and reductionism are two faces of the same medal. One is opposite and complementary to the other. The scientific paradigm is completely different, but the aim is the same: the highest possible level of understanding of nature.

## The values of the forest

Western culture has traditionally considered nature for its *instrumental value*. *Instrumental value* is the value that something has in relation to the needs of humankind; *intrinsic value* is instead the value that something has independently from the needs of humankind. Today many believe that we should move from considering the value *of* things to fully appreciating the value *in* things, especially when dealing with biotic communities.

1. Ciancio O., Nocentini S., 1997. *The forest and man: the evolution of forestry thought from modern humanism to the culture of complexity. Systemic silviculture and management on natural bases*. In: *The forest and man*. (O. Ciancio ed.) Florence, Italian Academy of Forest Science, 1997, pp. 21-114 (available at: <https://aisfedit.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/forest-and-man.pdf>).

If the forest has a right to exist, then the problem of rights is inevitable, as has been pointed out by several philosophers and academics. We cannot continue to consider the forest as an instrumental asset, that is an *object* that can be shaped according to the desires and interests of humankind, we must instead take into account its intrinsic value (2,3). Our behaviour when dealing with the forest must be one of respect and management must focus on interventions which sustain the forest itself.

A common mistake is that of considering and managing forests as if they were systems isolated from other systems, or, at most, connected only to the market. But forest management cannot be based only on market economics because, as Georgescu-Roegen (4) wrote in 1975, "the market mechanism by itself results in resources being consumed in higher amounts by the earlier generations, that is, faster than they should be."

The connection forest-market, as it is structured nowadays, is based on a *growth process* that almost always causes the *non-growth* of the other systems interacting with the forest. Thus, the harmony between interacting systems, which is indispensable for sustainability, is missing.

A crucial point of the question is linked to the conflict between ecology and economics. There is an increasing awareness that problems can be solved only if economics and ecology are also associated to ethics. Foresters have usually preferred to look at science for the solution of problems, but the current debate is showing the failure of the technocratic approach. Until words like "sustainability" and "biodiversity" will not be associated with values, they will not be able to give concrete answers to real problems (5).

The analysis of the theoretical foundations of forest management has promoted the definition of *systemic silviculture*, that is a new forestry vision which widens the scope of the values at stake and bases sustainability on the intrinsic value of forests. The forest is not seen any

more as a simple group of trees, but as a complex biological system where humans, an essential part of the system, can intervene without reducing its complexity and diversity, i.e. within the limits of the system's functionality (1, 3).

### The forest: a cultural asset

For a very long time the forest has been considered both a *reserve* and a *resource*. Starting from the eighteenth century it has been increasingly considered as a *resource* and less and less as a *reserve*. But in the last decades we are witnessing a different trend.

The 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention linked together the concepts of nature conservation and preservation of cultural properties. The forest can be fully recognized in what at the time was defined as *bien culturel* because it belongs to culture, that is, to the history of civilization and to peoples' traditions. The forest is a vital, strong system, a subject in our lives, and it must be considered a cultural and environmental asset. Biodiversity has a cultural value because it enhances local traditional knowledge which is cherished by the communities which live by the forest.

The current debate on the values of the forest is the most evident demonstration of this change. Specialist of various provenance are participating in the debate: philosophers, scholars, jurists, economists, biologists, anthropologists, historians, geographers, environmentalists, theologians. The effort is to extend the object of research with the aim of opening new and wider horizons. Charles Percy Snow (*The Two Cultures*, Cambridge University Press), in his famous lecture at the University of Cambridge in 1959, pointed out the separation between what he called "the two cultures", on one side the "scientists" and on the other side the "literary intellectuals".

Today, the culture of complexity goes beyond academic formalism and the consequent fragmentation of knowledge, it reconnects knowledge from different disciplines into an organic whole, based on the study of non-linear systems.

The "culture of the forest" is not an option, it is a necessity, and the local and individual interests that often oppose it must be overcome. The forest can be protected and respected if it is at the center of society's interests and not on the outskirts. We must promote a "cultural progress" which considers the forest for its intrinsic value and cultural dimension. This is the premise for a new alliance between Humankind and Nature, truly a new frontier!

2. Ciancio O., Nocentini S., 1997. *Forest management between ecology, economics and ethics*. In: *The forest and man*. (O. Ciancio ed.), Italian Academy of Forest Science, 1997, pp. 223-236 (available at: <https://aisfedit.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/forest-and-man.pdf>).

