Memories of Europe

Angela Condello, Anna Mastromarino

Against the obstacles to the process of European integration, in particular as far as a common political project for all the member states is concerned, the reason of such obstacles is usually traced back to the absence of a *demos*, i.e. of a social body capable of recognizing itself as part of a cohesive entity united around the same will and the same values. More or less consciously, though, a crucial passage, in this inference, is usually neglected: the concept of 'people' is nothing but natural. It presupposes, on the contrary, the presence of an identity which results from a continuous political activity aimed at finding convergence among diversities and at handling conflicts. An identity, in other terms, which is anything but spontaneous, and that presupposes shared intentionality, as well as common horizons and perspectives[1].

These activities, intentionality, shared functions and projections, nevertheless, are becoming more and more difficult to be realized and reached in contemporary societies, which are extremely complex. If we can say, on the one hand - following Jan Assman, that "without multiplicity there can be no unity, and without alterity there can be no specificity"[2] (Assman 1997: 104), on the other hand it is necessary to recognize that within such hyper-differentiated context the problems of (re)composition of a group, of a unity, through a cultural, and symbolic[3], heritage, are no longer limited to the communicative level. Indeed, another requirement has emerged: that of stabilizing the political groups, highly unstable, within the social body, and also of integrating sociocultural universes that, among them, are heterogeneous also from the point of view of the values.

The construction of an identity, given these conditions, ceases to be a process based on the emergence of a spontaneous lifestyle, of dominating beliefs and values, and turns into an intense activity of culture production and construction. In other terms, it turns into an activity capable to erect, among the diversities, a macro-identity bridging a balance between the spontaneous formations of human socialization, providing for them a horizon in a wide sense, capable of connecting and vinculating them[4].

Angela Condello, University of Messina, angela.condello@unime.it
Anna Mastromarino, University of Turin, anna.mastromarino@unito.it

[1] On the concept of 'shared intentionality' from the perspective of the philosophy of language and society, see in particular Searle John R. (1995). *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York: The Free Press; and, likewise, Searle John R., (2010). *Making the Social World: The Structure of Human Civilization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[2] Transl. by the authors.

[3] Zagrebelsky Gustavo (2012). *Simboli al potere. Politica, fiducia, speranza*. Torino: Einaudi.

[4] *Ibidem*, 116.

For this reason, in the last years there has been frequent questioning on what could be the more suitable instruments to facilitate such identitarian process, regardless of the unfavorable streams; inevitably, a potentiality has been found in memory, in politics of memory, and in collective and institutional memory.

From this perspective, memory ends up playing a relevant role, given that communities build their unity and consciousness of their peculiarity starting from the events of a more or less recent past[5].

Memory, its traces[6], what remains of a culture, can indeed acquire a tremendous 'force of identity'[7], such that there cannot be "identitarian research without memory, and conversely, the memorial research is always paralleled with a feeling of identity at least at an individual level"[8] (Candau 2002: 21). The reflection on the past becomes a fundamental passage in the construction of the present and in the process of self-definition of a group[9].

This is indeed possible because what Assmann calls the 'culture of remembering' and that here we prefer to name 'memorial activity', is part of "projecting and of hope, i.e. of the formation of conceptual horizons and social time" (Assman 1997: 7). The archive of memory, made of photograms, events, narrations, singular and collective signs and symbols of a shared past, provide materials that, in their particular nature, are capable of referring to universally shared principles and values, thus producing agreement and the common directionality which are the necessary premises of shared intentionality.

