Beyond

The ISI Florence & Umbra Institute
Studies in International Education

n.1

Beyond

The ISI Florence & Umbra Institute
Studies in International Education

n.1

Beyond n.1

Design and layout
Nina Peci

Contacts
E-mail: npeci@isiflorence.org
www.isiflorence.org | www.umbra.org

Angelo Pontecorboli Editore - Firenze
E-mail: info@pontecorboli.it
www.pontecorboli.com
ISBN 978-88-99695-96-5

ISI FLORENCE
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES INSTITUTE

UMBRA INSTITUTE
PERUGIA, ITALY

Printed in Italy, June 2018

Rites of Passage towards Adulthood and Global Citizenship:
Transitions and Liminalities

Pierluca Birindelli

Abstract

Studying abroad is a growing and institutionalized practice that seems to constitute a liminal and transitional space-time: a rite of passage towards adulthood and global citizenship. However, the apparently uncontested global meaning of such double transitional passage is questioned by local and national cultures. The analysis of autobiographical essays written by a group of young Italian and American students highlights the significance given to the passage toward adulthood: the "limen" between youth and adulthood is drawn in a different vein and accompanied by different rituals. Becoming an adult and a citizen of the world follows different cultural paths, thus giving shape to heterogeneous identities under a homogenous global semantic umbrella.

Keywords: Youth, Adulthood, Culture, Transition, Ritual, Liminality, Italy, Globalization, United States

1. Introduction

Studying the values, lifestyles and cultural attitudes of young people is of crucial importance both for social sciences and for governments. The models of behavior of the young, the exploration of the areas of life in which they invest their identity resources, and the type of expectations they have of the world can help us understand the conditions and potential directions that the evolution of society takes as a whole. The way

in which the crossing of Conrad's "shadow-line"[1] between the developmental stages of youth and adulthood is achieved (or not), impacts the construction of personal identity.

In addition to offering insight particularly useful for understanding the young, interpretation of this critical passage also casts light on the adult world. Furthermore, exploring the liminal area between youth and adulthood allows us to discern the continuity and discontinuity of certain socio-psycho-anthropological features of the Western cultural heritage.

I see this study as even more useful in the light of cultural globalization[2] processes and the construction of a European identity, from the aspect of comparative research. What kinds of adults will today's young Italians, young Europeans and young Americans be? Will they have the economic, moral and cultural resources to ensure the process of social reproduction? And again, given that the sense of personal and collective identity is built through a dynamic of self-recognition and hetero-recognition, what will happen when the non-European/American Other[3] comes knocking harder on the door of the Old and New World?

Young people today face a double transitional challenge: 1) in the dimension of their individual and generational identity (youth – adulthood); 2) in the dimension of their collective identity (national – global). In recent decades, a growing number of contributions in the social science field has addressed how ongoing globalization processes affect socio-cultural chang-

1 Joseph Conrad's tale *The Shadow Line* (1917) addresses the transition from boyhood to adulthood, in which the 'shadow-line' is a threshold: "One goes on. And the time, too, goes on – till one perceives ahead a shadow-line warning one that the region of early youth, too, must be left behind." As we shall see, for young people in the twenty-first century the shadow-line has tended to become murky and blurred: the threshold between youth and adulthood is less distinct, precisely because today's adults do not offer clear and firm examples of what it means to be on the other side of the fence. For an updated and comprehensive international and multi-disciplinary collection of essays about youth and young adulthood, see Furlong, A., ed. 2009. *Handbook of Youth and Young Adulthood: New Perspectives and Agendas.* London: Routledge. For an overview of contemporary social and cultural analysis, see Furlong, A. and D. Woodman, eds. 2014. *Youth and Young Adulthood: Critical Concepts in Sociology*. Routledge: London.

2 See, among others, Tomlinson (1999).

3 The Other is the term of dialogue and of conflict of the Self. Without otherness there can be no understanding or identification, in the same way as identity cannot be recognised without difference; see Ricoeur (1990/1992). 'Other' is understood as another person, but also as another nation, people, social group or culture.

es and the construction of individual and collective identities.[4] A growing number of people in more areas of the world, through travel and symbolic media figures, dream and consider a greater range of possible lives than ever before: the core meaning of Self-identity (Giddens 1991) has been reshaped because of the closer relation (prevalently mediated) to a cultural Other. One of the most common denominators in the diverse dimensions of cultural globalization is the subversion of the cardinal assumption of early modernity, namely the idea that citizens live, act, and think in a self-enclosed space: the national state. Hence, it has become necessary to examine space and time compression and its effects on social as well as cultural dynamics, both at a collective level (nations, groups) and at an individual level. The convergence of global culture – the greater uniformity of models of consumption, lifestyles, cultural symbols, and transnational modes of behavior – has been both posited and critically tackled.

The analysis of autobiographies written by Italian and American youths[5] can shed sociological and anthropological light on the ongoing cultural sameness *vs.* difference debate in globalization studies (Robertson 1995). American and Italian youths follow different cultural paths toward adulthood: the "two roads diverge in a wood" of cultural practices and symbols. Thus the shared meaning of becoming an adult and a global citizen stands out.

2. Prolongation of Youth

Sociological investigations carried out in youth studies over the last thirty years concur in stressing the prolongation of the "youth phase", especially in Italy and Southern European countries. Economic and socio-cultural factors have generated and continue to foster a lengthening of

4 For a cultural approach to globalization, see Nederveen (2004) and Inglis (2005). For a communicative approach, see Meyrowitz (1985).

5 I collected and analysed 60 autobiographical essays written by young Italian university students aged 22-29 and 50 more self-narratives from young Americans (age 21) during their semester abroad in Florence. An extensive explanation of the method developed in this study is given in the first chapter "Mapping the Land of the Young: Developing a Method" of the book *The Passage from Youth to Adulthood: Narrative and Cultural Thresholds* (Birindelli 2014).

the youth phase in the life cycle, contributing to the creation of an amorphous existential period, a sort of no-man's-land of life. Numerous elements have contributed to the emergence of this condition. One of the most significant is linked to changes in a series of culturally-endorsed milestones in the transition to adult life: finishing education, finding a steady job, leaving home to live on one's own, getting married or living together, having children. These crucial steps were and are being postponed, and sometimes are not accomplished at all.