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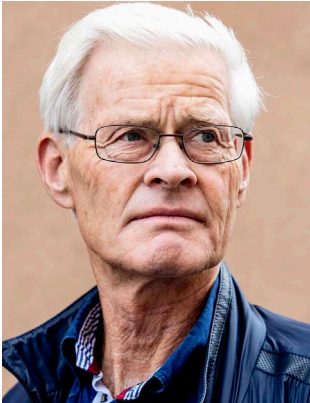


# Neurocultural Imperialism

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*Per Brodal*

**Neuroscience has high prestige, but critical voices claim that its results are being oversold. Do the scientists promise to explain phenomena that neuroscience cannot explain?**

**Keywords:** Neuroscience, mind-brain, neurocultural, reductionism, mereological, critical thinking

A long professional life in experimental neuroanatomy has made me increasingly sceptical about how many neuroscientists understand their own field and how they

present it to the public. I still remember the impression it made when, in 1992, I read an editorial by David Galin in the first issue of the journal 'Consciousness and Cognition' (1): "...in my youth I had been led astray by hard sell and high social standing of naïve reductionism". This aptly put words to my own growing unease of what I felt was uncritical reductionism among many – even leading – neuroscientists. With 'naïve' in this connection David Galin meant that the scientists were not aware of the limitations inherent in their explanatory models and therefore drew untenably wide conclusions from their results. "Pernicious reductionism" was the term he used of those who not only over-interpreted their results but also claimed that the parts were more real than the whole, and the smaller the parts, the more real they were.

## Prestige

Neuroscience has even higher prestige in 2021 than in 1992 and attracts enormous funding through programs like The US BRAIN initiative, the EU Human Brain Project, and private donations. Nevertheless, this is obviously not enough: a Science article in 2014 states that increased funding of neuroscience research is a moral obligation if we want to take seriously mental disorders among adolescents (2). Mind you, this was not a solitary voice but based on a prestigious symposium supported by the US National Institute of Mental Health. The same institution (the world's largest within its field) ascertains in its

strategic plan that mental disorders must be understood and treated as brain diseases (3). The policy statements of the main neuro-initiatives appear to take for granted that more neuroscientific research is necessary to be able to answer our deepest questions about ourselves as thinking, feeling, and acting beings in a complex world.

## Is Neuroscience Oversold?

Several critical voices have been raised recently, however, on what is considered oversell of neuroscientific data. Some have even used words such as "neuromythology", "neurotrash", "neuromania", and "neuromadness" to express their dismay.

A recent and weighty contribution to this critique is the book "Being Brains. Making the Cerebral Subject" by Fernando Vidal and Francesco Ortega (4). It should be emphasized, however, that their critique does not concern neuroscientific research as such. They state initially that no one would be against research aiming at understanding and treating serious brain diseases. Furthermore, knowledge of brain structure and function has an intrinsic value. The critique of Vidal and Ortega concerns what they see as extravagant claims and uncritical applications of neuroscientific results. The title of the book alludes to the tendency to reduce human beings to their brains, in which explanation of all human phenomena is thought to reside. The authors assert, however, that neuroscience is not always helpful or even relevant when trying to explain complex human phenomena – in contrast to the claims of many neuroscientists and institutions trying to attract funding for their projects.

The first part of the book provides a historic overview of the views of the connection between mind and brain, criticizing how many neuroscientists today treat brain

1. Galin D. The blind wise men and the elephant of consciousness. *Conscious Cogn* 1992; 1: 8-11.

2. Lee FS, Heimer H, Giedd N, et al. Adolescent mental health-opportunity and obligation. *Science* 2014; 346: 547-48.

3. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/about/strategic-planning-reports/introduction.shtml>.

4. Vidal F, Ortega F. *Being brains. Making cerebral subjects*. Fordham University Press, New York 2017.

and mind as the same. The second part describes the development from the early 1990's of what Vidal and Ortega term 'an expanding neurocultural universe'. The third part discusses the use of neurologic terms to explain conditions such as schizophrenia, autism, depression, obesity, and alcoholism. The fourth and last part provides a critical appraisal of how neuroscience is used and, not least, misused in popular culture.

### Confusion about Brain and Mind

Statements such as "you are your brain" may sound innocent but entail, in reality, a conflation of two fundamentally different phenomena. As expressed by the psychologist Lisa Feldman Barrett (5): "Psychological states such as thoughts and feelings are real. Brain states are real. The problem is that the two are not real in the same way, creating the mind-brain correspondence problem. "The mind (psyche) is furthermore not a unity. We use the word as a practical, although imprecise, manner of speaking to encompass numerous specific human capacities and their use (think, feel, plan, remember, decide, want, intend, mean, believe, judge, speak, and so forth). Therefore, neuroscience will never be able to tell us what the mind is, not because it is too metaphysically elusive to be amenable to scientific inquiry but because it is no unity at all. Feldman Barrett furthermore emphasizes that psychologists (but it pertains to neuroscientists as well) looking for causality speak of psychological facts as if they were physical facts that can be localized in the brain. Thereby, they attribute to the brain capacities that are meaningful only when used of a person. This is called a *mereological error* by Bennet and Hacker in their book "Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience" (6). The error is to ascribe to a part, property that gives meaning only when ascribed to the whole. Without specific brain activity we cannot think, but I am the one who thinks, not my brain. Here are a few examples of erroneous use of concepts when neuroscientists convey their subject to the public in newspapers: "Of course you dislike injustice. But only now we can ascertain that your brain instinctively agrees with you"; "The brain is stern but just"; "How to get the best from your brain"; "The scientists scan the brain for self-discipline". Do the scientists mean that you and your brain are two independent units? Am I and my brain two parts that communicate with each other? Does it give meaning for me to agree or disagree with my brain, or to talk with my brain? Is self-discipline a physical entity that can be localized in the brain?

