

## AFTERWORD

Giulia Daniele, CEI-Iscte

Manuel João Ramos, CEI-Iscte

Pedro Figueiredo Neto, ICS-ULisboa

To the reader who has reached the end of this admittedly heteroclitic and fragmentary electronic book:

As we have indicated in the Introduction, the chapters gathered and aligned here are a reflection, a window so to speak, of a multidisciplinary and multipronged approach to the (*kaleidos*) topic of migratory fluxes into, within, and out of Europe, and to the dialogic dynamic of bordering and border-crossing. We take the set as glimpses of a of an ill-categorised and concerning issue that is daily negotiated between peoples, nations, and individuals.

This eBook also reflects what academia is and isn't today, what it permits and what it refuses, what and how it engages and is challenged by what and those who lie within and beyond its borders. A by-product of a ten-year serendipitous adventure involving students, lecturers, researchers, activists, artists, and more, it was being readied when the Covid19 pandemic struck, and for indescribable reasons its publication process was suspended for a while. The sanitary, economic, and political impacts of this sudden global crisis, and the short-term and long-term changes in migratory and mobility patterns it induced, will be a matter for others to discuss and to study. Suffice to say that our academic routines were drastically challenged by the imposition of quarantines, the recourse to virtual classrooms, online teaching, etc.,

and as further securitisation and bordering set in, disrupting travel, work, and the illusions of certainty. What came out of these strange times in what we, as editors, are concerned was a rather depressing and nihilistic feeling that many of the fine threads whereupon the concept and practice of *The University* hangs were broken. The pandemic made the implicit explicit, the hidden obvious, and we are yet to learn this lesson. Now, as it seems to wane (future days will tell), the academic edifice seems to recompose, and their inhabitants look intent on believing that normalcy is about to return just because in-presence classes, academic meetings, and research programs restart. The risk here is that of self-inflicting denial: denial of the profound crisis of legitimacy and meaning of the market-driven University, and its current reliance on part-time, precarious, low-wage jobs; denial of the ensuing commodification of knowledge, the dismantling of specialisation, the loss of academic freedom, the irrelevance of intellectual debate, the suppression of internal criticism.

The pandemic period could have been a time to prepare ourselves to answer an important question: will the ruined University be able to reinvent itself? We sense that the late Bill Readings' appeal (Readings, 2000) will stay unheeded, as will the late David Graeber's caution against the iniquity of "bullshit jobs" (Graeber 2018), It is yet too soon to know. As to the matters, the topic, and the people that this book addresses, they will still be here when the virus finally, hopefully, becomes endemic among humans. Wars and drought won't magically vanish from "troubled" areas. Migrant networks and paths will reconstruct themselves, and "they will still come" to an even more sanitised Europe, to an even more Orwellian continent (one that is equipping itself with Covid passports, digital certificates, pre-tastes of a coming Minority Report environment nurturing crimmigration). The pandemic seems to have momentarily halted the irrevocable demographic trend that is the ageing of the European population, and the concomitant appeal for injections of external young blood. But "they will still come".

Publishing a book that pictures what was before 2020 is a plea to the restart of a suspended conversation, and hopefully to search for ways to renew the relationship between academia and the world outside.

## References

- Graeber, D. 2018. *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Readings, Bill 2000. *The University in Ruins*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.