Through memorial practices, institutions not only recall an event of the past: they actually promote it as a sign recognized at a collective level, i.e. as a sign capable of referring to another dimension, that of principles and values; the singular event, fact, name, or body, inasmuch as the singular image or flavour or sound at a perceptive level, when promoted as 'stories' referring to a broader 'history', can be reinterpreted in light of the present, in order to grant integration and peace. Through this dynamic oscillation between past and present, and through the semiotic capacity of saying

---

[5] In the Hellenica by Xenophon, 4, 20-21, Cleocritus, in 403 B.C., hopes for getting closer with the oligarchs beaten in Athens, to the democrats that were the winners: "for the paternal and maternal gods, for our kingship and affinity in wedding, for our *hetairía*". Plato in the *Menexenus*, 244°, refers to the same facts and invokes a happy reconciliation among all Athenians based on "real affinity of origin, that produces not with words but with facts, solid and fraternal friendship".

[6] Derrida Jaques (1992). "Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority". In: Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld, David G. Carlson (eds). *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*. New York – London: Routledge; Ferraris Maurizio (2011). *Documentality. Why it is necessary to leave traces*. New York: Fordham; (Maurizio Ferraris racconta) *Derrida e la decostruzione*, Roma: Biblioteca di Repubblica, 2011.

[7] Joutard Philippe (1992). Le musée du désert. La minorité réformée. In: Pierre Nora (dir.), *Les lieux de mèmoire*, T. III, *Les France, 1: Conflits et partages*. Paris: Gallimard, 546.

[8] Rossi Paolo (1991). *Il Passato, la memoria, l'oblio. Sei saggi di storia delle idee*. Bologna: il Mulino, 20, recalls that "memory…undoubtedly has something to do not only with the past, but also with identity and thus (indirectly) with its own persistence in the future" (transl. by the authors).

[9] In a famous movie of 1982, *Blade runner*, directed by Ridley Scott, replicants are completely similar to men. They are only different in that they have no memory. In their fight for liberation from slavery they try first of all to construct a collective autobiography: they are envious of men not only because they have a longer life, but they envy the past made of memories towards which they can feel a sentiment for what is unknown, like nostalgia.

more than what they say, memories enrich the present with symbols and aspire to consolidating rituals that can contribute to the resistance of a certain history through time; memories are socialized in order to contribute to shaping the identity of the social body within an order of values defined by the same institutions[10].

As a consequence, both those who have participated to the past event, and those that only knew it *a posteriori*, end up being the addressees of the same institutional message and are jointly called to share the same heritage of symbols and values, regardless of their direct experience, of their personal recollections, of the individual emotions generated by that event.

It is widely known that for a long time the necessity to shape a European memory has been monopolized by the narrative of the Holocaust, emblematically assumed as an exemplary memorial event starting from which a 'never again' could be affirmed. This is not the right place where to discuss the limits of such approach, that has favoured a disproportionate generalization of the Shoah and that has flattened and simplified the memorial paths of many people, epochs, latitudes[11].

It is important to recall that right after the fall of the Berlin wall, with the enlargement of the Union towards the East, also the minimal collective memory constructed around the tragic events of World War II has crumbled, showing all its fragility in the moment when it had to confront other narratives, those of the people beyond the iron curtain.

The reflection around the concept of totalitarism, aside from the ideology behind it, has become the spindle around which the thread of memory must be rolled up, and the dignity of human life has become the weave on which the fibers of society can be linked together. But this is a much harder operation than what it seems, as proved by the controversies emerged right after the approval of the resolution on the