5. Feldman Barrett L. The future of psychology: Connecting mind to brain. *Perspect Psychol Sci* 2009; 4: 326-329.

6. Bennett MR, Hacker PMS. The philosophical foundations of neuroscience. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford 2003.

### Imperialistic Neuroculture

The Neuroculture as described by Vidal and Hortege now encompasses several new subject fields with the common prefix *neuro*: economy, ethics, law, philosophy, anthropology, culture, and so forth. *Neurosociology*, for example, is defined as use of neuroscience in the study of society. While these new fields may appear rational, Vidal and Hortege point out that they promise to answer questions of which neuroscience can say very little. The prefix assumes that psychological phenomena can be localized in the brain, where we can seek for "objective" answers to our deepest questions about consciousness, learning, personality, and so forth. Thereby, fields with the neuro prefix are given a weight and explanatory value that allegedly is lacking when studied by the methods of the social sciences and humanities. At this point the inflated prestige of neuroscience often trumps common sense and critical thinking. Many seem to accept that neuronal activity associated in time with a psychological phenomenon is more real (objective) than the person's (subjective) experience. Consequently, it is concluded that if we can localize the brain substrate of a mental phenomenon and document it "objectively" with neuroscientific methods, we avoid concerning ourselves with mental life as subjective phenomena. This is misunderstood, however: pain, for example, is an experience a person has, and it is, by its nature, subjective. To talk of subjective pain experience is at best unnecessary but at worst it suggests that there also exists "objective pain" – i.e., a pain for which the doctor finds a bodily cause.

### Amygdala and Emotions are not the Same

Specific brain processes are obviously necessary for a person to have an experience. Nevertheless, the neurons and neural processes *are* not the experience, and it does not help a patient to hear that the "pain sits in the head" (except when the person has a headache). Further, do we understand motivation, joy, and sorrow better by being informed that dopamine (among many other neurotransmitters) plays a role in brain processes underlying these mental phenomena? Although amygdala is among the structures most closely associated with emotions, is it misunderstood to talk as if the emotions were located in the amygdala or to use the words amygdala and emotions as synonyms. This is as misguided as it is to seek the meaning of the word transport by examining each small part of a car.

### The Emperor's New Clothes

Vidal and Ortega are indeed critical of the belief that neuroscientific methods can do much to explain the connection between the brain and psychological

phenomena. Often, trivial neuroscientific results are presented as providing deep insight and novel understanding of the human mind and human behavior. Numerous articles, books, and websites launching methods for self-help and learning claim that they build on neuroscientific research. Most of them, however, do little more than putting together behavioural data with trivial neuroscientific knowledge. Results from brain scanning, for example, become more than trivialities only when one can establish connections between differences in brain structure and function on the one hand and psychological theories on the other; the latter being much closer to explain behaviour than neuroscience. This requires the building of bridges between

neuroscience and cognitive psychology – that is, between different levels of explanation. An excellent example of such bridge building is the book by Shallice and Cooper (*The organisation of mind*, OUP, 2011). They assert that a deeper understanding of mental processes is hampered by the tendency of neuroscientists to ignore the cognitive (psychological) level of explanation. Such a reductionistic approach, explaining mental processes by neuroscientific data only, is unfortunately still widespread.



# Limitations and Delimitations of Academic Freedom in Pediatric Healthcare Systems

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**Limitations** of pediatric healthcare systems like university children's hospitals rely on influences that pediatricians cannot control. These restrictions can be due to nature, methodology and administrative rights such as the right for academic freedom during patient care, teaching, training and research. By contrast, **delimitations** are choices and decisions made

by pediatricians themselves. These restrictions are based on individual, moral and professional ethics to avoid an abuse from academic freedom in critical or controversial situations. Therefore, it becomes important to identify and to promote any possible action aimed at protecting this academic freedom.

The word "pediatrics" refers to a complex range of activities including "science" (production of new knowledge), "teaching" (various types of interactions student/teacher pre- and post- graduation), "post-graduation updating" (active or passive teacher/student interactions). Therefore, the financial resources supporting pediatric activities may come from three different general systems: scientific, teaching and healthcare activities.

Consequently, the appropriateness of the financial support to the three pediatric activities depends on the quality of interaction among the different financial support systems. If so, what should be done to deliver transparency, efficiency and fairness to the entire supply chain which is characterized by

cooperation of departments but also by competing divisions?