The protracted sojourn of Italian daughters and sons in the family home is an obvious indicator of the larger phenomenon of the prolongation of the youth phase. In 1995, 47% of Dutch and English young people between ages 20 and 24 were still living with their parents; the percentage was 52% in France and 55% in Germany; 87% of young Italians in the same age bracket had not yet flown the nest (Eurostat 1997). Significantly, the Eurostat report did not include data on the residential situation of young adults aged between 25 and 29 at the time. Surveys of young people at the European level stopped at 25 years of age, while the Italian studies went up to 35. This reflected a telling difference of a whole ten years in the age at which one leaves youth status behind. The fourth IARD report[6] on the condition of young people in Italy, based on a sample interviewed in 1996, recorded that 64% of young people between ages 25 and 29 were still living with their parents. This percentage had gone up by 3 points since the IARD report of 1992. The 2000 report showed that the percentage of young Italians still in the condition of residential dependency was continuing to rise and had reached 70%: a growth of 1.5 percentage points a year.

In 2016, another European survey (Eurostat 2018) reported that 66% of young Italians between 25 and 29 years of age were still living at home. The percentage of Danish young people in the same social condition was 4%, in Finland 6%, in Sweden 6% and Norway 9%. Moving south, French young adults still living with their parents accounted for 20% of their co-

6 The IARD is a research institute in Milan that periodically performs research on young people. See: Cavalli (1984); Cavalli and De Lillo (1988 and 1993); Buzzi, Cavalli and De Lillo (1997, 2002, 2007).

hort, German 27%. In the Mediterranean area the only country that superseded Italy was Greece, in the grip of a profound economic, cultural and social crisis, at 70%. The same source records the average percentage of young people living with their parents in the 27 countries of the European Union as 38%. Pew Research Center (2016) analysis of census data reveals that 25% of young American 25-29 year olds were living with their parents in 2014, ten points below the EU average.

The processes of construction of youth identity are currently the focus of intense debate in both the social sciences and in public opinion. It is in relation to young people that the concept of identity crops up most frequently, along with references to the identity crises lying in ambush throughout the long transition to adulthood. Understanding the path that leads towards adulthood, and the assumption of the roles and responsibilities connected with it, is a complex and perplexing matter for both policy makers and academics: as a result, representing, analyzing, furnishing theories and constructing identity types is a multi-faceted issue. Furthermore, in western society, and especially in Italy, this passage has become nebulous and variegated: the rituals that sanctioned entry into the adult world have become rarefied. Analyzing young American students' autobiographies abroad, this consideration does not apply to American culture and society, which I would define as "hyper-ritualized." From elementary school to high school graduation, and in college for those who continue to study, we can find, for both adolescents and young people, a smorgasbord of rites of passage. As far as our investigation is concerned, the graduation ceremony and prom night are two of the most significant.

In Italy, besides rituals, even the tangible stages marking the acquisition of the social status of adult have been complicated, with the result that the ford has grown wider. Moreover, the observers of the world of youth formulate their considerations from the other side of the divide between these two life stages. Generally speaking, they are not even close to the limen – from the Latin word *līmen*, meaning "threshold" – and hence are at a conspicuous hermeneutic as well as a generational distance from the subject of study.

> Young people are elusive, in search of identity, of landmarks. They're disorientated by the media suggesting to them (me included) what "our" identity is, telling us what our landmarks should be. It seems ridiculous, but as I see it, it's a vicious circle. We are what someone else wants us to be. (Filippo, age 24)

The point of view adopted in sociological studies of youth is frequently adult-centric. If we also factor in the considerable difficulty that each individual has to address when moving through today's segmented social universe, in which every sphere of life has its own distinct language, then deep chasms can emerge between the territories of the adult and those of the young.

> Maybe with a good dose of courage, patience and identification, someone will succeed in "classifying" us (it drives me mad!); and then, perhaps, he will write about us as the hidden generation. The one that was always there but no-one ever wanted to know. (Matteo, age 24)

The difficulties that sociologists come up against are of two kinds: 1) the real changes in the relations between the individual and the social system: swift and vast, certainly; regarding their depth, caution is perhaps best, especially in the light of anthropological analyses underscoring the slowness of cultural change; 2) the hermeneutic crisis generated by recourse to conceptual instruments incapable of comprehending the processes inherent in the complexity of late modern life. The new visibility and objective vocality of the differences, combined with an enhanced subjective perception of them, build up a cognitive map outlined with great precision and abundance of detail, which charts as new and unknown a territory that has in reality changed less than its map.

The passage from youth to adulthood traverses different spaces and times, often staggered: one can still be young in terms of physical age and have already developed typically adult attitudes; similarly, one can be chronologically adult while persisting in lifestyles that are commonly con-

sidered typically juvenile. As a result, researchers are forced to invent new categories to cast light on new processes and different life patterns; thus a new category of individuals has emerged: that of young adults, who are no longer young but not yet adults; or the other category of "emerging adulthood", coined by the American psychologist Arnett (2004).

To investigate the prolongation of the youth phase, scholars have constructed the following classification: adolescents, 15 to 19; young people, 20 to 24; young adults, 25 to 29; adult-young, 30 to 34. The beginning and the end of secondary school are the passages delimiting the adolescent phase of the life cycle. The education axis is thus the pivot around which the representations of the world of youth are constructed. In the western social imaginary, youth and student status are one and the same thing: it is taken for granted that, at least up to legal age, young people will be engaged in some sort of educational activity, generally secondary school: so much so that being a student has come to represent a structural element of young people's identity. The end of secondary school marks the beginning of the youth phase. In general, the subjects taken into consideration in the sociological surveys are those that prolong their studies beyond compulsory schooling; those who stop studying appear to enter a sort of sociological shadow cone (probably due to the fact they are harder to trace), unless they experience some form of hardship or maladjustment. Around the age of 25, when in theory the individual ought to have completed university training, we arrive at young adult status. Then, in a telling reversal of the terms, the new subject that appears in the age bracket between 29-30 and 34-35 is defined as "adult-young." While attendance at secondary school offers a fairly effective demarcation of the beginning and end of adolescence, the focusing of the transitions between the other phases is more difficult; the characteristic aspects of adolescence are mingled with other traits considered typical of youth and of adulthood.

3. Sociological Thresholds: Eternal Adolescents

In Italy the transit through the culturally-endorsed thresholds considered essential in marking the passage to adult life (completing education, finding a steady job, leaving home to live on one's own, getting

married or going to live together, having children) has stalled. In contemporary societies, transition is marked by milestones, stages that have to be passed through in order to become firmly established in the social positions that distinguish the adult and differentiate him/her from the adolescent. This itinerary has two main yardsticks – the scholastic-professional sphere and that of family-marriage – within which five symbolic stages can be identified that progressively introduce the young person to new roles and social responsibilities. Although not strictly mandatory in terms of the psychological maturity of the individual, the crossing of all five thresholds appears to be essential for the reproduction of a society. The failure to cross these thresholds generates feelings of inadequacy that impede the psychological maturation of the individual.

