

Letter from the Editors

Dear reader,

Since 2006 the Euresis Association organises a series of annual Symposia at the University of San Marino, devoted to the discussion of fundamental topics in modern science. The themes are taken from across disciplines and chosen based on their relevance and breadth of impact. In some occasions, the Symposia also focused on reflecting about the scientific endeavour itself, in an enlightening exercise that invites world-leading scientists and scholars to speak openly about their personal experience of creativity and discovery. The subjects treated until now, including consciousness and evolution for example, are all at the forefront of research and share that high degree of complexity which characterises much of contemporary science. It is this complexity, filled with multidisciplinary interfaces, that responds for the widespread sense that scientific progress can no longer be achieved without cross-fertilisation.

The route of specialisation followed so successfully by science in the course of the past century has prized us with the possibility to formulate many of the fundamental questions about nature, by then an exclusive subject of philosophical inquiry, within the sphere of the scientific method. Given the nature of such questions (Where do we come from?, What is the fate of the Universe?, What is it to be human?), and the limited technical resources available to tackle them, it should not be too surprising that the current state of affairs leads us to a position of greater openness to dialogue. It should surprise us neither that each discipline, with its own methods, arrives at singular perspectives on its way to answer these questions, exalting those particulars which are more akin to the adopted approach.

What is then the novelty we arrive at after the experience of six San Marino Symposia, apart from saying that interdisciplinarity is here to stay? Each discipline follows its own methodologies, carefully drafted and developed to suite the requisites imposed by their respective objects of study. Scientific ingenuity is indeed master in identifying and tackling problems according to this epistemological principle. So large has been its success in asking the good questions with the right tools that it currently incurs in a grave danger: To invert the principle above and attempt to circumscribe reality to those aspects belonging to the realm of investigation of the scientific method, thus identifying reason with a restricted set of its capacities.

In San Marino, instead, we are learning that no true synthesis of knowledge is possible by following an exclusive line of inquiry - the basic prerogative of interdisciplinarity - or by adopting a particular method of knowledge as absolutely preferred to all others. The experience of the San Marino Symposia has been constantly revealing an unexpected plurality which exists within the unity of every subject discussed, dismissing in every case the possibility of a complete "patronage" of reality by whichever discipline or set of disciplines one might consider better tuned to understand it.

This is also clear in this fourth issue of EJ, dedicated to "Biological Evolution and the Nature of Human Beings." It thus suggests us that this perception of the importance of interdisciplinary research today is less of a contingent characteristic of the problems we happen to be dealing with, but more likely holds the potential for an epistemological shift. The truth of this affirmative is still to be verified, but in a world which science shows to be rich beyond all expectations, such plurality might well be awe-inspiring, but should not bewilder the open mind.

The Editors. ■