First, it should be kept in mind that such a problem does not pertain only to pediatric activities. This is indeed a general problem in university hospitals. However, children's hospitals have great difficulties to become a profit generating department. In other words, there is a competition for the financial support between pediatric, surgical and medical departments. Second, there is also a competition between pediatrics and other healthcare providers protecting the health of children from birth to adolescence. Within this complex scenery those of us, university pediatricians, engaged in science and in teaching have two main roles and responsibilities:

1. To honestly define the needs and wants concerning finances, technology and workforce which are necessary to sustain the present status and to allow future developments of child healthcare services.
2. To work with the highest possible quality in using the resources made available for protection of health from birth to adolescence.

Therefore, two steps should be separately and adequately assured:

1. A general and operational system for the education to scientific activities.
2. Honest and competent interaction in the decisional system in establishing the scientific resources and those necessary for specific projects.

In other words, two systems are called to quality and responsibility:

1. That specifically pediatrics, having quality, credit, esteem.
2. The responsible system in financing the activities should have full credibility concerning its decisions.

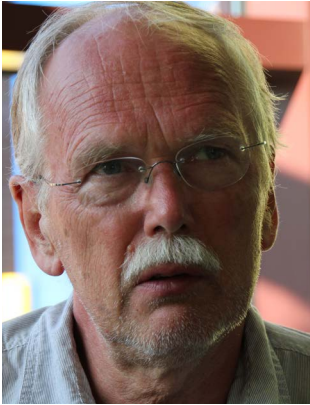


# There is a Need for Young and Old People to Read Books Together

Jochen Ehrich

Children's Hospital, Hannover Medical School, Hannover, Germany  
Coordinator of the Committee on Linking the Wants and Needs of Children and Old-Olds

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Jochen Ehrich

At an early stage of development most *children believe in fairy tales* and in magic moments like Christmas Eve. In his book "Children need fairy tales" (1), Bruno Bettelheim established a connection between the fairytale world and childlike experience and thinking. He was arguing on different levels and connected the structure of

the fairy tales with childlike thinking, and their content with developmental stages of children and related to them with fairy tale themes concerning developmental crises during childhood. One of the key messages of many fairy tales is the assumption that *wants and wishes* of people may have a good chance to become reality if the *belief* is strong enough. This philosophy is of course highly attractive for young children.

Old people no longer read fairy tales for their own pleasure; however, they love to read them for their grandchildren. Do old people no longer believe in *magical dreams*? When grandparents meet their grandchildren and start telling stories of their own past, they like to use the words "*Once upon a time, I was...*". However, this may sound like: "A long time ago, I had wonderful times which unfortunately will not come back." It is possible that this sentimental feeling of old people is transferred to young children and these may feel sorry for their old grandparents. How about using a different sentence: "Let me tell you a story which happened in my youth, *when wishing still helped... wonderful, isn't it?*" This sounds like hope, like an encouraging statement that miracles may happen - not only in fairy tales.

*Wishes are an expression of the human hope and will.* Wishes are full of energy and creativity. Are old people suffering from a lack of wishes, thus, indicating a lack of hope, will and energy? If fairy tales will not fascinate old

people how about the role of *fantasy literature*? Fantasy is a genre of speculation set in a fictional universe inspired by real world myth. Oral traditions became later on fantasy stories. Fantasy expanded to film and video games. Fantasy is distinguished from *science fiction* by the absence of scientific themes. *Utopian literature* is aiming for an idealistic world where everything is perfect. Could literary fiction help young and old people to cope with everyday life? In fantasy stories the world seems to be separated from reality and science. Thus, the readers can develop their own world. Could fantasy literature establish a connection between a fictional universe on one side and child and adult like experience and thinking on the other side? I conclude that transferring imagination into reality could become the basis for creativity of young and old people.

*Is adult thinking different from child thinking?* "Curiosity, imagination, fantasy, and continuous questioning: the child seems to be a natural philosopher until the age of eight to ten years, when the initial spirit of inquiry mysteriously seems to fade. What happens to them? Innovative ideas, dreams and endless speculations: adolescents and young people start creating and planning their own new world. Have they reached the level of becoming experienced philosophers? Rational decisions, pragmatism, disillusion, lack of time for thinking, and poisonous competition seem to rule the life of adults. Has the adult world missed the chance to practice philosophy and more importantly to understand the child as a philosopher?" (2) Gareth Matthews took up these concerns in "*The philosophy of childhood*" (3). Philosophy is orientation in thinking and at the same time orientation in the world through thinking. From this perspective, doing *philosophy is an essential task for survival*.

Philosophy puts a strong emphasis on methodological as well as logical aspects. Philosophy can be practised or trained. If old people practise philosophy with their grand

1. Bettelheim B (2006) Kinder brauchen Märchen. Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag.

2. Brock B (2018). Philosophy aims at the health of the soul: the role of philosophical practices for children. In Ehrich J, Corrad F, DeSanto NG. This I think should have priority in child healthcare services. The personal philosophies of people involved in child healthcare services. Barke, Medizinische Hochschule, Hannover p. 138-141.