The results of the IARD reports (Buzzi, Cavalli and De Lillo 2002, 2007)[7] on the condition of young people in Italy relative to the 25-29 age bracket[8] illustrate the crossing of the five thresholds marking the transition from adolescence to adulthood. The first step is the completion of education: in 2004, 35% of the survey sample had not yet completed university or an analogous course of study. This percentage was higher than the 24% recorded in 1996 and the 30% of 2000. The second step is entry into the world of employment: 35% of the 2004 interviewees were not in permanent employment, down from the 43% of the 2000 report and the 56% of 1996. The third step is the previously mentioned departure from the parental home to live on one's own: this is a crucial milestone for the individual who wishes to achieve not only economic but existential independence, freeing himself from daily dependence on parents. While in 1996, 36% of young people aged 25–29 were living independently, by 2000 the figure had fallen to 30%, equivalent to a drop of 1.5 percentage

7 The information gathered in the IARD report published in 2007 derives from a survey conducted in 2004; the publication of 2002 refers to interviews carried out in 2000; the data of the 1997 publication comes from a survey conducted in 1996.

8 I chose the age bracket from 25 to 29 because this is the age when the tension towards the acquisition of adult status strengthens, and the failure to overcome the significant hurdles starts to be perceived as a problem.

points a year. In 2004 the trend seems to be inverted (31%). Marriage (or living together) is the fourth step. It is significant to compare the figures for crossing this threshold with those related to living independently: in 1996, 68% of young people were not married or cohabiting. In 2000 this percentage had risen to 76%. So it seems that, for young Italians, living independently tends to coincide with cohabitation as a couple. The fifth step, the birth of a child, had been achieved by 22% of this age bracket in 1996, but by only 12% in 2000 and 15% in 2004.

The passages endorsing entry to adulthood are clearly being postponed. Almost 20% of the young people between 25 and 29 years of age have not overcome a single stage and can be considered as still in a state of full adolescence (students without work living with their parents). If, for the sake of approximation, we were to take the achievement of just three steps as the sign of having acquired adult status, then we should have to consider as not yet adult 98% of young Italians aged 18 to 20, 94% of those aged 21-24, 73% of the 25-29 year-olds and 35% of the 30-34 age bracket (Buzzi 2002, 27). Pooling the data, it emerges that more than 8 out of 10 Italians aged 21 to 29 can, from a social point of view, be considered adolescents to all effects and purposes.

The presence of a supplementary phase between adolescence and adulthood – the psychosocial moratorium (Erikson 1968) – is typical of modernized western societies: it is a period in which the young person trains to take on responsibilities connected with the role and status of adult. On the other hand, if this phase is lived as a postponement of the assumption of responsibility in terms of emotional, operational and professional decisions, then the young person can enter into a state of stalemate or impasse and get tangled up in a stationary condition: not youth but prolonged adolescence.

The narrative investigations that I conducted confirm the sociological theory from two angles: 1) the five stages identified as tangible signs of the acquisition of an adult identity were also recognized by young people; 2) like the subjects in the IARD report, they too find themselves in an adolescent condition.

> You become an adult through a series of processes, ranging from finishing school and university to finding a steady job, living on your own, getting married, having a child. In this process, your responsibilities progressively increase and are legitimized by the degree of maturity acquired with the passage of time. (Carlo, age 24)

4. Being Young and Being Adult

> As it turns out, I find myself facing this reflection precisely at the age of 25, an age in the middle, a sort of limbo, a period of transition from a post-adolescent situation to a pre-adult one. (Franco, age 25)

What are the meanings attributed to the two phases of the life cycle by the young Italians I met in my study? As one might imagine, there was initially a certain difficulty in the attempt to define (this was the term most used) "being young" and "being adult". The obstacle lay in the fact that they had never even thought about it. And beyond that, the absence of first-person experience – and the resulting difficulty of constructing independent criteria to circumscribe the sense of identity – forced many of them to resort to hearsay, to what is generally said about young people and about adults. It is a mediated experience. I shall come back to this point later on.

> I find myself living in the middle of that time when a young person approaches becoming adult. And so I ought to have a fair baggage of personal experience behind me to be able to describe what being young means to me, and what it has meant up to now. On the contrary, to be able to express what being adult means, I have to resort to expedients – what I've seen and hearsay – and the ideas I've formed about it as a result over the course of nearly twenty-three years. (Sonia, age 23)

The fact that these youngsters have never carried out any analysis of their own condition gives us an idea of the infrequency of that reflection

or self-reflection, which is crucial to the processes of identity construction for youths living in the late modern age. In late-modern societies the narration of the self becomes increasingly important, not only for prominent public figures but for all social actors. Therefore, the sense of individual identity can no longer be inherited or given, as it normally happened in traditional societies.

> Self-identity is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography. Identity here still presumes continuity across time and space: but self-identity is such continuity as interpreted reflexively by the agent… . To be a 'person' is not just to be reflexive actor, but to have a concept of a person (as applied both to the self and others)… . A person with a reasonably stable sense of self-identity has a feeling of biographical continuity which she is able to grasp reflexively and, to a greater or lesser degree, communicate to other people. (Giddens 1991, 53-54)

The major obstacle to reflection on the self, on young people and on adults, can be summed up in the statement: it's hard to think about yourself on your own. The young people I met do not see themselves as a generation or even as a group, but as individuals. The practice of comparison and dialogue necessary to map out the boundaries of one's own persona is situated in the microcosm, in the everyday relations – lived moreover in a manner one might call automatic – which the young appear unable to transcend. The abstraction necessary to construct a scaffolding for the interpretation of self is weak: for them, speaking about young people and adults means talking about oneself, and maybe about those few adults with whom they have significant relations. Paraphrasing Ricoeur (1990/1992) *Self without the Other* – apart from parents and those accommodating others who are willing to clear the obstacles off the life path, satisfy desires, keep fears at bay – also implies a low level of awareness of the identity of other young people and adults, whether

Italian, European or American. It means an incapacity to place your own biography within a collective story and thus build up your own field of identity: "Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both" (Mills 1959, p. 3). Hence the exercise of self-reflection proves anemic, coiling around one's own story, one's own sacred individuality.