---

[10] As the product of a social process, identity is nourished by symbols and meanings and is based on myths and rituals. Indeed, there can be no memory without myth, and there is no myth without communication: a communication based on ceremony, i.e. "elevated, far from the daily" (Cfr. J. Assmann 1997: 112, transl. by the authors). Institutionalized memory, even if heteroinducted by public powers presupposes, in fact, the activation of collective rituals of participation, that guarantee the resistance of memory against the passing of time. If myths express the idea of a certain order within society, rituals aim at producing and reproducing it without an end (Cfr. Balandier Georges (1988). *Le désordre. Eloge du mouvement*. Paris: Ed. Fayard), since in rituals repetition becomes "stimulus, an outburst of trust for oneself and for the world" (the words are by Loewenthal Elena (2014). *Contro il giorno della memoria*. Torino: Add Editore, 53, transl. by the authors). It is through their repetition, in fact, that the identitarian machine of a group is kept together. And it is for such act of resistance that the ritual is concretized in the majority of cases into ceremonies that presuppose reunion, participation, a celebration, preceded by its stigmatization in the calendar, defined *a priori*, shared not because one has contribute to write it but as the product of a statual decision aimed at signing the times of collective life (and inevitably also of individual life).
Institutionalized memory, therefore, is not only limited to remembering an event of the past. It assumes it by reinterpreting it in light of the present, for the present; it enriches it with symbols and aspires to the consolidation of rituals that can contribute to its resistance in time; it proposes its socialization in order to contribute to shape the identity of a social body in view of a context of values politically predefined by the institutions. The consequence is that both he, who was witness during the event of the past, a he, who only knows the event by having heard about it a posteriori, end up being addressees of the same institutional message and by being called to share the same symbolic heritage, regardless of the direct experience, of the personal memories, of individual emotions provoked by that event.
[11] See among others, Traverso Enzo (2016). *La historia como campo de batalla. Interpretar las violencias del siglo XX*. Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

importance of European memory for the future of Europe (2019/2819(RSP), adopted on September 19, 2019 by the European Parliament[12].

In the absence of common memorial vehicles, of exemplary objects and of shared semantic instruments of collective reference, the stories and national memories start to re-emerge overwhelmingly, stealing the scene to any other possible narrative, and denying the possibility of a possible European memory capable of accomodating, if not of composing, the many divided memories intertwined at a local and a communitarian level.

While on the one hand it gets clearer that the arrangement of shared politics of memory constitutes a necessary itinerary in order to reach political unity, on the other hand a paradox in which we are immersed becomes evident: if not entirely impossible, it is difficult – to say the least – to reconstruct shared memorial itineraries without common coordinates; at the same time, without investing in shared memorial spaces it becomes if not impossible, at least certainly difficult to throw the foundations to trace the common coordinates within which to create the evoked European *demos*.

Both memory and identity, in order to emerge and become stronger, need some form of self-consciousness to build upon their foundations, and in order to represent a 'yesterday', a 'today', and some potential projection in the future. It is only the consciousness of a 'we', of a first-person-plural subject understood as a collective space, that allows to read the past to attribute coherence to the present, and likewise to the identitarian projects of the future.

And, therefore, how would it be possible to help Europe distribute to its citizens a certain 'emotional salary', by transforming its economic-political horizon into a naturally political horizon, without falling in the grips of the logics of the nation-State?

A first step could be represented by the effort made to take seriously, also at an institutional level, the studies on memory: a field with international and multidisciplinary vocation, dedicated in particular to the analysis of the interconnections between past, present and future through a socio-cultural key. From the perspective of the *Memory Studies*[13], as a matter of fact, the individual character of mnemonic faculties is intertwined with the collective dimension, where the need of doctrine to look at what has been finds expression, by focalizing not only on events and characters, but on their projection in time, on how they are perceived in the present and on their potential future re-elaboration. It is in this sense that the complex character of memory studies emerges, and its field is defined more than by a specific object, by a method of research that leads to confront, dismantle, reconstruct the present in the light of the past. A similar approach, 'responsible' we could say, might turn useful to avoid inappropriate banalizations, as it happened recently in the cited case of the Parliament's Resolution

---

[12] Mastromarino Anna (2019). "Fare memoria, narrare la storia. Il Parlamento europeo e l'importanza della memoria per il futuro dell'Europa". *lacostituzione.info*, on https://www.lacostituzione.info/index.php/2019/09/25/6570/.

[13] The denomination *Memory Studies* is recent, but was affirmed in the scientific community, despite its (purposefully) generic nature. The bibliography on this theme is wide, given the interdisciplinary nature of its questions. The documents are, therefore, easy to find, considering the growing number of centres for research, projects and journals on the theme. Be it sufficient here to recall, paradigmatically, that in December 2016 there was in Amsterdam the inaugural conference of the *Memory Studies Association* (MSA), formally instituted in June 2017.

of September 2019[14], or in the case of the intolerable abuses caused by policies whose purpose is defined by utilitarian and contingent criteria[15].