3. Matthews GB (1994) The philosophy of childhood. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

children, ideally both parties can profit from the training because children are doing philosophy differently from old adults. Old adults possess greater experience in thinking, so that they can guide the children in the thought process. By contrast, childlike thinking is more naïve – innocent, as Nietzsche put it (4). Infantile thinking distinguishes itself through a form of refreshing naivety, which adult thinking has lost over the years. This naivety can sometimes have an unmasking quality.

Thinking does not blindly accept common knowledge. While old adults are inclined to comfortably confine themselves in a shell of pre-established truths, children are not as quick to settle for common sense explanations. They do not accept explanations that are contrary to their own worldly experience. Children cling to what they have seen, no matter the parental assurance that “such and such is definitely the case”. Persistently questioning children are able to help the old adults to get to the deep meaning of things by hindering the old from coming up with prejudices or immediate answers that prevent a deep illumination of the matter in question.

Those old adults who do philosophy with children should ask what a child has seen and what answers it has given

4. Nietzsche F. The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred ‘Yes’. In: Thus spoke Zarathustra, Book 1, On the three Metamorphoses; Translation Kaufmann W, New York 1966, p. 27.

to questions. Old people should not patronize children. It is absolutely essential in education “to give children responsibility in accord with their level of development – also for their thinking”. “Patronizing - even based on a nurturing intention - is the death of child philosophers whose central organ is imagination” (5).

A philosophical education for children emphasizes responsibility. Philosophical education is an invitation to think for oneself in a twofold manner: on the one hand through the practice of thinking, the “capacity to use one’s own intelligence”, as Kant phrased it (6); and on the other hand, through imparting a fundamental disposition of openness. Basically, everything can be questioned and put into different perspectives. To wonder in this context is not so much an expression of naivety, as the precondition of an incipient mode of thinking, which does not only operate logically, but also creatively.



5. Saner H (1977) Geburt und Phantasie. Von der natürlichen Dissidenz des Kindes. Basel.

6. Kant I. Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung? Gesammelte Schriften (Akademie Ausgabe). Vol. VIII, Berlin 1912; p. 33-42.

## NEWS



### Emeriti and Retired Professors as a Potential Resource for Good if Adequately Supported

Luigi Campanella  
General Secretary of EAPE  
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An interesting debate took place on June 2, in the course of the webinar on **Ethical and Legal Aspect of Retired Researchers and Professors Emeriti Contribution in Public Goodness**, organized by Professor **Jože Gričar**, Emeritus University of Maribor for the **Professors Emeriti Network**.

The core problem is that many countries have adopted a position toward emeriti/retired professors which is inadequate in relation to their cultural role. It is supposed that, due to age, their contribution cannot be meaningful and that they are in a preferential position compared to other workers. Euklems (European Union + k for capital, l for labour, e for energy, m for material, s for service) is a European project which created a

data bank relating to industry level, growth and productivity. One aspect of the role of the bank is about performance and salaries of workers older than 50-60 years. The conclusion, valid in all European countries, on this topic is that older age people are assigned a lower efficiency and capacity by the common thinking of others and consequently receive lower salaries. This correlation between age and salary is lost only in the case of very high-level study degree. In the case of retired/emmeriti professors the pension amount is constant and very near to the salary. In the absence of cultural evaluation, the common feeling of many people is, as already pointed out, that retired/emmeriti professors are a “lucky component” of the

working community. To contrast this position, it is essential that we maintain our role in continuing, as much as possible, to teach, to study, to help, to guide, particularly paying attention to the young who accept advice from the elderly, very well.

With reference to the Italian situation the participation in the knowledge market by retired/emeriti professors is very subjective as related to individual engagements and possibilities. These activities are often offered free by us and so represent a supplement for public resources. Why are such assets not always accepted? It is difficult to find a reasonable answer. In Italy, in relation to emeriti/retired we observe differences between scientific and humanistic departments. In the case of scientific departments generally the role of emeriti/retired is strictly linked to their very long experience and ability in the managing of experimental methods and techniques, especially regarding the interpretation of results. In the case of humanistic departments their role is linked to their connection with political power and local institutions (municipalities included). For both the kinds of departments, depending on the local situations, office space and other privileges are not available or not granted. This situation occurs even if the ethical and legal position of professors emeriti and retired researchers and their contribution to the public good is recognised.

The fundamental premise is that addressing the effects of ageing by improving and strengthening intergenerational solidarity is one of the solutions to ensure that everyone can participate in doing something good for the community. The formal and social status of professors emeriti in Europe, as referred to above, varies widely, reflecting cultural and traditional attitudes towards the elderly in general. Intergenerational learning, including mentoring or experience-sharing, enables young and old to build mutual solidarity in joint efforts to find better solutions. In parallel with the policy response to the socio-economic impact in the welfare of society, there is a need to discuss how professors emeriti can contribute to the establishment of intergenerational collaboration. This means that retired academic experts should be given basic options to be participants in the public good.

The task of the experts of working groups is to collect data, coordinate exchanges and promote discussion. In this [hyperlink](http://eregion.eu/slovenia-professors-emeriti/) "http://eregion.eu/slovenia-professors-emeriti/".



