Hybrid Identities and Memory

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Abstract: In this article the author reflects on some of the most recent instances of the hybridization of identities, brought about by movements of migration in the more general context of globalization. New situations triggered by the epoch-making historical developments of the world we live in require us to modify our notion of individual identity, which is no longer seen as a fundamental and self-referential essence of the individual, but rather as the product of a number of relational variables, many of which arise from processes of ethnic amalgamation and cultural blending. In this new historical condition, one that old styles of thought are no longer able to grasp, the notion of memory is paramount. Memory, as Said has indicated, is connected to Vico’s concept of “invention” as “finding again,” that is, as an incessant process of the remembrance and the discovery of stories that are lived, leading to a “re-creation” and reconfiguration of one’s roots. This article, however, does not simply formulate, articulate and discuss the problem, but also raises the question of its genealogy, locating this in Vico’s distinction between the topical and the critical, that is connected with the triad of memory-imagination-ingenuity, and in certain philosophical positions – such as that of Dilthey, which is specifically acknowledged here – that involve an instance of hybridism, interpreted as a relationship between biological-natural and psychological subjectivity on one hand and historical-cultural identity on the other.

1. The Origins of Inventio in Vico and the Concept of Hybridization

“In Latin, *invencio* [sic] is to find again. It was used in classical rhetoric to describe a process by which you find past experiences and rearrange them to give them eloquence and novelty. It’s not creating from nothing, it’s reordering. In that sense, I invented myself.”¹ To me these words by Said, taken from an interview, seem to perfectly clarify in which sense, from the viewpoint of philosophical clarification, we can establish a relationship between memory and identity, the latter meant, as we must immediately explain, as the prismatic set of historical, psychological, anthropological as well as, naturally, logico-cognitive

elements. To explain how the memory exercised by an exile (and I would also add a migrant or vagrant) essentially tends towards self-rediscovery,² the Palestinian–American intellectual uses the Latin term *inventio*, fundamentally meaning to *find again*, meaning the continual process of remembering and uncovering stories lived, meaning to *re-create* and reorder one’s roots.³ Said identifies the particular slant given by Giambattista Vico to the meaning of *inventio* as the philosophical fundament of this idea of *finding again*. From a philosophical point of view, it is with Vico that the relationship between *ethics* and *aesthetics* opens up. It becomes established as the extension and integration of the more general epistemological nexus that Vico had initiated – not by chance following comparison with Cartesian rationalism – between the *topical* and the *critical*. In Vico’s view, the topical element does not only concern rhetorical and the art of discourse, but it is the mainstay of a more comprehensive and effective method than the critical procedure in the search for truth. Vico considers that the “critics” commit an error when they allocate to the first truth a place before, even beyond and above, all bodily images.⁴ The topical method – according to Vico wrongly neglected by the logical and critical philosophers – is able to initiate a perception that comes before all conceptual reflection, and this is precisely why it can build a “new” critique which is no longer only metaphysical or only erudite.

This is also the best way to fight skepticism, since the *finding*, the *topical*, enables the formation of a common sense which in turn finds its fundament beginning from the *verisimilar*. As is easy to see, these are theoretical passages which, though still connected to a traditional philosophical definition of the imagination, form one of the most interesting antecedents to a *philosophy of memory*,⁵ in whose long course an important place has been held by an intri-

³ I use the term *roots* in the same sense as another scholar of the relationships between memory, history and exile-errantry, Édouard Glissant. Starting from the distinction proposed by Deleuze and Guattari between root and rhizome, the Antillian intellectual also maintains that the root of identity is not a totalitarian *unicum* nor a “predatory rootstock,” but relational, which keeps the idea of rootedness without making it totalitarian. See E. Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation. Poétique III*, Paris: Gallimard, 1990; [*Poetics of Relation*, trans. B. Wing, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007], pp. 11 ff.
⁵ I do not have enough room here (nor the necessary competences or knowledge) to go into the history and theory of the varied and “transdisciplinary” meanings of memory. Naturally, there is a philosophical approach and a physiological and psychological approach to memory. Here I take up and share the hypothesis of separate degrees of analysis as shown in the entry under *Memoria*.
cate and complex vision of the mind’s faculties, centered around the memory-imagination-ingenuity trio (memoria-fantasia-ingegno).

