

Editorial notice

Anthropological Legacies and Human Futures is the title of the 14th Conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists which takes place in Milan in July 2016. As an active part of this initiative, the editorial board of *Antropologia* has deemed it appropriate to prepare one issue that can transmit the idea – albeit partially – of the themes which will be debated during the conference by a vast array of varied panels.

In this issue, anthropologists from Italy and other countries discuss, from both ethnographic and theoretical perspectives, arguments that are closely bound to disciplinary inheritance and the future towards which human culture and society are progressing.

Rather than aiming to provide in-depth reflections on the disparate topics put forward in the articles, we would like to simply underline how certain articles insist on the need to re-evaluate the task of anthropology in light of theoretical, institutional and political conditions currently seen in the field. These conditions certainly vary from country to country but, on the whole, demonstrate the “retreat” of human sciences in the face of an advance from those which Marilyn Strathern has called audit cultures: conceptions of scientific research based on the double axiom of economic efficiency and of good practice (Strathern 2000).

For those who reason with these axioms, anthropology is “problematic”. However, the true problematic nature of anthropology does not stem from either a lack of returns in terms of economic efficiency, or from that of good practice; where the former is clearly understood as a mere calculation of profit and the latter is based on disciplinary research practices that are modeled on standards which are abstract, quantitative and inadequate even for “hard sciences”. The problem is due, rather, to the “critical” nature of the discipline, which is closely linked to its ability to traverse diverse worlds and produce, at the same time, a discourse that always has the potential to cast doubt, not only on itself but also on the presuppositions, the axioms, upon which audit cultures are based. Certainly, there are conformists to be found amongst anthropologists, but fewer than in other sciences.

The diverse nature of the articles presented here, on themes such as the understanding of nature, changes in work relationships, the politics of development, gender conceptions, ever increasing waste from mass consump-

tion, resources, and new forms of affectionate and familial relationships, as stated, is “held together” by the efforts with which, in the spirit of the July conference, the authors of the works have strived to treat the future as a potential “cultural resource”. A “resource” not only as a possible development in the cultural construction of the communities and societies anthropologists study, but also for the very same anthropologists who are committed to finding a future and providing a legacy of inestimable value.

The Director, Ugo Fabietti
The Editorial Board