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### The Centenary Congress of the International Society for the History of Medicine (1921-2021)

*Riga, August 2021*

*The 47<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Society for the History of Medicine (ISHM) was initially scheduled to take place in Riga (Latvia), in August 2020. This pre-centenary Congress of the ISHM has been postponed to **August 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021** due to the ongoing SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and in the hope of a classic "face to face" meeting. Nevertheless, the Congress has been formally opened virtually on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The 47<sup>th</sup> ISHM Congress will be held in August 2021 as the *Centenary ISHM Congress* either in an online version, or in a physical form, if possible. In one way or another, there will be a chance to meet each other again, analysing and better understanding the history of medicine and medical ethics, as well.*

*Under these particular circumstances, the call for papers has been renewed and the deadline for abstract submission is now March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The limit for one presenting author is of three abstracts (English language), as specified on the site*

Dana Baran

ISHM General Secretary

Email: [ishmsecretariat@gmail.com](mailto:ishmsecretariat@gmail.com)

of this scientific event <http://ishm2020.rsu.lv/>; [www.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/ishm2020); [twitter.com › ishm2020](https://twitter.com/ishm2020); [express.converia.de](https://express.converia.de) › frontend).

Celebrating one hundred years of uninterrupted activity – except for WWII time-lapse – is a unique moment. Globalised pathologies and fight against various life threatening conditions redimension the necessity of international cooperation in the attempt of drawing useful lessons from the past intended to improve present and future history of humanity.

EAPE members are kindly invited to visit the Congress website and participate in the 47<sup>th</sup> ISHM Congress.



# 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Instrumental Methods of Analysis Modern Trends and Applications

*Virtual Event, Organized by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki  
and the National Technical University of Athens*

*September 20-23, 2021*

Prof. Maria Ochsenkühn-Petropoulou

National Technical University of Athens

Email: [oxenki@central.ntua.gr](mailto:oxenki@central.ntua.gr)

The scientific program will consist of keynote lectures, oral and poster presentations given by a wide mix of scientists and engineers from the established academics and world leaders in analytical chemistry to the dynamic and ambitious postgraduate student. Furthermore the Conference aims to attract contributions from companies, including presentations of new instrumentation, new applications and assessment of future commercial trends and opportunities. A very energetic and dynamic scientific gathering is anticipated!

The event, Co- Chaired by Prof. Manassis Mitrakos (Aristotle University Thessaloniki), Prof. Maria Ochsenkühn-Petropoulou and Assist. Prof. Fotis Tsopelas (National Technical University of Athens), brings together some of the most talented and innovative analytical chemists from all over the world for an excellent scientific online conference.

Website: [www.IMA2021.gr](http://www.IMA2021.gr)



## Lifelong eLearning and eEducation

Wednesday, September 29, 2021, 17:00-18:30 CET

**ZOOM meeting of the Professors Emeriti Network**, and the representatives of **the network University eLearning & eEducation Group**. European Association of Professors Emeriti is participating.

On the occasion of the **International Day of Older Persons**, October 1, 2021.

**Contacts:** [joze.gricar@UM.Si](mailto:joze.gricar@UM.Si)



## Global Webinar on Healthy Aging for the World Day of Older Person

Naples, Fraternity of Pilgrims in Naples

Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup> 2021, 6.00-7.30 PM (CEST)

To mark the United Nations 'Decade of Healthy Ageing' and to celebrate the World Day of Older Persons on October 1st 2021 the European Association of Professors Emeriti and the Reference Site Collaborative Network organized an event that will take place on September 30<sup>th</sup> from 6.00 to 7.30 PM in Naples. The event will be also host on RSCN GoToMeeting Communication Platform (connection details below) and will be streamed on Youtube .

Some of the Honorable Speakers who have already confirmed their presence are: Prof Vincenzo Bonavita, Director of Hermitage Capodimonte (*Aging and the neurologist*), Giuseppe Paolisso, Professor of Gerontology and Geriatrics at the University Luigi Vanvitelli (*What is Aging*), Prof. Maddalena Illario, Reference Site Connective Network (*Active aging*), Don Tonino Palmese, President of Polis (*Reflexions on Aging*), Giancarlo Bracale, President Mediterranean Federation of Vascular Surgery (*The vascular surgeon and the needs of older persons*), Natale Gaspare De Santo, President EAPE

(*The need for a Ministry of Older Persons*), Vincenzo Galgano, President of the Fraternity of Pilgrims (*Conclusion and take home messages*).

**Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.**

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**Contacts:**

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Fraternity of Pilgrims:

[segreteria@arciconfraternitapellegrini.net](mailto:segreteria@arciconfraternitapellegrini.net)

## Event in Person to Celebrate the World Day of Older Persons

Messina, Italy, Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup> 2021, 5.00-8.00 PM

The European Association of Professors Emeriti and the Accademia Peloritana Pericolanti in Messina are organizing on September 30, 2021 (5.00 PM- 8.00 PM) an event in person to celebrate the World Day of Older Persons. The event will take place in the Main Hall of the Accademia.

