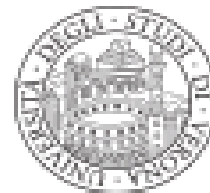Riccardo Pozzo

Innovation
for
the Reflective Society

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Abstract

'Cultural innovation' sounds like an oxymoron. It is not, though. It is something real that tops up social and technological innovation. How can we measure 'cultural innovation'? The answer is, as a result of co-creation. Items of cultural innovation are: content providers such as museums, science centres and libraries, as well as processes triggered by issues such as cosmopolitanism, inclusiveness, mobility, migration, heritage and creativity. The paper offers migration relate case studies for evaluating the impact of cultural innovation in societies that aim at being inclusive, innovative and reflective. Valuating the impact is fundamental to improve societal acceptance of public investment in culture, because these measurements may provide a basis for aligning research and innovation with the values, needs and expectations of society.
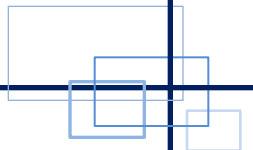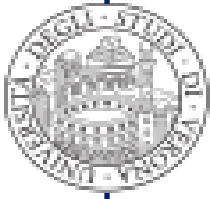
ESFRI SWG SCI

'Social and Cultural Innovation' is a syntagma that is receiving increased usage among researchers after it was chosen by the European Strategy Forum Research Infrastructures (2016) for the name of the working group that deals with research infrastructures primarily connected with Social Sciences and the Humanities.
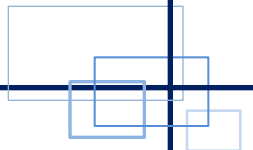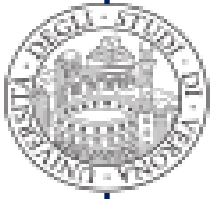
Context

Globalization has made it clear that a most urgent objective is to work out policies of social and cultural innovation to the advantage of citizens – policies that aim at achieving changes in the regulatory environment that make societies both inclusive and reflective.
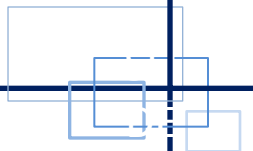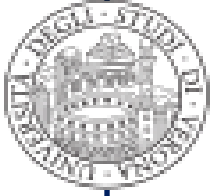
An oxymoron?

Cultural innovation is something real that tops up social and technological innovation by providing the reflective society with spaces of exchange in which citizens engage in the process of sharing their experiences while appropriating common goods content.

Public Spaces

We are talking of public spaces such as universities, academies, libraries, museums, science-centres, but also of any place in which co-creation activities may occur, e.g., research infrastructures such as DARIAH-Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and the Humanities.

At this level, social innovation becomes reflective and generates cultural innovation.
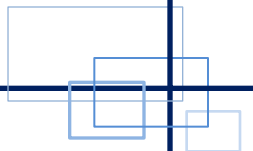
# Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective Societies
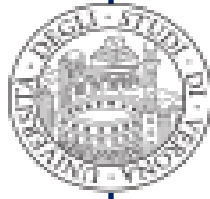
The 'reflective society' is also a syntagma that has found wide usage among researchers since a precise date, in this case the fall of 2013, when the European Commission introduced it for posting Social Sciences and Humanities related calls within the sixth societal challenge of Horizon 2020, the one about 'Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies'.
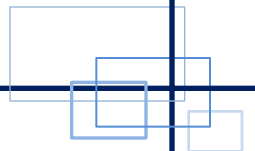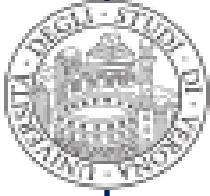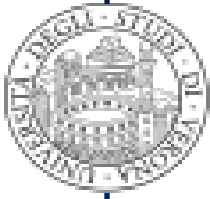
Faro Framework Convention

The Faro Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society of UNESCO (2007) encourages reflection on the role of citizens in the process of defining, creating, and managing a cultural environment in which communities evolve.
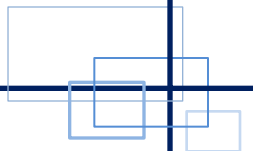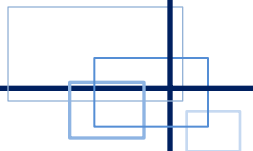
Culture needs Innovation

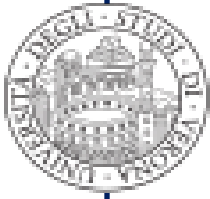We still know little about cultural innovation, though.

The syntagma is mentioned at times just to say that culture too needs innovation and in fact produces innovation:

    museum studies foster innovation in museography;

    archaeology fosters innovation in data science that becomes data humanities;

    music and art foster innovation through social networks.

Heritage-led Innovation

We can talk of 'heritage-led innovation', which means that culture fosters technological innovation.

Digitisation is in itself innovation.

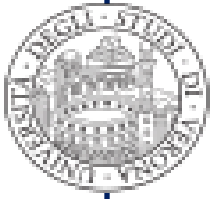Data science has become data humanities.

We still need a great deal of reflection on digitization.

However, we can look at it the other way around.

Cultural innovation tops up social innovation, which on its turn relies on technological innovation.

Innovation must come to term with social innovation, then, this is a European requirement.
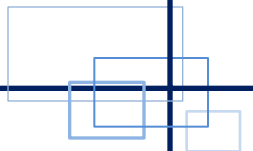
Identity and Diversity

The question is what part of social innovation is cultural innovation and what rights can cultural innovation claim with respect to society (Koefoed 2017)?