The important methodological configuration of the topical is inseparable from its strong theoretical worth. Indeed, it would be merely “enumerative” and descriptive to rediscover the “places” where the capacity to invenire is exercised, if this were not accompanied by the human faculty of ingenuity. In On the Most Ancient Wisdom, the ingenium assumes a paradigmatic value since it is the only faculty that can “connect disparate and diverse things.” In this same connection, ontogenesis and phylogenesis, the cognitive and the anthropological principle, should be dialectically combined. For Vico ingenuity is not just a specific form of cultural expression determined by history, but the manifestation of the specific nature of man. Indeed, it is the work of ingenuity to establish the measurement of things; to define the good, useful, beautiful and vile, a capacity denied to boors. While nowadays Vico’s mode of reasoning is followed more closely and brought up for comparison on the main issues in the present-day debate on the relationship between identity and memory, singular and collective identity, memory and history, and


7 Now see the volume by A. Musi, Memoria cervello e storia, with introduction by A. Oliverio, Naples: Guida, 2008. It is interesting to see how the historian’s reflection (along the same route followed by the philosopher) is committed to rethinking the traditional categories of historicity and historical science itself (traces, signs, historical consciousness, time, analogy, freedom/necessity, memory, identity, difference, etc.) in light of a theoretical and methodological comparison with the results of the empirical life sciences (biology and neurosciences) and a not
memory and recognizing diversities, we will see how it is not wholly implausible to attempt to relate Vico’s conception of memory-imagination-ingenuity with contemporary issues that concern, from a theoretical point of view, the reforming of new connections between the critical and the topical, ethics and aesthetics, rationality and imagination, and, from a practical-philosophical point of view, the increasing influence of debates on recognition and intercultural processes.

The rationality of the *inventio* is not an alternative to the fully unfurled reason of civil humanity. Rather, it goes alongside the science of concepts and forms and offers to the understanding of the world of history and practical action unprecedented cognitive tools, new categories and new methodical equipment: philology, poetic wisdom, the verisimilar, imaginative universals (*universalia fantastici*) and common sense. Poetic reason has accompanied critical reason along a long and bumpy road leading to some upshots of contemporary reflection which, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, rediscover and reformulate Vico’s theories. For Said, Vico’s notion of poetic wisdom is a form of historical knowledge based on the human being’s capacity to produce knowledge and not just absorb it passively, in a reactive and lazy manner. On her part, Nussbaum maintains that “story-telling and literary imagining” must not be deemed “opposed to rational argument, but can provide essential ingredients in a rational argument.” Besides, today in the heated con-

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9 Said was one of the first (after the excesses of idealistic and hyper-historicist interpretations) to insist on the physical-bodily dimension of Vico’s philosophy. See E. Said, “Vico on the Discipline of Bodies and Texts” (1976), now in Id., *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, pp. 83 ff. For the purpose of the discourse sketched out here, Said’s observation on the “incredible productivity” of the allegorical emblem to me appears very interesting. It generates (and therefore leads to the reading and interpretation of) meanings that not even geometric rationality could manage to identify. Said’s interpretation is important in the context of our discourse, since he consciously places central importance on the meaning of Vico’s theory of “the relation between epistemology and institutional development.”

temporary debate on history and memory, remembering and forgetting, the importancethe issues relating to the relationship between individual and collective memory can be seen in the blossoming in recent decades of studies and research around these topics.\textsuperscript{11} One of the greatest scholars on cultural and literary memory, Aleida Assmann, has quite rightly observed that “at present, as never before, remembering is at the centre of a vast theoretical debate: it is called upon to excuse, to blame and to justify; it has become essential to the fundament of individual and collective identity and is the place preferred by both conflictuality and identification.”\textsuperscript{12} As regards the central motif of Assmann’s proposed theory and interpretation – the distinction/relationship between memory as \textit{ars} and memory as \textit{vis} –, it could be traced back to the same channel of general philosophical intentionality that Vico had also begun from: \textit{ingenuity-imagination-memory} as not just a rhetorical-literary combination but also and above all as a cognitive and ethical-philosophical device, as the favored place for activating the nexus between remembering and subjectivity as well as the role taken on by remembering “in the project to found the identity.”\textsuperscript{13} It is precisely Vico to whom Assmann refers as the paradigmatic example of the shift from memory as \textit{ars} to memory as \textit{vis}, that is, from rhetoric to anthropology. This was possible insofar as “he held onto the other theoretical paradigm of memory, the psychological paradigm, and understood it, together with imagination and ingenuity, as one of man’s three spiritual faculties.”\textsuperscript{14} But Vico also saw memory – in light of his fundamental philosophical problem of founding a new science of human knowledge – in a “historical-genetical” perspective. In this perspective, which would then be the same taken up by psychology comprising a historicist basis, memory of the self, like the phylogenetic memory of the historical experience of nations, is no longer merely reproductive, but becomes a productive and creative faculty that appears at the very origin of the human spirit. Naturally, remaining open is the incredibly important question of the relationship between memory considered from the psychological and neurobiological viewpoint and memory as the indispensable backdrop for the creation and interpreta-