**Program Chairs:** Guido Bellinghieri and Vincenzo Savica (EAPE Founders).

**Speakers:** Antonio Arcoraci (*Introduction*), Guido Bellinghieri (*The fragile patient*), Cosimo Inferrera (*The cry of the organs and / or the test tubes?*), Rosa Musolino

(*The new frontiers of cerebral stroke*), Vincenzo Savica (*The new future of carnitine in aging*), Anna Gensabella Furnari (*The elderly and their double role in treatment*), Vittorio Nicita Mauro (*The goal to age in beauty*), Rosellina Zamblera Crisafulli (*Harmonious health union of mind, soul and body*).

**Patronage:** The Order of Physicians of Messina, Federation of Retired Persons, Association of the Wives of Italian Physicians, Italian Association for Organ Donors.

**Contact:** [gbellinghieri@hotmail.com](mailto:gbellinghieri@hotmail.com)



## On the Occasion of the International Day of Older Persons

Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia, Friday, October 1, 2021, 10:00-12:00 CET

**Collaboration of municipalities in publishing the eService Guide for Seniors 55+ who take care of their parents, who are 75+.**

The meeting -in person- is organized in Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia by the municipalities that published the *Guide* in September 2021 in collaboration with government

organizations that provide eServices to seniors. **Professors Emeriti Network** and the **European Association of Professors Emeriti** are participating.

**Contacts:** Dr. Jože Gričar, Professor Emeritus, University of Maribor, Slovenia, [Joze.Gricar@um.si](mailto:Joze.Gricar@um.si)



## International Day of Older Persons 2021 The Canadian – European Emeriti Event

October 1, 2021

Last year the European Association of Professors Emeriti (EAPE) published a special edition of this Bulletin to celebrate the International Day of Older Persons. This year the Association is co-sponsoring with the University of British Columbia (UBC) Emeritus College a webinar on October 1 about insights into healthy ageing.

Keeping fit and well into the post retirement years is a hot topic these days. Nearly 10% of the world's population is 65 or older, according to the United Nations, and that is projected to rise to 16%, or one in six people, by 2050. So as we are living longer, how do we stay vital and energetic? How do we continue to contribute meaningfully to the community? And how do we keep our minds sharp? These are just some of the issues experts will address at the October 1 global panel discussion entitled, "Healthy Ageing".

Co-sponsored by UBC Emeritus College and EAPE, the session spotlights the UN's "Decade of Healthy Ageing" (2021 to 2030) and the International Day of Older Persons which is always marked on October 1. It also marks the first international collaboration for UBC Emeritus College, started in 2018 as a resource supporting UBC faculty and senior academic administrators in the transition to retirement through academic work, mentoring, research and publishing. For EAPE it is a first global collaboration following on several recent European collaborations.

There will be two speakers each from UBC and EAPE followed by a panel discussion jointly moderated by Professor Luigi Campanella, a prominent chemist from Sapienza University of Rome and General Secretary of EAPE, and Associate Professor Emeritus and Vice-President-elect of the UBC Emeritus College

Dianne Newell

Email: [dnew@mail.ubc.ca](mailto:dnew@mail.ubc.ca)

Les Ebdon

Email: [les.ebdon@beds.ac.uk](mailto:les.ebdon@beds.ac.uk)

Anne Junker, an MD and rare diseases clinician in immune deficiency disorders.

The panel will feature Dr Judith Hall and Dr John Helliwell of UBC. Canadian Medical Hall of Fame member Dr Hall, OC, MD, DSC, FRSC and FCAHS will draw from her research to explore the topic: 'Do emeriti have the opportunity for a new stage in their academic career?' UBC Emeritus Professor of Economics Dr Helliwell, OC, FRSC, and co-editor of the "World Happiness Report" will speak about key supports for happy, healthy ageing.

From EAPE the distinguished paediatrician Emeritus Professor Jochen Ehrich MD, DCMT (London), of Hannover, Germany will delve into "the needs and wants of children and elderly people concerning healthy ageing", contending that preventative measures will have to start early in life to allow for healthy ageing. The EAPE President-elect and Emeritus Professor Sir Les Ebdon CBE, DL, DSc, DUniv, CCHEM and FRSC,

is an award-winning analytical chemistry researcher, former University Vice-Chancellor and lead University regulator. He was knighted by her Majesty the Queen in 2018 for his contribution to education and social mobility. Sir Les will talk about the importance of life-long learning and healthy ageing.

This global webinar will be from 9 to 11 am Pacific Standard Time which is 19.00 to 21.00 Athens time, 18.00 to 20.00 Paris time or 17.00 to 19.00 London time. The webinar is free to attend and will be on the Zoom platform open to the public, UBC community and emeriti groups across Europe and Canada. It will be necessary to register in advance and to do so you should go to the UBC Emeritus College web-pages, or use the following link where further details may be found:

<https://global.ubc.ca/news-events/news/jun-23-2021-emeritus-college-and-european-partners-share-healthy-aging-insights-oct>



## The World Day of Older Persons 2021

Athens, Greece, Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup> 2021, 7.00 PM

The Association of Professors Emeriti of the University of Athens, presided by Professor Stella Prioivolou will celebrate the World Day of Older Persons 2021.