In this sense, the choice of objects-vehicles of memory becomes as important as the selection of the values that must be celebrated. Their exemplarity, in other terms, becomes their force and translates into their capacity to integrate in one singularity (fact, person, name, place, etc.) an order of values and a certain vision of the world.

It is not sufficient, for instance, that the event to be remembered is – so to say – 'collective'. In order to catalyse a shared memory, the event must become 'common', i.e. it must be the product of a participated elaboration, also when not necessarily conscious.

In this sense, for example, a library does not constitute, *per se*, the space of collective memory; but an event, a date, a person, a place can become an exemplary object for an entire community, one to which public schools or media have dedicated a process of reflection that has converted it into a memorial singularity by activating what Rouquette defines 'nexus', i.e. those pre-logical and affective cores common to great masses of individuals in a given society – cores that are first of all useful as a point of reference and base in the formulation of judgments and for acting within the public sphere, justifying and legitimizing from the political point of view one and the others[16].

In concrete terms, this entails inevitably that the same memorial singularity could be experienced in very different terms by two communities that – though sharing that object – do no connect it to the same nexus, because one relates it to 'freedom', for instance, and the other to 'homeland'. It is clear that the values activated by that same object are different because the two communities are characterized by a different nexus, i.e. by different logical schemes and affective cultures. All this entails that, even when based on the same object, the memories of two communities could not be traced back to the same collective memory, even if they shared the same memorial space.

The construction of a common memory presupposes, therefore, the act of tracing relations and to establish criteria of relevance between nexus, values and the singular exemplary objects of memory. All this in order to achieve - if reaching a shared

---

[14] Making memory is one of the most delicate activities that an institution can be challenged with: the Resolution of the European Parliament clearly shows that the route of good intentions is always full with temptations. In this case the temptation is the will to say too much, stumbling on the threshold that divides the memorial activity from the work of historians, simplifying too much through a language which is not fit to events on which the conflict between divided memories is still open. By retracing without scientific rigour some facts in history, out of their contextualization, in the resolution there are premises, like those formulated at points C, D, E, K, but also considerations like those recalled at points 2, 15, 16, whose content and assertive tone collide with the general aims of the document. The text moreover is very ambiguous at a conceptual level: let us just recall the mixed and confused use of the terms 'communism' and 'stalinism'.

[15] Even if this is not the place to deepen the theme, let us recall that the consequences at the level of the recognition of the same treatment for all citizens might derive from an instrumental use of memorial laws. These laws, in fact, can throw the bases for an unjust discrimination: if parameters used by public powers in the memorial sphere are unclear, it becomes hard to understand the reasons supporting the choices of the legislator. These, therefore, end up appearing arbitrary, generating a competition between the victims and by consequence between the different communities. Especially in those orders that live in a state of chronic crisis of the representative structure, since what lacks is consensus contributing to the consolidation of the authority of the decisions of public power. See Mastromarino Anna (2018). *Stato e Memoria, Studio di diritto comparato*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

[16] See Roquette Michel-Louis (1994). *Sur la connaissance des masses*. Grenoble: Presses Universitaire de Grenoble, 68 ss.

memorial horizon is too utopistic (in our complex societies) - at least the definition of an arena in which shared memories can coexist.

It cannot be excluded that the process of the European political integration has, indeed, suffered from a slowdown also due to the latent mistrust that concepts like 'identity' have undergone, by being assimilated to categories such as 'nation" and "nationality', which (read in their excluding meaning) are in a clear-cut contrast with values such the protection of pluralism and of human dignity. The world wars have left a heritage to European civilization, in terms of suffering but also of responsibility for the future.

