CHAPTER 10

Epilogue

Luisa Passerini

This book is centered on a thematic cluster of theoretical and practical relevance: heritage, dissonance, and memory. Placed in the European context, these notions and practices presuppose the wider debate on European identity that has occurred in the last three decades, radically deconstructing this concept. The critique has been twofold: attacking, in general, the very concept of identity as a fixed and exclusionary notion, and, more specifically, refuting the claim to a cohesive and linear European sense of belonging throughout the centuries (Pagden 2002). Attributing continuity to the history of Europe and to European identity has always been, and still is, a heavy anachronism, dictated by religious and political motivations and/or intended to assert cultural exclusivity/superiority.

In the course of this long debate, a wide range of materials and practices, ranging from the consideration of official documents of the European Union to various forms of popular and academic culture, has come under the spotlight (Stone 2012). This process has entailed the

L. Passerini (✉)
Department of History and Civilization,
European University Institute, Florence, Italy
e-mail: luisa.passerini@eui.eu

© The Author(s) 2019

T. Lähdesmäki et al. (eds.),
Dissonant Heritages and Memories in Contemporary Europe,
Palgrave Studies in Cultural Heritage and Conflict,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-11464-0_10

deconstruction of the notion of European identity in many fields, including the history of emotions (Passerini 1999, 2012a), thus extending from the private to the public sphere, and vice versa, in a direction parallel to one that is modifying and expanding the prevailing concept of the public sphere centered in Europe towards a transnational public sphere (Kaelble and Passerini 2002; Fraser et al. 2014). "European identity" has thus not only been pluralized and "opened up" through an endeavor that unfolded during the initial phases of the process extending up to the 1990s, but it has also been turned upside down in terms of many of its implications. Its history has been shown to be discontinuous and contradictory, reflecting the history of the continent and the extra-European origins of its very name from the mythical Europa traveling west from Phoenicia, that is, present-day Lebanon.

The traditional dichotomy counterposition of Europe and its Other has, in the course of the intellectual debates on the subject, not only been expanded to include multiple Others, but, more importantly, it has been reversed. Consequently, Europe has been shown to be composed of and by many contributions from "others", and the old debate (partially still ongoing) on the primacy of Christian roots in European identity has largely given way (apart from political instrumentalizations) to the recognition of many other roots, which are often discordant among themselves. Finally, and even more pertinently, Europe herself has been shown to have been and to be "another" or the Other for many in the world (Strath 2000; Bhambra and Narayan 2016), a perspective requiring a revision and reformulation of the concept of cosmopolitanism inherited from the Enlightenment (Benhabib 2006; Delanty 2010; Passerini 2012b). The critique has gone so far that the end of Europe, one of the themes dominant after World War I, has powerfully resurfaced (Balibar 2016).

At the same time, if a new cosmopolitanism is possible, freed from the limitations imposed by the Enlightenment on the notion of "citizen of the world", and if this latter concept is substituted by the idea of "citizens without frontiers" (Isin 2012), then we can say that everybody is entitled to the legacy of all the cultures of the world. This is no easy claim, and its implementation will require a critical and self-critical attitude to every individual's place of origin, residence, and activities. Moreover, it will entail the fostering of attitudes of respect, humbleness, and curiosity towards cultures other than those that an individual knows and shares.

However, this form of reciprocity has already been practiced for centuries around the world by mobile people, who have been able to experiment with a sense of reciprocity without losing the pride and affection that they feel for their original cultures. A prerequisite of the right to inherit the legacy of many cultures is the rejection of exclusivism and superiority, not of uniqueness, which is the prerogative of individuals and can also apply to some aspects of every culture. For Europeans specifically—whether native or not—this type of right to inheritance would mean avoiding any assumption of fixed and solid heritages and instead fully accepting the mixture of continuity and discontinuity in the history of Europe. No birthright, no blood privilege. The term "dissonance" can be taken as encompassing all of these allusions.

The deconstructive process of European identity has encompassed the three connected notions of our cluster: heritage, dissonance, and memory. However, not all of the implications of disrupting the idea of European identity in a decolonial and postcolonial context have been teased out. First of all, while the deconstruction of "identity" can reach the point of dissolving the concept, "heritage" is not always intangible, rather, it is often material and corporeal, visible and touchable in spite of being elusive, and therefore more difficult to erode. Secondly, the terminological and conceptual discussion of the term heritage has not sufficiently explored the connotations in terms of gender and property that this term has in many European languages. Its etymology has repercussions that make it outdated and embarrassing because of the privileges it alludes to: in French (*patrimoine*) and Italian (*patrimonio*), it refers to the property of the father. In Portuguese (*herença*), Spanish (*herencia*), and Greek (*kleronomia*), it was originally connected with terms indicating the passage of property.