The event will take place at 7.00 pm on October 4<sup>th</sup> at the Amphitheater of Ioannis Drakopoulos at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (30, Panepistimiou Str., Athens).

The speaker will be Professor George Christodoulou, Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry, University of Athens,

President, Society of Preventive Psychiatry, former President, World Federation for Mental Health and Councillor of the European Association of Professors Emeriti. He will deliver a lecture on "Dysfunctional and Adaptive Senility".

**Contacts:** [gdrosatou@gmail.com](mailto:gdrosatou@gmail.com)



## ■ INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

*The Bull Eur Assoc Profs Emer* is a multidisciplinary journal fostering the idea that the vocation for research and teaching is for life and protecting full use of the human capital of professors emeriti.

The Bulletin adopts the Vancouver style. Authors are invited to visit the website of the Association and read the last issue. Manuscripts shall be in good English in Word, font 12, with good illustrations and shall be emailed to the editor in Chief, Natale Gaspare De Santo MD.

• Email: [nataleg.desanto@unicampania.it](mailto:nataleg.desanto@unicampania.it)

Original manuscripts (Word file) around 900-1100 words shall include affiliation(s), email and phone numbers of the authors, as well as 5 keywords from the manuscript. Preferably titles should not exceed the length of 50 characters (spaces included). A portrait of the 1<sup>st</sup> author is required. 1 Figure and 1 Table (emailed on separate sheets) and a maximum of 6 references and a minimum of 3 are allowed. References must be numbered and ordered sequentially as they appear in the text. When cited in the text, reference numbers are to be in round brackets.

Manuscripts related to news about emeriti and their associations shall be limited to a maximum of 500 words, and up to 3 references; no portrait of the author is required, but 1 Figure or 1 Table can be added.

All manuscripts undergo editing.

At the end of the article number references consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text. For articles with more than 6 authors, list the first 3 authors before using "et al."; For articles with 6 authors, or fewer, list all authors.

### JOURNALS

1. *Journal article published electronically ahead of print*: Authors may add to a reference, the DOI ("digital object identifier") number unique to the publication for articles in press. It should be included immediately after the citation in the References.

Bergholdt HKM, Nordestgaard BG, Ellervik C. Milk intake is not associated with low risk of diabetes or overweight-obesity: a Mendelian randomization study in 97,811 Danish individuals. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2015 Jul 8 (Epub ahead of print; DOI: [doi:10.3945/ajcn.114.105049](https://doi.org/10.3945/ajcn.114.105049)).

2. *Standard journal article*. List all authors when 6 or fewer; when 6 or more, list only the first 3 and add "et al." Abbreviate journal titles according to *Index Medicus* style, which is used in MEDLINE citations.

De Santo NG, Altucci P, Heidland A et al. The role of emeriti and retired professors in medicine. *Q J Med* 2014;107: 407-410

3. Committee on Infectious Diseases, American Academy of Pediatrics. Measles: reassessment of the current immunization policy. *Pediatrics* 1989; 84:1110-1113.

### BOOKS and other MONOGRAPHS

1. Personal authors

Antier JJ. Jean Guittou. Milan, Paoline, 2002

2. Committee report or corporate author

World Health Organisation. Good Health Adds Life to Years. Geneva, WHO, 2012.

3. Chapter in book

De Santo NG. The priority: broadening the boundaries of paediatrics and turning basic science into cures. In Erich J, Corrad F, De Santo NG, ed. This I think should have priority in child health care services. Joachim Barke, Hannover 2018:69-71.

4. Agency publication

Committee on Infectious Diseases, Report of the Committee on Infectious Disease, 22nd Edn. American Academy of Pediatrics. Elk Grove Village, 1991; 319-320.

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Plato. Laws. <http://data.perseus.org/itations/um:cts:greek-Lit:tlg034,perseus-eng1:3.666> (accessed May 14, 2020).

2. Online journal article

De Santo NG. The Impact of Covid-19 on Education and Science Florence in the XIV century -after plague, famine, death and depopulation- generated Renaissance Scholars such as Filippo Brunelleschi, Giovambattista Alberti and Leonardo An Achievable goal for our Universities. *Bull Eur Assoc Prof Emer* 2020; 1(2): 19-20. (accessed 14 May, 2020)

### EMAIL MANUSCRIPT TO

Natale Gaspare De Santo, MD

Editor in Chief • *Bull Eur Assoc Profs Emer*

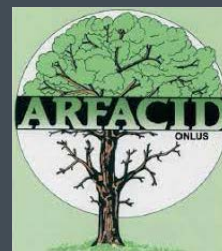
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