For the majority of the participants in the study, being young has to do with expressive and emotional aspects, with the freedom to experiment in many different areas of life, with so much time ahead of them. The awareness that, at a certain point, one has to choose between different options, using this phase of life to discover and relate criteria, is one of the first elements that closes the gap between the youth and the adult.

> The main feature of this phase of life is freedom from ties of a family nature – because you don't yet have a family of your own – different from the one you were born into; for those who study, freedom from restrictions related to work as well. This freedom has to be exploited to the fullest, to discover your potential, your gifts, to cultivate your interests, so that you can steer your choices towards specific targets, those that lead to self-realization. In fact, I think the crux of the life of a young person lies in having to make choices, in both the professional and the emotional fields; choices that will be the basis of their entire future life, in the sense that they will have a profound effect on how it evolves. (Irene, age 24)

The passage from youth to adulthood is not simply a question of physical age: almost all the young people stress the fact that being adult means being mature. Such maturity is conceived essentially as an awareness of and responsibility for one's own actions in relation to oneself and to others. If we tried to find the crux, the buzzword for being adult, according to the young people in the study, it would no doubt be *responsibility*: "The first requisite that comes to mind is that of responsibility, understood as the ability to answer for your own actions" (Daniele, age

24). Even those who admit that they are far from acquiring a responsible way of being and acting stress the fact that it is the watershed dividing adulthood from youth.

> Since I don't feel adult yet, and I'm not, I can't express sensations based on personal experience, through which I could formulate an evaluation of what it means to belong to the category of adults. Nevertheless I feel that the keywords on this subject are: responsibility, maturity, conscience, awareness, reality… The adult has arrived at a point where he knows himself, his limitations and his role in society, and so he is able to take on his responsibilities: this is something the young person can't do, because as well as being immature he also has less experience. Maturity makes it possible to be less impulsive, which is a typical characteristic of young people, and to address the problems that crop up with greater precision, thus finding the answer to one's difficulties and uncertainties more simply. (Luca, age 26)

It is fundamental to detach oneself from the protection of the family and become economically self-supporting through work, which is the indispensable means towards emotional, psychological and social autonomy. Indeed, it seems that it is precisely the passage from *expressive dimensions* to *tangible conquests* that launches the journey towards adulthood, if for no other reason than because the process of construction of the identity is that of self- and hetero-recognition, a process that cannot leave out social aspects such as economic independence.[9]

> The aspect that I want to underscore is the passage that takes place between an abstract approach, that gives precedence to research of a

9 It would be strange to maintain the opposite in the face of a widespread social culture – internalized by the young people encountered in this study – based on consumption as the criterion for definition of self and other. One of the reasons why many young Italians remain at length in the family home is because they are loath to do without various consumer goods that they would not be able to afford if they lived on their own.

> spiritual kind and values such as love and friendship, and a concrete approach in which you become a 100% social subject, with all the duties that brings with it. In my book, someone is a 100% social subject when he has an income and electricity, gas, water and phone bills made out in his name, his own means of transportation and a house that he lives in, alone or with people he's chosen to live with. If you fall into this category, then you can say you're adult and be seen as such. Otherwise you come into the other category, that of the kids. (Paolo, age 25)

In the statements of some participants in the study we discern the need to learn how to move in the external world, like an actor on the stage. The game of life has rules that cannot be transgressed, and it is necessary to be able to act in different contexts and roles that cannot be freely chosen. Such roles cannot simply be abandoned the moment problems arise. The subjects conceive arrival in adult life as spelling the end of casual mobility, experimentation, and zapping: "Perhaps being adult means acting within a number of scenarios where you have to abide by precise rules, independent of your personality or wishes. There are rules we have to follow on that stage: don't shout, don't run away, don't escape" (Marco, age 24).

Those who prolong the youth phase do so for instrumental reasons connected with the convenience of remaining in the family, continuing to have emotional protection and being exonerated from the responsibilities that inevitably accompany the moment of abandoning the nest. It seems that this continuing dependence is consciously and voluntarily pursued and that the ostensible reasons (work, rent etc.) are not really perceived as obstacles. In a word, we might say that youngsters stay at home because it allows them to consume more. Moreover, the parents do nothing to encourage the young to leave the nest.

> Why do we remain young for so long? Simply because it's much more convenient to have everything laid out for you, or at least it's much easier to go on living in a situation where there are always other people to take care of us and our needs, even when all the

> possibilities exist for making a life of your own, independent of your parents. Nowadays the idea of taking on the responsibility of a house and a family of your own, thinking about someone else apart from yourself (or at most your girlfriend), seems to be an increasingly difficult and demanding objective. (Fabio, age 24)

> The parents-adults – one of whose fundamental duties is to educate young people emotionally –frequently don't help their children to grow up. They rarely spur them on; instead, they keep them tied to themselves, transforming the parent/child relationship into one of friendship. They don't pack the kids off because they're afraid of being left alone, afraid of what might happen to their kids or simply because they want to go on controlling them. (Sara, age 24)

Relations between the young people and the adults are difficult. In the first place, during the youth phase there are very few significant relations with adults other than parents and relatives. Secondly, we can observe that, on the whole, the young people in this study are treated as children for far too long, even in school and work environments.

5. Anthropological Thresholds: Rites of Passage

In order to understand the transition from the youth phase to the adult phase, it is helpful to consider the concept of the rite of passage: the absence of collective rituals that can tie in the existential turning-points of the young individual with those of a generation, and with the acknowledgement of the adult world, represents one of the major stumbling-blocks to the crossing of the "shadow-line." According to Jung (1938/1969), ritual helps the individual at a time when their psychic equilibrium is threatened in the transition from one way of being to another. If there are no rituals available, the subject invents their own to safeguard their personality. These are the rites of passage that we are interested in here – more specifically, the rites of initiation into the adult world: a series of ceremonies and tests through which a young individu-

al becomes part of the group of adults. In pre-modern societies, in order to be admitted to the adult world, the adolescent had to address a series of initiatory trials.

> To gain the right to be admitted among adults, the adolescent has to pass through a series of initiatory ordeals: it is by virtue of these rites, and of the revelations that they entail, that he will be recognized as a responsible member of the society. Initiation introduces the candidate into the human community and into the world of spiritual and cultural values. (Eliade 1958, p. x)

The expression "rite of passage" was coined by Van Gennep (1909/1960) in the early twentieth century; he identified three crucial stages in each rite of passage:

1. a preliminary phase of separation from or abandonment of the previous state;
2. a liminal phase, a period of transition marked by ritual discrimination;
3. a post-liminal phase of aggregation and readmission to society in a new condition.