\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 20.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 32.
tion of the products of culture and of history in general. Most studies, both philosophical-cultural and neurobiological, in recent decades have progressively abandoned all dualistic and opposing visions. Here all I can do is note how very positive it is that the disciplines are coming together and making increasing efforts to place their respective researches on memory on common, anti-reductionist ground, that is, on ground that on one hand abandons all mechanistic and physicalistic paradigms and, on the other, all positivistic or, on the contrary, intuitionistic models.\textsuperscript{15}

If we take into account the considerations made thus far, we can understand that the conviction that referring to one of the modern sources of philosophical reflection on memory may help to clarify the present intricacy of the question of subjectivity is not the result of arbitrary and historically unfounded association. There is no possibility of “mixing” and contaminating cultures except within a paradigm of historicity and non-linear temporality, the paradigm first expressed by Giambattista Vico.\textsuperscript{16} And it is precisely in

\textsuperscript{15} Here I will just point out some books which have dealt with some of the issues brought up here in a clear and at the same time scientifically rigorous manner. I am referring first of all to the studies by G. Edelman, \textit{Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: on the Matter of the Mind}, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994; Id., \textit{Second Nature: Brain Science and Human Knowledge}, New Haven, CT-London: Yale University Press, 2006. Upholding convincing anti-reductionist arguments based, both philosophically and neurobiologically, on the original plastic and continually experiential nature of the brain and the theory of the \textit{qualia} is V. Gessa-Kurotschka, “La non riducibilità della coscienza fra \textit{Philosophy of Mind} e neurobiologia,” \textit{Iride}, 40 (2003), pp. 467-493; Id., “La complessità della vita umana: neurobiologia, etica, cultura,” in V. Gessa Kurotschka and C. De Luzenberger (eds.), \textit{Immaginazione, etica, interculturalità}, Milan: Mimesis, 2008, pp. 231-250. In substance, the most recent biological and neurobiological research appreciates and agrees on “establishing a model of the mind that takes into account its different functions in an integrated manner” (see V. Gessa-Kurotschka and G. Cacciatore, “Introduzione” to Idd., \textit{Saperi umani e consulenza filosofica}, Rome: Meltemi, 2007, p. 20). But having the last word against reductionism is a scientist, with his vivid statement: “We can consider the whole process of humanity’s cultural evolution as a continual, progressive release from our biology” (see E. Boncinelli, \textit{I nostri geni. La natura biologica dell’uomo e le frontiere della ricerca}, Turin: Einaudi, 1998, p. 183).

\textsuperscript{16} It is not by chance that it was precisely one of the scholars who made a remarkable contribution to rethinking the topic of memory in Vico – I am talking about Jürgen Trabant – who put forward critical arguments against the excessively logistical interpretation of \textit{memory}, his use of the English term already concealing a polemic tone. The neither erudite nor nostalgic gaze he casts upon Vico and his philosophy, capable of holding together history, language and culture, allows him to see critically that “the Americanization of memory research has withdrawn memory completely within the individual and has ignored its social aspects.” In a world like the present one, which seems to be ruled by a truly overblown imaginary, societies and virtual economies, and ways of life inspired by the fleetingness of spectacularity and talk shows, it becomes increasingly urgent to bring up the question of culture again insofar as it is “human memory,” a question that becomes eminently political with the “impending loss of social memory” (See Trabant, \textit{Vico’s New Science of Ancient Signs: a study of sematology}, pp.106-8).
Vico, in his dynamic vision of the links between universalism and difference, that I consider it possible to identify the theoretical model for defining the concept of cultural hybridization.\(^\text{17}\)