Only the re-elaboration of the idea of State outside the perspective of the nation-State can effectively help to rescue at the same time the 'State' as valid formula of political organization (…not necessarily because it is axiological better than others, but because it is currently lacking rival models capable of replacing it) and the 'identity' as the indefectible *humus* in which we could harvest a sense of belonging, solidarity, projectuality, that are essential for a political project in order to prosper and be solid. It is the context that makes the difference: where the nation-State prefers 'monologic frames', our organizations based on the principles of democratic constitutionalism cannot disregard 'dialogic frames'.

In this sense it is necessary that also the memorial process, a projectile force in the identitarian structure, is developed in a dialogical perspective. Without a common platform, the perspective for its edification can only be communicative: memory must be made discursive and as such it is linked to language, i.e. to the whole structure of communication and not to the mere act.

In effect, even without denying that remembering represents an essentially individual activity, it has now been generally recognized an idea of the collective dimension of institutionalized memory that, to be structured, is necessarily based on an interpersonal process of exchange of information; it leans on the activity of institutions for its diffusion; and it uses symbolic and artistic instruments for its assimilation. The consequence is that it must be accepted that "hay efectos globales del recuerdo y del olvido que no tienen por qué ser dependientes directamente de actividades individuales conscientes y voluntarias"[17]. Likewise, on the base of each interpersonal dynamic, including those of memorial nature, there are singular individuals with their heritage of lived events and dreams to realize[18].

[17] Paez Dario et al. (2000). "Identidad, comunicación y memoria colectiva". In: Alberto Rosa Rivero, Guglielmo Bellelli, David Bakhurts (eds.). *Memoria colectiva e identidad nacional.* Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 395. The authors continue by arguing that: «memoria colectiva es un ejemplo de constructo colectivo mcroscopsicológico. Un constructo macropsicológico es aquel que postula que las percepciones, emociones e intenciones de los individuos tienen un impacto social más allá de lo interpersonal y individual».

[18] As recalled by Paolicchi Piero (2000). "Recordar y relatar". In Alberto Rosa Rivero, Guglielmo Bellelli, David Bakhurts (eds.). *Memoria colectiva e identidad nacional.* Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 287): «Recordar, en sus expresiones concretas individuales, no es, por tanto, el solitario proceder de una mente universal ni la respuesta a un estímulopor un organismo islado en una solitaria relación con el mundo de objetos, pero tampoco es el producto o el reflejo de procesos sociales o discursivos objetivos, es más bien la forma sigmìnificativa y concreta de establecer una relación con su proprio pasado y con otrso por parte de agentes individuales situados históricamente, los cuales, tanto recordando como pensando, comunicando o actuando construyen su propio ser y co-construyen un mundo compartido con los otros».

It is within this tension between the individual and the collective that memory is structured. In a tension made of signs and symbols and therefore of definitions and interpretations – since symbolic activity is never extraneous to the recipient and the act of reception of the singular individual. In this sense, actually, we cannot forget that even when it is collective, memory is always the 'act made by someone'. Even when it is institutionalized – and thus stabilized by public powers – memory is never given once for ever. In this sense memory is present as instrument of preservation and activation at the same time[19], interpreting at its best its role of promoter of identity in a social space that, being characterized by pluralism and physiological conflict, cannot but give origin to memories that clash with each others.

It is not by chance that, in time, there have been consistent changes that have profoundly modified the ways of construction of memory in the public realm. If once memory was made of celebration, today it is mainly made of reflection and remembrance; in our complex societies, the memorial ritual is reasonable if there is commemoration in function of the present, and not just of the mere exaltation of the past. During the last century we have progressively seen changes of the forms of public memory. Starting from the end of the first World War, passing through the teachings of the theory of the counter-monument, an inclusive idea of memory has started developing, an idea in which the State is called not to define memories, but to inaugurate arenas where the different memories divided within the social body can find their room, those in contrast, but also the repressed ones, that were never made explicit. Public memory becomes the space of the presence, but also of the absence, by becoming an occasion for the manifestation for all those subjects that are part of the story, even if they have never contributed to its writing. In those memorial arenas, also through the refusal of the institutional 'version' of the story, those that in the past have been excluded can turn into narrating voices and they can contribute to build new memories. They are, in more theoretical terms, 'inclusive': in other words, they re-open the process of history-making, and writing, by enlarging the group of subjects participating in the narrative process, and by doing so they are – as mentioned above – both preservative and revolutionary, they preserve and they create at the same time.