The purpose of the initiation is to endorse the passage of the individual from one defined situation to another that is also defined. This is why rites of passage have a recurrent structure, a real pattern that guides, controls and regulates the transformations of each individual and of a group, fostering the changes without violently arresting personal and collective life. The incompatibility between the initial and the final condition is overcome by means of the intermediate stage, the *threshold*. The three stages identified by Van Gennep in the rite of passage are separate in both the space-time dimension and in structural terms. He also stresses the fact that the change in social status involves not only the individual who performs the ritual, but other subjects too. It is indeed precisely the public

celebration that renders the moment of passage sacred and endorses the collective recognition of the new social position acquired.

The function of the separation is to sever the links with the world experienced up to that time, introducing the novice into an unknown world. This passage from the profane world to the sacred world implies the experience of death: the youth has to die symbolically in order to become adult (Eliade 1958). Thus the individual enters into the liminal marginal phase, characterized by a series of trials that have the function of introducing the youth into the mythology of the adult world: a set of beliefs and values regarding human beings and the world that establish the common ground for the coexistence of a group or a society, which are preserved and handed down to the new generations. In this way the novice learns the behaviors, the techniques, the strategies and the institutions typical of the adult world. In the third phase, after having learned how to take on the responsibilities connected with being adult, the youth is readmitted to society.

The initiatory death of the liminal phase has symbolically killed the youth, clearing the field of all the characteristics typical of infancy and adolescence. This phase is indispensable in initiatory rituals: it is only through the symbolic death of the youth that a new birth is made possible. According to Eliade (1958) the initiatory death, transiting through the marginal phase which represents a temporary return to chaos, is therefore the exemplary expression of the end of a way of being: that of the ignorance and irresponsibility of the child. The myth-ritual is crucial both for the young person and for the adult community; it triggers and forges the disposition to action of the youth necessary for a re-generation of society, while at the same time exerting a normative effect that engenders social cohesion and instills a feeling of belonging and of collective identity. The ceremonial, and hence choral and collective, expression of such sentiments serves both to maintain them at the required level of intensity in the mind of the individual, and to transmit them from one generation to the next. Without this expression the sentiments in question could not be handed down (Campbell 1960). The ritual installs and institutionalizes an individual-group dialectic, thus placing the subject in relation with the

collectivity. This interaction implies a strong symbolic charge, sparked by adherence to a common sphere of values: the ritual becomes the catalyst of the transmission of values of a community to which the members belong ethically, emotionally and conatively,[10] and not merely instrumentally. For all these reasons, the ritual produces solidarity and holds the group together, as stressed by Durkheim (1912/1995).

In late-modern society, and particularly in Italy, the rituals of initiation into adulthood have become rarefied; without capes to be rounded, the young people are disoriented. Not wishing to do without rites of passage, they create some of their own, alone or in small groups. But these are rituals in which the adult figure is absent, so that the approach to the adult world becomes opaque as well. In the liminal phase the novice was able to count on the assistance of his tutor: the figure of the old initiate, who accompanies the novice through the difficulties characterizing the marginal period, is a topos of the rite of passage. The absence of rites is felt above all by the contemporary young male: the postmodern male, born and reared after the Second World War, is the first in all male history who has not had a father, teacher or initiator to tell him what a man must do (apart from develop his muscles). Thus, disenchanted modern society has thrown out the rites and myths along with the masters who were their custodians. The field of identity of the youth has not only been swept clear of the ceremonies, symbols and initiations so important for pre-modern and modern societies, but also of the seriousness with which man in archaic societies took his responsibility to receive and transmit the spiritual values to the new generations (Eliade 1958). Nevertheless, the master and the rite still seem necessary even to today's youngsters.

> In terms of building character, I attribute great importance to the acquaintance of certain adults. There have been several people who have "captivated" me and have had a major influence on the decisions I've taken in my life: my primary school teacher, my first foot-

10 The ritual has a perlocutionary character (Austin 1962); its strength resides in the effect it produces.

> ball coach and so on. I feel that my math teacher in secondary school was very important to me, and it was thanks to her that I decided to study economics; it was she who set me in the direction of what I think I really want to do[11]. (Alessandro, age 23)

From my research it emerged that the rites were personal, or performed in pairs or at most among small groups of friends. Instead, there was no collective marking of the crucial benchmarks: the first day of school; the first vacation with friends; the scooter; the first evening outing; the driving license. Even on the three occasions most appropriate for celebration (coming of age, the final exams for finishing high school, and graduation from university)[12] sharing of the significance between the young people and the adults was decidedly absent; from the way they were described they appeared to be the simulacra of a rite of passage.

> For me, finishing secondary school was definitely a passage. It was a sudden passage, that I felt the very moment it happened. During the frenzy of preparation in the two months leading up to the final exams, none of us had given a thought to what was actually happening … We hadn't realized that achieving that goal would wipe away, in one fell swoop, all those special times spent together: all that remain are the memories that allow you to look back over them. We celebrated that moment in the best possible way: we locked ourselves in a communal embrace right there in our classroom, and couldn't resist the temptation to scrawl some phrases on our desks, sign our names on the walls, almost as if we had at all costs to leave some indelible sign amidst those walls. The actual exam certificate

11 For both Italian males and females, the few significant adults are women. A continuity is set up between the central role of the mother in the family and external reality, in which, if things go well, there is an encounter with another woman who points the way. The father figure and the adult males are nowhere to be found.

12 In Italy the degree certificate is not awarded at the time, but several years later in a totally bureaucratic manner: a mere piece of paper, for all intents and purposes.

> meant little or nothing: for me that piece of paper had no interest or significance. Partly because I only got it over two years after the actual exam, and partly because in this day and age it's a qualification that's worth little or nothing on its own, and so you find yourself on the treadmill again heading for another goal and you don't even pause to savor what you have just achieved, with the risk – as happened in my case – that you attribute only a temporary and precarious value to it. (Gabriele, age 22)

Fulfilling a rite of passage, when it is of a collective and shared character, means more or less consciously placing yourself within a tradition; in this sense, the ritual becomes a mechanism linking the worlds of youth and adulthood, the formalization of a symbolic bridge to be crossed. The difficulty in discerning such bridges, and the absence of ceremonials endowing them with a dense symbolic charge, contributes to making the crossing of the shadow-line a lonely business. To return to Van Gennep's three stages, the results of the research allow us to confirm that:

1. the first phase of abandonment of the previous state has not been accomplished;
2. the second liminal phase never even began, since the tasks characterizing the first were still in abeyance;
3. the third phase of readmission to the world as an adult person is far-off in the distant future, hampered by obstacles of a structural and cultural nature (the difficulties of the job market, lifelong learning, confusion between the attitudes and behaviour typical of the youth phase and those of adulthood).