These connotations are still present in the notion of heritage, the use of which is often unfounded when its conceptual antecedents remain unexamined. However, the combination of "heritage" and "dissonance" operated by various scholars since the second half of the 1990s has deepened and enriched the problematic aspects of the term (among others, Graham et al. 2000). Indeed, heritage has been subjected to a critique that has aimed to eliminate its implications of exclusivity and has offered the useful concept of an inclusive heritage discourse (Kisić 2017). With our title, as well as in this book, we intend to reflect on the multiplicity of heritages and their internal contradictions, not only using the plural but also bringing together many different approaches.

"Dissonant heritages" (we would like to insist on the plural) are oxymoronic, and we have done our best to accept the challenge that this implies. We have used the metaphor of dissonance not only in the spirit of following other scholars and building on existing scholarship. We also had in mind the history of this term, which has become increasingly popular in recent decades, during which paired concepts such as dissonant subjectivities (Voli 2015), dissonant beauty (Braidotti 2011), and dissonant whispers have been introduced (Dissonant_Whispers).

The history of music reflects the history of the European continent; dissonance has always been a feature of classical music, to a limited extent, existing as a passage to be "resolved" in the following sequence of the musical piece. It was only in the twentieth century, and especially from the period around the time of World War I, that some composers started to place a heavy emphasis on dissonance within their scores, drawing inspiration from popular and world music, and incorporating new musical grammars into the old canon. With time, it became clear—also thanks to improved communications and new technology for reproducing sound—that what sounds dissonant to the ears of people in certain parts of the world, in other epochs and regions does not. We cannot help notice the affinities of musical history with the history of the terms identity and memory on European soil. All of these processes entail an increased acceptance of Europe's internal contradictions and dissonances, while implying a renewed recognition of its connections with other parts and peoples of the world.

While many appropriations and instrumentalizations of the term "heritage" are often disquieting, there have also been notable efforts to confer new meanings to it in fundamental contexts like education, and museums and exhibitions have sought out new practices. In the former field, it is of absolute importance to understand the multiplicity of discourses on heritage from the citizen's perspective (Carretero et al. 2017) and to grasp why "heritage has become the agora of history" within education (Asensio and Pol 2017, 774). In the second context, we find interesting practices of documentation, dissemination, and exhibition, conducted in a non-Eurocentric way, some of which are also analyzed in the present book. A significant example is the experimental initiative to create a "House of European History" in Brussels, one that maintains a balance between institutional aspects—such as displaying European integration, and cultural, social, and artistic products illustrating European history—while simultaneously questioning what Europe is and what the

roles of multimedia and material memory in this are on this continent (Mork and Christodoulou 2018).

Concerning the third element of our cluster, it is now widely acknowledged that there has been a deluge of memory in the last fifty years. Writing about this memorial invasion, Philippe Joutard (2015, 9, 14) observes: “aujourd’hui, tout est mémoire” (today, everything is memory). At the same time, the notion of memory has become even more puzzling and vague (Samuel 1994). It has been conceptualized as a technology, for instance, understood as a component of economic globalization (Plate and Smelik 2009). Considering the variety of memories, memory studies has emerged as a central point of contemporary epistemologies and a crucial part of the self-reflection within this domain of knowledge (Kattago 2015). However, in this situation, the mix of concepts can be confused. This is the case with the so-called memory complex, an ensemble that has proved appealing for many, including some of the authors whose contributions feature in this book. Pulling together memory, identity, and heritage (MacDonald 2013) may be helpful for highlighting the diversity and fluidity within European memories, but it does not give sufficient attention to conflict, inequality, and questions of power and resistance. Given our positionality as European scholars (here in the double sense of being based in European institutions and receiving funds for research from the European Union), what we need is a different methodological practice that can succinctly be expressed as multiplying and decentering memory.

The process thus designated has been ongoing in the socio-historical disciplines, particularly in cultural history, for over half a century. It has taken a double course: on the one hand, the multiplication and decentralization of memory has occurred in Europe and in North America, thanks to the increasing priority accorded to the collection of memories from those subjects who for a long time were relatively invisible within traditional historiography. These subjects are the oppressed of history, discriminated against in terms of class, gender, age, and culture. Oral history has contributed a great deal to documenting their memories, thus destabilizing the existing priorities in collective and individual remembering. On the other hand, a similar process of multiplication and decentralization has unfolded with the increasing presence of memories that have long been emerging outside of the North Atlantic area. In scholarly, artistic, and popular fields, memories from all parts of the world have become increasingly evident and relevant. Here too, oral historians have

widely documented such developments. Interestingly, these processes show similarities to those described above for “dissonance”.