It is a concept that belongs originally to biological, botanical and zoological language, and it has, metaphorically, become the term that means “to be made of or mix with heterogeneous elements” or, again, a “practice of crossbreeding between vegetable or animal individuals from different races or species”\(^\text{18}\) and, finally, it is becoming one of the keywords in the present-day anthropological and philosophical-political debate relating to the conceptual, sociological and ethical-political issues brought up by the now mass phenomenon of migrations and the mixing of cultures, needs and lifestyles. But, before all this, we have an instance of hybridism postulated by those philosophies that, beyond and before the birth and cross-use of the term, theorize forms of renewed relations between biological-natural and psychological subjectivity, on one hand, and historical-cultural identity on the other. It is, again, the case of Vico and his project of integration between the individual’s life cycle and the sequence of historical-cultural eras in the human-civil world. As we will see, this would also be the case of Dilthey who builds a philosophical itinerary whose constant commitment is to rediscover the relationship between the original psychic connection of the Selbst and the historical connection of the objectifications of life. Thus the philosophical presupposition of hybridization as one of the conditions for the possible understanding of the radical changes in categories such as identity, difference, relativity, universalism, interculturality, cosmopolitanism, etc. appears, first of all, as a new stage in the process of integration between the natural biological and psychological base of the human subject, critical reason and history (meant in the wide sense of history of culture). When, therefore, the idea of hybridism comes to be placed outside its original physical-natural and biological context, it can assume, as it indeed has assumed, a complex and layered series of meanings. Either singularly or together, they indicate a manner of philosophizing that does and has called into question the epistemological and ethical exclusivism of categories such as uniqueness, clarity and distinction, purity, totality, essentiality and, finally, the consolidated vision of universalism itself.


2. The Structural Nexus of Life

The criticality of the historicist perspective – which was originally pointed out by Vico and then ripely reflected on by Dilthey – encounters the problems and complexity of a geopolitically hybrid situation, but also and above all the reality of the contemporary individual who appears in an increasingly fragmented and dispersive dimension in the complicated game of his biological and psychological components and who, as a result, when reasoning as to the philosophical and ethical use of *inventio*, memory and remembering, imagination and stories, can express and interpret the “plurality of discursive forms of his being in the lifeworld.” Nowadays a theory of identity wanting to have a minimum amount of plausibility has to be based on the multiple contents of life and has to rely on methodologies based on connections and relations, which is not to exalt differences nor a state of exception, since “relations do not come from extraneousness, but from shared knowledge.” As Dilthey already taught, the Selbst-Welt, Self-Other relationship is at the basis of the structural nexus of life, and this relationship is always formed so that each of the two poles constantly refers to the other. Life experience is a unitary fact, it is the general connection within which human kind originates and manifests itself. While we can first obtain a scientific type of description of human kind, it is, nevertheless, to philosophy that we have to turn in order to penetrate its constitution proper. “Wherever the life of the human world,” Dilthey writes, “presents itself to us, we also see its manifestations in particular life-units, that is, in their life-concerns, in their conduct and stance toward things and people, […]. This enduring subsoil of life, from which differentiated functions arise, contains nothing that is not also a life-concern of a self.” But the situation of the self is destined to change on the basis of the relationship with things and with other men. “There are no people or things that are merely objects to me, that do not involve pressure or furtherance, the goal of some striving or a restriction on my will; […] they are either close to me or distant, resistant, and strange.” Thus there comes into being an idea of culture and the historical world as a connection of elements of biological and psychological life which develop dynamically in the relationship with individual biographical and auto-

20 Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, p. 22.
biographical experiences and the intersubjective experiences of history. This theoretical model of understanding individuality as a vital structural nexus since it is the place where multiple cultures meet and intertwine can be used by reflection on identity and on cultural pluralism. In addition, it can also be used in reflection on the ethical, socio-juridical and political problems linked to the inevitable meeting with cultural difference where the “different” and the “other” must not and cannot be assimilated by categories which absorb and cancel out the wealth and complexity of what is different.22