It is possible to apply to the practice of memorial actions the ideological platform supporting the counter-monument. As a matter of fact, the fear that collective memory, once institutionalized, can subtract the reflection on the past in the public sphere to individual awareness, promotes a memorial activity aimed at decomposing collective memory, not to destroy it but to guarantee a kaleidoscopic vision, presupposing the participation of visitors[20].

---

[19] As well in this tension between perennial and the mutating nature lies one of the reasons of the dilemmatic character of memory, that while leans towards continuity, preserving the past, this way it always alters it in view of the present. Cfr. Middleton David, Edwards Derek (1990). "Introduction". In David Middleton, Derek Edwards (eds.). *Collective Remembering*. London: Sage, 12.

[20] The theorization of the counter-monument can be traced back to Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev Gerz, even if it is thanks to the words or the critic James Young that the phenomenon starts spreading. In *The Texture of Memory*: *Holocaust memorials and Meaning* (1994), 27, James Young – remembering the debate on the public memorial practice in Germany – affirms that maybe the most bewildering answer to the issue of German memorials is the emergence of so-called 'counter-monuments'; i.d., of those memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their own existence. Their authors are the heirs of a double heritage post-war: a

So, in the process of construction of the European memory, in its identitarian function, the challenge is even more of high-performance since the absence of a gaze towards the shared past amplifies the role of the citizen, who is no longer visitor/actor in the memorial arena, but even becomes co-author[21], by contributing to the definition of the interpretive field of the memorial symbol and therefore to its stabilization, but not to its petrification[22]. In this sense, the memorial space becomes the space of possibilities and, as such, it turns into a dimension of inclusion on which the democratic constitutional state is based: universes of meaning that intersect with each other through the dialogical narration, by contributing to construct new platforms of shared values.

Where there is natural homogeneity, also naturally identitarian affinities are constructed. But the process of political integration is called to measure itself with other conditions: those of differentiation which is indeed the natural state of existence of man and of the environment surrounding it and, therefore, it is the context in which public powers operate. The construction of a collective memory with an identitarian function, in search of intersections, starting from which converging paths can be found, develops, therefore, through the processes of narration that without giving up the link with reality (*logos*) leads us to construct the plot of a narrative (*ludus*), in which past and present are intertwined in view of the future, through the selection of values that are reified in events or characters of the past that – because of such process – become exemplary and memorable (*mythos*)[23]. These exemplary values are symbolized, represented, depicted into singular dates or events (for instance, July 14th in France, or April 25th in Italy), inasmuch as into singular heroes, colours, songs, landscapes, by virtue of the "exceptional congruence that what is exemplary realizes and exhibits between the order of its own reality and the order of the normativity to which it responds"[24]. Indeed, the capacity of bringing the singularity to universality,

---

profound distrust for the monument; as well as a profound desire to distinguish their generation from that of the assassins, through memory. In the perspective of the counter-monument, opposing its hieratic nature, the monument becomes invisible, mimetic, and proposes itself more than imposing itself. Starting from the more paradigmatic among the models of counter-monuments, i.e. that in Hamburg against fascism, was, violence – for peace and human rights (by Jochen and Esther Gerz), many examples follow, trying to decompose collective memory, in order not to destroy it but to guarantee a kaleidoscopic vision, presupposing the participation of visitors. From here, develops the idea of 'diffused monument', beside the already mentioned diffused museum and that finds its highest expression, probably, in the work of Gunter Demnig with his *Stolpersteine* (stumbling stones). Interaction with the public gives life to the monument that progressively turns into a stage, where memories indeed meet with each other, sometimes collide, up to the point where they enter into a conflict. The monument, quintessential example of static nature, acquires in memorial practice a dynamic force that makes it apt to become an instrument of institutionalized memory also when public powers intervene not to glorify but to reconcile the past, also if it becomes necessary to challenge open dissent.