6. Travel and adulthood: sheltered journeys

In the collected autobiographies I was able to trace a recurrent rite of passage: *the first holiday on your own*. However, it lacks the educational value of traveling or of a prolonged visit: it seems rather the simulacrum, the fetish of a journey. For Giovanni, his first holiday in Rimini was an au-

thentic rite of sexual and social initiation. He went to the place in Italy that is the epitome of youthful recreation: a sort of Land of Toys, as referred to in *Pinocchio*. But you do not need the persuasion of Candlewick to go to Rimini: it is a cliché. If anything, you would need the opposite of Candlewick to persuade you to go somewhere else; but there is not the faintest shadow of such figures in the lives of these young people. Giovanni spent a week hanging out in the discos. Making out in the discos of Rimini – where it is very easy to end up having sex (the sought-after rite of initiation) – is tantamount to becoming a man. Another thing one notes is the total absence of any difficulty. It is an easy, comfortable holiday that presents Giovanni with no problem of any kind.

> A very important experience, and one that I have lots of fond memories of, was my first holiday on my own, without my parents. Of all the goals I have reached, this was the one that gave me the greatest satisfaction, even more than being able to drive a scooter or a car… Rimini is something of a status symbol for this sort of thing; it made me feel that I'd finally managed to make it into the ranks of the grown-ups. During that holiday I also had my first sexual experience, which I'd been totally keyed-up about. Coming home after that holiday, that had left such a mark on my life, was almost like the return to the tribe of a young warrior who had been sent alone into the jungle for a while so that he could prove he was a real man. (Giovanni, age 23)

Franco experienced slightly more difficulty in Viareggio, since he and his friends had to agree about shopping and cooking and other household chores. These were the biggest worries that the youngsters in my study had to address during their first vacations on their own: "It was an important experience because it made us face problems that we had always avoided up until then, like preparing food and all the other things that made it possible to live amicably together" (Franco, age 22). Comfortable and sheltered as they are, such trips are still the most formative expe-

rience in the histories of these young people. It is only when you leave the nest and have to address practical problems, without Mom and Dad to count on, that you become aware of your condition as a youth-adolescent.

In Italy, the classic study vacation in England is a common example of this separation from the family. It usually takes the form of about a month spent in London or its environs with the ostensible intention of improving one's English. The learning of the language – which will not actually take place, since everyone will just gang up with all the other Italians present – is the pretext for convincing the parents.

> Understanding as always, Mom and Dad packed me off to Oxford with my friends for three weeks to attend the famous language courses. We learned a bit of Milanese dialect, which always comes in handy, and a bit of Verona dialect, which… well, you never know.… English language or English people? Not a trace. (Filippo, age 23)

Another typical trip is that taken under the umbrella of the Erasmus Programme. The young people describe it as a sort of Disneyland. The organization is so smooth that when they get to wherever they're going, the accommodation is already arranged and the courses already chosen. All they have to plan are the parties.

> In 2002 I went on an Erasmus Programme for five months. It was really great: I had very few courses to attend and no problems to deal with. All I had to do was organize the giddy round of parties, welcome dinners with other foreign students, afternoon and evening outings. In short, pure fun! (Sara, age 23)

From the descriptions made by those who have taken part in them, it seems that the Erasmus Programme is very similar to a package holiday in some club: places where the chances that the young person may in some way be put to the test are extremely rare. These "trips", like the non-study holidays spent in England, are extremely sheltered experiences: a

fitting metaphor for the biographical careers of the young Italians. There is no sign of the trans-European Interrail trips. This type of journey was quite common up to about ten years ago, but no longer.

The solitary journey followed by a lengthy sojourn in another country, or in another Italian city, is a crucial opportunity for acquiring self-awareness only for a tiny minority of young people. People frequently acquire self-knowledge by addressing tests that bring their strategic capacities to the fore. But young people no longer actively seek out the challenges of traveling; on the contrary, they carefully avoid them. If our youngsters do find themselves in a sticky situation, they have at their disposal a whole series of therapeutic tools and painkillers to muffle their consciousness: the journey of *Erfahrung* that could be triggered by certain episodes is cushioned, under control. *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis*[13] both mean experience in German, but in a different sense. *Erfahrung* emphasizes the notion of a wisdom drawn and communicated from experience, while *Erlebnis* refers to experience as something lived or witnessed.

In order to travel there have to be two movements, a push and a pull working in the same direction. The movement of separation, abandonment, and emancipation takes place when something from the extra-familial world attracts and, at the same time, something else propels one away from home. In my study I found no trace either of the desire to "see what's round the corner" or of a centrifugal force originating in the family – generated by educational motives or by some form of acute suffering that drives the young person away. As I said, only for a handful of the young people in my study did traveling function as a sort of identity catalyst, setting in motion a reflective process that expands the horizons of life and fosters self-awareness. After a genuine travel experience, these youngsters were able to map out the contours of their city, of the socio-cultural milieu they belonged to, and the position of the family in the social stratification. Gabriele brought together two essential elements

13 In English the distinction can be expressed by contrasting experience (in the sense of wisdom handed on from one person to another) with experiences (Ferris 2008). See Benjamin (1927-1930/1999) and Gadamer (1960/1989).

in the self-identity construction process: traveling and work. He implemented this synthesis for a reason symbolic of freedom: to buy his first motorbike. Consequently, this desire was not satisfied by the parents but achieved personally through his own work, and in another city to boot. That motorbike became an important Self-object pervaded by meanings that straddled adolescence and adulthood. On his return from his time in Rome, Gabriele saw his own city with new eyes.