The oxymoron used in the title of this paper – *hybrid identities* – immediately bears witness to the distance from all monistic and totalistic conceptions of identity. What I want to present here is not a substantialistic idea of identity (both in its idealistic and flatly materialistic versions) nor a more refined notion of identity drawn up in a rationalistic or logico-epistemological key. The semantic range that the meaning of identity used here wants to signify instead belongs to a historic and ethic-anthropological sphere (obviously without neglecting identity’s important role as an object of psychological science), albeit aware of the many possible semantic, linguistic and conceptual approaches that the idea of identity has shown in the historical, and nevertheless continually changing, coordinates of the contemporary age. It is precisely in the contingency of the here and now that the philosophical critique of the concept of identity (and of its relation with the concept of memory) needs to adapt to the processes of transformation of a more and more multi-ethnic world society. In this sense, to me the correct method for analyzing the historical-cultural and social specificity of identity seems to be one that uses the dialectically placed categories of permanence/change and equality/difference.23 These seem to me the conditions for being able to think post-metaphysical identity, located on a level with a different and precarious balance between singular identity and the set of parts making it up.24

3. On the Importance of the Link between the Psychic and Historical Nexus

Now we need to see what positive upshot can be had, in terms of the choices and contents of ethical-political resolutions, from a non-reductionist and pluralistic

conception of identity beginning with the layers belonging to individual life experience (upbringing in one particular family or religion rather than another, in one local tradition rather than another, in this social environment rather than another) in order to then grasp how they solidify into a transmissible heritage of memories.\textsuperscript{25} In this direction of research, it can be useful to start off from an idea of the single individual’s memory that is not restricted, so to speak, to certifying that the contents of the consciousness are in line with one’s own capacity to remember or to forget. Memory of the self also has to include the experiences that the self has had and objectified in the web of the relations with the history and culture of one’s era, but also with the specific nature of the territory in which one is rooted or from which one has been uprooted.\textsuperscript{26} Not to speak then of what is also stratified in every person’s memory, crossing through and at times absorbing it, from belonging to a race and a skin color, or the choice, whether voluntary or imposed it does not matter, of a religion or a social status. The moment that the balance and the circularity of the complex elements forming an identity come to be altered, it may be that a religious identity transforms into fundamentalism, or an ethnic identity becomes racism and xenophobia. At the same time we need to be able to show a belonging, for example, to a religious culture that is not based in the historical roots of our country, or an ethnic belonging in a geographical situation which cannot be traced back to our origins. Thus the concept of \textit{hybrid identity} appears at the same time outside and inside the single individual’s consciousness and memory. Going to make up an individual’s identity can be a wide range of elements that make him common with others (citizenship, religion, language, profession, social class, etc.), but common does not mean identical. That is, unless we want to astutely transform belonging to a race, a religion or a class from an element of commonality and historical memory into a constant and reciprocal relationship with other commonalities and other memories, in a process of self-exclusion and exclusion of others which at times also takes on forms of violence and intolerance.

Therefore, in order to define, create, maintain and transform an identity, help is needed from the inside (the \textit{psychic nexus}, Dilthey would say) and from the outside (the \textit{historical nexus}). \textit{“The particular, individually formed, psychic life in...”}\textsuperscript{25} Speaking, quite rightly, of \textit{polymorphous identity} is E. Morin, \textit{L’Humanité de l’humanité, l’identité humaine}, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2001 [Italian edition: \textit{L’identità umana}, trans. S. Lazzari, Milan: Cortina Editore, 2002, pp. 63 ff].\textsuperscript{26} Of course, the opposite is also true: the memory can serve to provide traces and materials for historical research and narrative, but history can also nourish and regulate the memory’s store. What A. Musi wrote was true (\textit{Memoria, cervello e storia}, p. 72), although he invited us to be suitably careful in our methodology and epistemology in terms of the public use of history: “Man and human societies have to take care of their own memories. And history can make a powerful contribution to memory as man’s ability to remember, recognize and act in the present.”
its development,” the German philosopher had written, “constitutes the sub-
ject-matter of psychological research, but its first goal is to establish what is com-
mon in this psychic life of individuals.” Therefore, when I insist that identity
is a historical category, I am not only making a obvious statement as to its being
conditioned by space and time. Rather, I want to refer to its complexity and
layers which are not only formed and transformed upon their impact with the
Umwelt and collective history, but also within the process of its possible trans-
figuration into the same single personal identity, into the life story, that is, the
story of the existence of an individuality. “The pluralization of subjects coin-
cides with the pluralization of sense and with the multiplication of belong-
ings in complex societies. First, plurality refers to the individual subject. A
multiple self, made of opposing polarities, who not only lives in the present,
but transits through numerous stages. The continuity of individual identity
has now been entrusted to this ability to transit: without cancelling out the
memory, but without freezing the past, it is a route that requires delicate dos-
ing, constant selection, a mix of preservation and forgetting.” The ability
to transit, the openness to being crossed through helps, more than any other
experience, to critically cope with the pre-built and pre-constituted inherited
layers of historical identities (the nation-state, for example), but, even more,
it increases the possibility of recognizing differences. And, nevertheless, as
Édouard Glissant cautions, recognizing differences does not lead in itself to
a full and real dialectic with the Other. What is needed is a phenomenology
of errantry and relations, in which thinking of the Other does not mechani-
cally reproduce the dualism of differences, all to be traced back, nonetheless,
to a “generalizing universal.” Therefore also “uprooting can work toward
identity, and exile can be seen as beneficial, when these are experienced as a
search for the Other […] rather than as an expansion of territory.” Thinking
errantry means nothing more than awareness of the “destructuring of com-
pact national entities that yesterday were still triumphant” and of the “dif-
ficult, uncertain births of new forms of identity that call to us.”