[21] See Jedlowski Paolo (1997). *"Collective memories", Small-Groupe Meeting on Collective Memories*. Bari: Proceedings, 23-30, to underline the passage from a reflection in the memorial realm that starting from the works of Halbwachs moves within a sociological perspective, to a psychological perspective.

[22] … In the fear that "il dolore reificato muoia esiliato nella pietra" (reified pain dies in the stone, our translation): Calimani Dario (2002). "La memoria e il suo esilio". In: Aa.Vv., *L'ombra lunga dell'esilio. Ebraismo e memoria*. Firenze: La Giuntina, 32

[23] Paez Dario et al. (2000), cit., 354 ss.

[24] Ferrara Alessandro (2008). *The Force of the Example. Explorations in the Paradigm of Judgment*, New York: Columbia University Press, 3.

or – following Kant and Arendt – of bringing reality to normativity has been related to aura, charisma, extraordinarity, exceptionality, authenticity, perfection. All these characteristics stabilize the progression from *logos* to *mythos* abovementioned into a *consensus*, an agreement on the incredible depictional force of the individual instantiation. The force of the exemplary *mythos*, in this sense, becomes more salient to us "as the force of principles becomes more difficult to ground in the light of a philosophical horizon not yet overcome"[25]. Where and when it becomes more difficult to grasp the level of universal principles, especially in situations governed by various forms of pluralism, exemplary singularities help making explicit: the example contributes to understanding and clarification in the same way in which the schema helps one to recognize the table as a table.

Against such background, for the shared construction of identity, it is necessary that the memorial processes respect some prerequisites of form and substance. To put it otherwise, and with specific reference to the themes explored in this issue, not all memorial actions that European institutions can imagine, nor all reference to the existence of a common past, can generate collective spaces of memory. This produces a certain discomfort and skepticism for improvised declarations, even when backed by the votes of majorities, like those contained, for instance, in the Resolution of September 2019.

There are prerequisites to the narration of the past that cannot be circumvented. That of the plausibility, for example, inexorably linked to the need of explanation and persuasion for those that, despite they were absent (…without even having witnessed…) are called to believe. And, in fact, saying that memory is the product of the creative activity of man does not exclude, and instead fosters, the necessity that the narrative that is aimed to be implemented within the community, though exemplary, can be welcomed as credible and therefore it can be assimilated. In this sense, if memorial action is performed in an identitarian perspective and if the identitarian processes are necessary for the stabilization of platforms of values aimed at guaranteeing integration and peace in the social body, the selection of the exemplary memorial objects becomes a delicate and fundamental passage to assign coherence to the whole process[26] and to guarantee that memorial action works well.

In the following pages, the interdisciplinary voices collected in this issue move from this perspective: i.e., in search for a narrative thread that starting from memorial objects, be them material or immaterial, can attribute coherence to the story of a Europe that is mature to look at its past in view of its own future. It would not be, in this

---

[25] *Ibidem*, 4.