As noted in the introduction to this volume, the methodological and conceptual meeting place that we from the EUROHERIT and BABE research teams have found and adopted is not aimed at resolving tensions between memory and cultural heritage. Rather, our aim is to build on their multiple dimensions, evidenced by the diverse contributions in this book. The introduction also indicates the links and bridges between groups of chapters, or between individual chapters, so that the whole book emerges as a field of crossroads, however, one where the intersections do not ignore the distances between various points on the multiple itineraries. A specific type of convergence unites the chapters emanating respectively from EUROHERIT and BABE, but at the same time, there are differences within each project as well as reciprocal correspondences that overcome the boundaries of the two projects.

One common ground between EUROHERIT and BABE has been the practice of decentering, as documented in this book. EUROHERIT has contributed to decentering heritage, illustrating and analyzing some of the forms that it has taken in recent times in various European countries (and the same can be said, although from a different perspective, for Rob van der Laarse’s contribution). BABE has focused on decentering memory, documenting the individual itineraries of people from all over the world towards and across Europe. It has collected—and contributed to the creation of—oral, visual, and written memories generated by and around mobility (Passerini 2018). It has also given particular attention to what can be considered a special type of memory, the archive, in both its material and cultural senses.

The dialogue between the two conceptual approaches and the connected practices has been far from linear and simple, and we believe that it remains ongoing. We see the present book as an initial outcome of our exchanges, and with it we hope to participate in a wider debate. We trust that this will enable the exchange between the two projects to develop further and take on new dimensions that are both European and global.

Acknowledgements This Epilogue owes much to a research that received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013), ERC Grant Agreement number 29585 (BABE).

References

Asensio, M., and E. Pol. 2017. The Neverending Story About Heritage and Museums: Four Discursive Models. In *Palgrave Handbook of Research in Historical Culture and Education*, ed. M. Carretero, S. Berger, and M. Grever, 755–780. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Balibar, E. 2016. *Europe: crise et fin?* Lormont: Le Bord de l'eau.

Benhabib, S. 2006. *Another Cosmopolitanism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bhambra, G.K., and J. Narayan. 2016. *European Cosmopolitanism: Colonial Histories and Postcolonial Societies*. London: Routledge.

Braidotti, R. 2011. *La bellezza dissonante*. https://rosibraidotti.com/publications/la-bellezza-dissonante/.

Carretero, M., S. Berger, and M. Grever (eds.). 2017. *Palgrave Handbook of Research in Historical Culture and Education*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Delanty, G. 2010. *The Cosmopolitan Imagination: The Renewal of Critical Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dissonant Whispers. https://dnd5e.fandom.com/wiki/Dissonant_Whispers.

Fraser N., et al. 2014. *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere*. Edited by Kate Nash. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Graham, B., G.J. Ashworth, and J.E. Tunbridge (eds.). 2000. *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture and Economy*. London: Routledge.

Isin, E.F. 2012. *Citizens Without Frontiers*. New York: Bloomsbury.

Joutard, P. 2015. *Histoire et mémoires, conflits et alliance*. Paris: La Découverte.

Kaelble, H., and L. Passerini. 2002. European Public Sphere and European Identity in 20th Century History. *Journal of European Integration History* 8 (2): 5–8.

Kattago, S. (ed.). 2015. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Memory Studies*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Kisić, V. 2017. *Governing Heritage Dissonance: Promises and Realities of Selected Cultural Policies*. Amsterdam: European Cultural Foundation.

MacDonald, S. 2013. *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*. London: Routledge.

Mork, A., and P. Christodoulou. 2018. *Creating the House of European History*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Pagden, A. (ed.). 2002. *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Passerini, L. 1999. *Europe in Love, Love in Europe: Imagination and Politics in Britain Between the Wars*. London: Tauris.

Passerini, L. 2012a. *Women and Men in Love: European Identities in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn.

Passerini, L. 2012b. Europe and Its Others: Is There a European Identity? In *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*, ed. D. Stone, 120–139. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Passerini, L. 2018. *Conversations on Visual Memory*. http://hdl.handle.net/1814/60164.
Plate, L., and H. Smelik. 2009. *Technologies of Memory in the Arts*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Samuel, R. 1994. *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*. London: Verso.
Stone, D. (ed.). 2012. *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Stråth, B. (ed.). 2000. *Europe and the Other and Europe as the Other*. Brussels: P.I.E.-Peter Lang.
Voli, S. 2015. *Soggettività dissonanti*. Firenze: Firenze University Press.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.