A preliminary answer is: European cultural heritage marks our cultural identity, which is at the same time cultural diversity.

The European Year of Cultural Heritage is about identity and diversity, said Jean-Claude Juncker in his opening speech at the *European 2017 Culture Forum* in Milan on 7 December 2017.
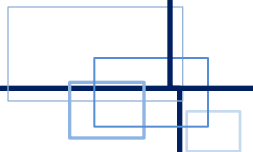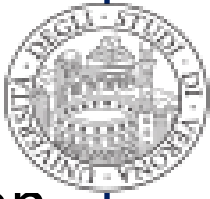
Migration

The biggest challenge of this century, which is migration, asks for a new narrative of inclusion and reflection.

Kantian philosophy, e.g., has the best chances to provide it.

What Kant has written on the right of visit (*das Recht eines Fremdlings*), on hospitality (*hospes*) and sovereignty (*hostis*) is the key to shaping the narrative.

The commentary to the third definite article of *Perpetual Peace* makes it clear that 'originally no one has more right [*Recht*] than another to live on a particular place [*Ort*] on the earth' (Kant 1795).
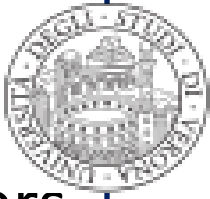
Narrative

On the basis of a cross-disciplinary approach, philosophers is to be trusted to achieve what Hanna Arendt (1963) did achieve for the Holocaust and Jürgen Habermas (1991) for citizenship, by pushing forward the recent proposal of Donatella Di Cesare (2017) for a philosophical narrative of migration.

It is now time to examine the role of reflection for rethinking the ways in which culture has been envisioned, particularly to visualize the various ways in which users engage with cultural processes in the past, present, and future.
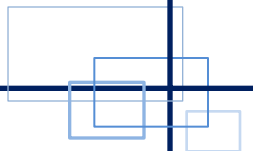
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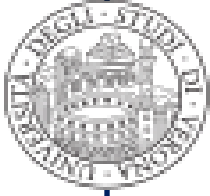
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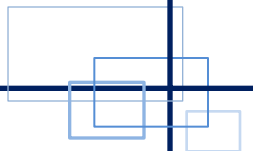
Case Study: From Plato

Let me propose a case study. Imagine a second-generation diaspora child (*huaqiao* 华桥) who attends a human sciences high school in Italy.

At a certain point, s/he might be asked to read a text by Plato, possibly the *Apology of Socrates* (*Apologia Sokratous* Ἀπολογία Σωκράτους), first in Italian, then perhaps in the Greek original or in the classic Latin rendering of Marsilius Ficinus.
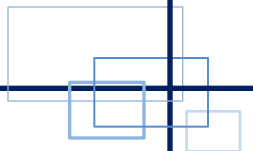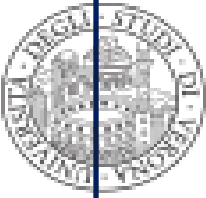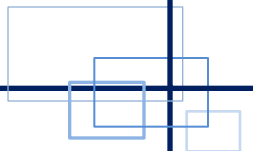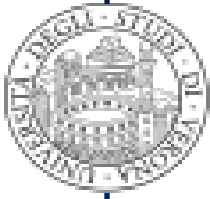
Case Study: To Confucius

Students today delve easily into multilayered, multilingual hypertexts, and they do so on the basis of the reciprocal guidance made possible by social reading tools.

Our student ought to read the same text in modern unified Chinese as well, so that s/he might be able to start a discussion on Socrates in its Chinese-speaking family.

Reflection in Class

Inversely, schoolmates might appropriate, say, the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 伦语) of Confucius through the conceptual references indicated by our student. Together they may start thinking on movement (*dong* 动), rest (*jing* 静), human being (*renji* 人际), humaneness (*ren* 仁), and eventually come to grasp key tenets of Neo-Confucianism, such as the dictum that represents the unity of heaven and human or supernal heaven and humanity (*tianrenheyi* 天人合一), which amounts to 'restoring the Heavenly Principle and diminishing human desires' (Wang 2005; Ni Peimin 2017).

Ocean

Rémi Brague (2004) has noted that the Arabic term for dictionary, قاموس (*qāmūs*), is a translation of the name of the Titan of Greek mythology Ὠκεανός (*Okeanós*), in the original literal sense of a liquid extension that embraces all emerged lands, permitting navigation and hence communication.

Leibniz has used the ocean metaphor for an encyclopaedia, which is the very same idea concerning languages that this paper tries to defend.
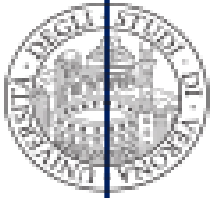
Conclusion

We expect SSH research to trigger a change in the mind-set as regards locating culture for inclusion and reflection in education, life-long learning, healthcare, urban development and regeneration.

Culture cannot be but plural, changing, adaptable, constructed.

Inclusion and reflection take place whenever we are in contact with other human beings, regardless where they come from. This we have to learn.
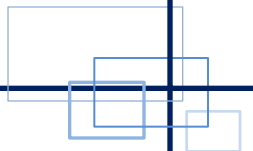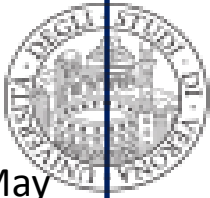
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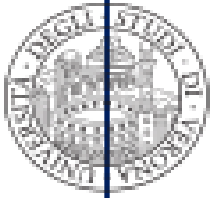
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