> When I was sixteen I had this overwhelming desire to have a motorbike: I decided to spend the whole summer in Rome working for my aunt, who ran a bar and ice-cream parlor. It was a fantastic period: as well as the satisfaction of earning money, I also got to know a wonderful city that I remained attached to for many years. For me the motorbike marked an irreversible passage: it was the key to fully grasping the sense of freedom that only the road, the wind and speed can give you. It's as if, as you travel, you leave everything behind you: the only thing that matters is what's ahead, and you try to get there as soon as possible… Rome was my first real experience with a metropolis, in the sense that I was able to live there for a while. That time came to an end, but it left its mark, because from that moment on I looked at Pisa with different eyes, almost with intolerance. (Gabriele, age 22)

Traveling is an efficacious way of constructing identity: entering into contact with the Other can reveal personal traits that could not be observed previously, given one's lack of perspective. It is as if young people were still too close to the Self. This is a carefully preserved, protected and adorned Self: a Self-Idol, a *facticius* that prevents the young person from growing, relegating him or her to a sort of limbo of identity. Limbo is not paradise or hell or even purgatory: limbo is a borderline, a marginal place, an absence. But there is no awareness of this condition in those who inhabit it. The instrument of the journey, which could help rip open the condition of vital immobility, is dulled and distorted by its mediatization:

it is deprived of its emancipatory power. When young people feel that they could get their hands or their heart dirty, that something alien could get under their skin and contaminate them so that they would no longer be themselves, then they will opt for self-defense rather than potential enrichment. This defensive mechanism is also activated through a hotchpotch of technological devices that prevent the individual from seeing, feeling and – at a later time – fishing up from their memory the experiences lived elsewhere. For example, we frequently see young people walking round with their ears and eyes glued to the epitome of the Self-device, the smartphone (with its video and photo functions). It is a reverse prosthesis, a fetish that keeps them separate from whatever they encounter. Through these protective prostheses the individual does not approach a different reality with their five senses but – at that very moment when it could be experienced – represents it, portrays it and saves it, to be viewed away from danger back in a protected environment. The experience of the other is an exercise in decentralization, an undermining of our closure within ourselves. The individual who is unwilling to lose, who refuses to abandon protection for fear of suffering, will be offered few insights.

For our grandparents, things, people and events were still something to be felt, generating an interior experience that was joyful or painful, in which they participated with their senses, emotionally and spiritually, or conversely that they either failed or refused to notice. For us, on the other hand, things, people, and events are like something that has already been felt, and the sensory, emotional or spiritual tone with which we address them is already determined (Perniola 2012). The distinction is not between emotional participation and indifference, but rather between something that is to be felt and something already felt. The feeling has acquired an anonymous, impersonal, socialized dimension, asking to be imitated.

Nowadays the possibilities of a genuine travel experience have been narrowed down, and liberating estrangement is eliminated from young peoples' lives. The journey is edulcorated, rendered safe and predictable. But without detachment the attachment itself becomes false. The young

person is bound to the family and the local community; but as a permanent resident the individual does not really know exactly what they are bound to: they click on themselves.

The compression of space and time that we are living through actually erodes the space for experience: the speed of travel has eliminated the lengthy periods of waiting and reflection. Today's young people are increasingly on the move and moving faster all the time, but they travel less. The traveller develops sensitivity and depth towards the Other because they have genuinely encountered the Other, putting themselves on the line. Conversely, the tourist trip is just another fantasy ticket that stands in the way between young people and the real facts of life: an illusory experience.

The autobiographies of the young people do not reveal moments of rupture, painful experiences that dictate a necessarily different "before" and "after". It is not a question of seeking a trial by fire for the young Italians to undergo; nevertheless, the absence of tough moments is striking. Reading the autobiographies, I had the feeling of being catapulted into cocooned, padded, soundproofed worlds, bubbles that never burst. Some of the young people I met are aware of this and comment on it: "I realize that I haven't experienced any difficult periods in my life" (Riccardo, age 24).

The young people do not have inner strength because they have never suffered. In their stories there are no particularly harsh or painful episodes: focal events that trigger change (Heatherton and Nichols 1994). The hardest challenge they have had to address is generally no more than having to take a university exam. The youngster has no nasty stories to flee from and thus discover reality and himself. But as I have already said, the place the youngsters appear to inhabit is limbo. It is a place where experience is always edulcorated. This means that one of the most potent spurs for generating change, for forging ahead, is lacking. The personality tends towards stability, so that setting in motion a process of change calls for a very powerful incentive, which can take the form of suffering or anxiety. In a word: the catalyst of change is a form of malaise. Without the experience of loss we cannot acquire an adult identity, and we become

incapable of bearing narcissistic wounds. Negation of the interior reality and escape into external reality was a way of life for previous generations (Klein 1935/1975). Nowadays it is the other way around: the negation of external reality and escape into interior reality. We have gone from a centrifugal to a centripetal force that leads to the construction of a "minimal Self": a contracted and defensive Self, entirely intent on protecting itself from the adversities of modern daily life (Lasch 1984), a Self that is incapable of supporting pain.

> I was greatly struck by an article I read by the Italian psychologist Umberto Galimberti called "Gli analfabeti delle emozioni" (The Emotional Illiterates). He argued that, since their families – and society as a whole – fail to give young people an emotional education, they have no emotional resonance before the events they see or the gestures they make. They move through the world with an aggressive vigilance that leads them to see their neighbor as a potential enemy. They are increasingly fragile; the slightest gesture can call their identity profoundly into question, provoking them to react violently. It is primarily the family that can avert these catastrophic consequences; it must educate the child and explain that there are limits, that it is possible to feel pain… in other words, you have to emotionally educate your children. (Pamela, age 24)

7. Conclusion: heterogeneity under apparent homogeneity

Since the cultural revolution of the 1970s youth has always had a transnational profile; consequently, the pinpointing of national differences has to go hand in hand with reconstructing cultural similarities. There are certain transcultural features that a young Italian shares with their European and American peers. For the last ten years I have been teaching young American college students in their junior semester abroad, here in Florence. When I first met them, I realized that they were not the young Americans I had known when I was an exchange student in New York in the 80s, although they belonged to the same social class: upper or

upper-middle. The young Americans I met in Italy seemed much more "protected" by Mom and Dad. So, in a certain sense, I found them "Italianized"; on the other hand, certain features of the Atlantic cultural divide were still evident.

One of the first questions I always ask my American students is: "Do you live on your own or with your parents?" And, every semester, the whole class answers: "With my parents." Coming to Florence in their junior year means that they have been living on a college campus – usually far away from home – for two years, generally going back to stay with their parents over the summer and for the Christmas vacation. A young Italian who lives ten months per year outside the nest would answer without hesitation: "I live on my own." The attribution of the *opposite cultural meaning to the same life condition* is striking. But the interpretation is relatively easy if we follow the hermeneutic path we have trodden so far. For the young American, living by yourself means being 100% independent, that is, supporting yourself with the money you earn. Autonomy is a cultural value in the US – and in Northern Europe – but it is not that much of a value in Italy, or when it is, it is pursued in a different way (the cultural difference).