The set of notions and categories used here converge with the critique of
a vision of human relations forcibly traced back to parameters of uniformity,
purity, uniqueness, clarity, substantiality and nationality. The idea of hybrid-
ization is an objective questioning of the attempt to uniform and level out our
differences, an attempt that has led to what have effectively been defined as

27 See W. Dilthey, “Studien zur Grundlegung der Geisteswissenschaften” (1904-1910), in Id.
Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 7, p. 14; [“Studies Toward the Foundation of the Human Sciences,”
trans. R. Makkreel and D. Scanlon, in Id. The Formation of the Historical World in the Human
28 See Melucci, Memoria, solidarietà, identità, p. 55.
29 See Glissant, Poetics of Relation, pp. 17-18.
“particularist contractions [...]”: the absoluteness of religious purity, exclusive cultural assertion through restrictive rooting in the territory or in the memory, the theory of ethnicity that often leads, worm-like, to racism.”\footnote{F. Laplantine and A. Nouss, \textit{Le métissage}, Paris: Flammarion, 1997 [Italian edition: \textit{Il pensiero meticcio}, trans. C. Milani, Milan: Eleuthera, 2006, p. 60].} These are the coordinates of a vision of history and of practicing human relations that uses the experience of hybridization as the basis for a new possibility of thinking identity. Identity is no longer thought of as the founding and self-referential essence of the single individual, but as the result of plural, relational variables, and of “mixing and crossing made of memories, but above all of forgetting.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 62.}

The philosophical and ethical meaning that I have wanted to give to the nexus between memory and hybrid identities can be singled out first of all in the search for a balance between identities, which is also a balance between memories. This is why ingenuity as well as critical rationality is needed, spatialization as well as temporalization, history as looking for traces as well as history as a continual exercise of interpretation. “Memory, in the end,” write Laplantine and Nouss, “is in itself an operation of \textit{métissage}: remembering belongs to the present of the consciousness that manifests it, but by doing so it also reawakens something that is no longer there.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 92.} So, Zygmunt Bauman was right when, unwittingly latching onto Vico’s \textit{invenire}, he defined identity “as something to be invented rather than discovered; as a target of an effort, ‘an objective;’ as something one still needs to build from scratch or to choose from alternative offers.”\footnote{See Z. Bauman, \textit{Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi}, Cambridge–Malden: Polity Press, 2004, pp. 15-16.} Only in that way, as I have asserted elsewhere, is it possible to keep together two principles that are only in appearance contradictory: the principle of autonomous specificity and the unrepeatability of individual identity and the multiple possible belongings, histories, memories and experiences that form the layers of an identity. But this is, once again, not just a descriptive hypothesis. It is, above all, an ethical-political option since it does and can preserve the concept of identity from intolerant usage, in terms of racial exclusivism, communitarian isolation and religious and ethnic fundamentalism.\footnote{See Cacciatore, \textit{Per una ridefinizione del concetto di identità}, pp. 721-722.}

\textit{(Translated from Italian by Karen Whittle)}