[26] Not many studies have attempted to reconstruct empirically the requirements that can contribute to the success of the politics of memory. Let us just refer to the rich reconstruction made by Pennebaker James W., Crow D. Michael (2000). "Memorias colectivas: la evolución y la Durabilidad de la Historia". In Alberto Rosa Rivero, Guglielmo Bellelli, David Bakhurts (eds.). *Memoria colectiva e identidad nacional*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 231 ss. Elements such as the flow of information, the age of the witnesses, the sharing of what has happened and of its psychological impact, regardless of the possible structural changes that might have been generated – these are some of the elements that according to the authors must be considered beyond the fact that, for different reasons, there is a cyclical memorial dynamic evidentiating the tendency to go back to the past after 20/30 years from the facts.

sense, a matter of ignoring the different constitutional identities and, therefore, more broadly, the memorial identities of the member States. On the contrary, in respect of the deontological code that has always characterized the process of European integration by imposing respect for diversities, it would be a matter of constructing a new 'culture of remembering', for the inauguration of a new European era of projection and hope, i.e. of the formation of conceptual horizons and of social time shared by 'starting from' the past, and 'despite' the past.

References

Assmann Jan (1997). *La memoria culturale. Scrittura, ricordo e identità politica nelle grandi civiltà antiche.* Torino: Einaudi.

Balandier Georges (1988). *Le désordre. Eloge du mouvement.* Paris: Ed. Fayard.

Calimani Dario (2002). "La memoria e il suo esilio". In: Aa.Vv., *L'ombra lunga dell'esilio. Ebraismo e memoria.* Firenze: La Giuntina.

Candau Joël (2002). *La memoria e l'identità.* Napoli: Ipermedium.

Derrida Jaques (1992). "Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority". In: Drusilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld, David G. Carlson (eds). *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice.* New York – London: Routledge.

Ferrara Alessandro (2008). *The Force of the Example. Explorations in the Paradigm of Judgment,* New York: Columbia University Press.

Ferraris Maurizio (2011). *Documentality. Why it is necessary to leave traces.* New York: Fordham.

Jedlowski Paolo (1997). *"Collective memories", Small-Groupe Meeting on Collective Memories.* Bari: Proceedings.

Joutard Philippe (1992). Le musée du désert. La minorité réformée. In: Pierre Nora (dir.), *Les lieux de mèmoire*, T. III, *Les France, 1: Conflits et partages.* Paris: Gallimard.

Loewenthal Elena (2014). *Contro il giorno della memoria.* Torino: Add Editore.

Mastromarino Anna (2018). *Stato e Memoria, Studio di diritto comparato.* Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Mastromarino Anna (2019). "Fare memoria, narrare la storia. Il Parlamento europeo e l'importanza della memoria per il futuro dell'Europa". *lacostituzione.info.*

Middleton David, Edwards Derek (1990). "Introduction". In David Middleton, Derek Edwards (eds.). *Collective Remembering.* London: Sage.

Paez Dario et al. (2000). "Identidad, comunicación y memoria colectiva". In: Alberto Rosa Rivero, Guglielmo Bellelli, David Bakhurts (eds.). *Memoria colectiva e identidad nacional.* Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva.

Paolicchi Piero (2000). "Recordar y relatar". In Alberto Rosa Rivero, Guglielmo Bellelli, David Bakhurts (eds.). *Memoria colectiva e identidad nacional.* Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva.

Pennebaker James W., Crow D. Michael (2000). "Memorias colectivas: la evolución y la Durabilidad de la Historia". In Alberto Rosa Rivero, Guglielmo Bellelli, David Bakhurts (eds.). *Memoria colectiva e identidad nacional.* Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva.

Roquette Michel-Louis (1994). *Sur la connaissance des masses.* Grenoble: Presses Universitaire de Grenoble.

Rossi Paolo (1991). *Il Passato, la memoria, l'oblio. Sei saggi di storia delle idee.* Bologna: il Mulino.

Searle John R. (1995). *The Construction of Social Reality.* New York: The Free Press.

Searle John R., (2010). *Making the Social World: The Structure of Human Civilization.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Traverso Enzo (2016). *La historia como campo de batalla. Interpretar las violencias del siglo XX*. Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Young E. James (1994). *The Texture of Memory*: *Holocaust memorials and Meaning*. London: Yale University Press.

Zagrebelsky Gustavo (2012). *Simboli al potere. Politica, fiducia, speranza*. Torino: Einaudi.