When I ask my American students what the most important things in their lives are, they put family first, then friends, just like the young Italians. However, the young Americans are talking about a family that saved money to send them to college and also allowed them to travel, rather than a family that gave them money to buy fashionable clothes to look smart.

American students know that graduation will spell the end of their youth game: "Returning to the United States will ultimately represent a return to reality. In many ways we spent a semester in a Fantasy World. In this Fantasy World, we are free to follow our whims and passions without any real consequences or repercussions" (Helen, age 21). The young Italian, on the other hand, does not know either when the game started or when it will finish (the absence of thresholds and rituals). This is a striking difference from an anthropological, psychosocial and sociological point of view.

With regard to travel as a rite of passage towards adulthood and global citizenship, I found some similarities between Italian and American young people. The analysis of autobiographical papers written by American youngsters during their study semester abroad in Florence indicates how their life experiences in Italy and Europe can be heuristically read through the concept of "play". The extra-ordinary, precise meaning, exhibiting few consequences beyond the event itself – one of the core characteristics of play activities recognized by Huizinga (1938/1950) – attributed by many students to social and cultural practices seems to fall into a conceptualization of experience as *Erlebnis* rather than *Erfahrung*. We might say that both Americans and Italians share an idea of travel as *Erlebnis*.

Furthermore, some of the favored weekend travel destinations fuel a particular experience of the chosen places: Venice during Carnival, Dublin on St. Patrick's Day, Munich during Oktoberfest. It is something like an extra-extraordinary experience (out of the United States, out of everyday life), and it seems closer to a conception of experience as *Erlebnis* – more isolated and categorical, something you do, a *carpe diem* event – rather than experience as *Erfahrung*, which is more profound, ongoing and cumulative, something you undergo: an event of meaning. "Our traveling was extensive and very demanding, but we rarely stayed anywhere long enough to get a real sense of the culture" (Mark, age 21).

As we have seen, the double transitional passage towards adulthood and global citizenship takes different shapes: the apparently uncontested global meaning is questioned by local and national cultures. My in-depth analysis of autobiographical essays written by a group of young Italians, and their comparison with essays written by American students, has highlighted the significance of the passage toward adulthood: the "limen" between youth and adulthood is drawn in a different vein and accompanied by different rituals – or rather, a lack of rituals for the Italian youngsters. Becoming an adult and citizen of the world follows different cultural paths, thus giving shape to heterogeneous identities under an apparently homogenous global semantic umbrella.

References

Arnett, J.J. (2004). *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Austin, J.L. (1962). *How To Do Things with Words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1927-1930/1999). *Selected Writings*. Vol. 2. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.

Bettin Lattes, G., Bontempi, M. (Eds. 2008). *Generazione Erasmus? L'identità Europea tra vissuto e istituzioni*. Firenze: Firenze University Press.

Birindelli, P. (2014). *The passage from youth to adulthood: Narrative and cultural thresholds*. Lenham, MA: University Press of America (Rowman & Littlefield Group).

Buzzi, C. (2002). Transizione all'età adulta e immagini del futuro. In C. Buzzi, A. Cavalli A., A. De Lillo (Eds.) *Giovani del nuovo secolo: Quinto rapporto Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia*, 19-48. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Buzzi, C., Cavalli A., De Lillo, A (Eds. 2007). *Rapporto giovani: Sesta indagine dell'Istituto Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Buzzi, C., Cavalli A., De Lillo, A. (Eds. 1997). *Giovani verso il duemila: Quarto rapporto Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Buzzi, C., Cavalli A., De Lillo, A. (Eds. 2002). *Giovani del nuovo secolo: Quinto rapporto Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Campbell, J. (1960). *Renewal Myths and Rites of the Primitive Hunters and Planters*. Dallas: Spring.

Cavalli, A. & De Lillo, A. (Eds. 1988). *Giovani anni'80: Secondo rapporto Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Cavalli, A. & De Lillo, A. (Eds. 1993). *Giovani anni '90: Terzo rapporto Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Cavalli, A. (Ed. 1984). *Giovani oggi: Indagine Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Cicchelli, V. (2012) L'esprit cosmopolite: *Voyages de formation des jeunes en Europe*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Durkheim, E. (1912/1995). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: Free Press.

Eliade, M. (1958). *Rites and Symbols of Initiation*. New York: Harper & Row.

Erikson, E.H. (1968). *Identity, Youth and Crisis*. New York: Norton.

Eurostat (1997). *The Young Europeans*. Luxembourg: European Union.

Eurostat (2018). *Share of Young People Living with Their Parents*. Luxembourg: European Union: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/ilc_lvps08.

Ferris, D.S. (2008). *The Cambridge Introduction to Walter Benjamin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Furlong, A. (Ed. 2009). *Handbook of Youth and Young Adulthood: New Perspectives and Agendas*. London: Routledge.

Furlong, A., Woodman, D. (Eds. 2014). *Youth and Young Adulthood: Critical Concepts in Sociology*. Routledge: London.

Gadamer, H.G. (1960/1989). *Truth and Method*. New York: Crossroad.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Heatherton, T.F., Nichols, P.A. (1994). Personal Accounts of Successful versus Failed Attempts at Life Change. *Personality and Social Psychology Bullettin* 20 (6): 664-675.

Huizinga, J. (1938/1950). *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*. Boston: Beacon.

Inglis, D. 2005. *Culture and Everyday Life*. London: Routledge.

Jung, C.G. (1938/1969). Psychology and Religion: West and East. In *CW*. Vol. 11. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Klein, M. (1935/1975). A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States. In *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921-1945*. Vol. 1. London: Hogart.

Lasch, C. (1984). *The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times*. New York: Norton.
Meyrowitz, J. (1985). *No Sense of Place*: *The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior.* New York: Oxford University Press.
Mills, C.W. (1959). *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Nederveen P. (2004). *Globalization and Culture*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
Perniola, M. (2012). *20th Century Aesthetics: Towards a Theory of Feeling*. New York: Continuum.
Pew Research Center (2016) *Fact Tank*: http://pewrsr.ch/1Xanq4V.
Ricoeur, P. (1990/1992). *Oneself as Another*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Robertson, R. (1995). Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity. In M. Featherstone, S. Lash and R. Robertson (Eds.) *Global Modernities*, 25-45. London: Sage.
Tomlinson, J. (1999). *Globalization and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity.
Van Gennep, A. (1909/1960). *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.