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## Cyprus: theatre, war, governmentality

The perspective marked by the reflections of Franco Cassano about ‘the meridian thought’<sup>1</sup> has paved the way to a long and complex work about rethinking the political and social categories of our common Mediterranean heritage.

The enlargement of the European Union to 28 members and the perspective of an enlarged market in the Mediterranean area, evidently indicate a new scenario.

Nonetheless it seems that the political reflection and the sociological one are forced to rethink some of its founding categories under new perspectives.

The debate of the last forty years prospected an articulated inedited horizon that could be designed under the name -which is for many aspects still nebulous- of post-modernity<sup>2</sup>.

One of the main features of the post-modern condition seemed to be defined as the development of a globalised dynamic, within which it could be possible to re-design the new spaces of politics, territoriality and social dynamics.

The point of crisis that nowadays seems to emerge and re-define the discourses is decisively shifted on the horizon of the conflict, that is rightly indicated with the formula of global conflict.

The Mediterranean, far from being a cradle or an ark of peace, can be designated as the space of an eternal wound, place of incessant conflict, where the story of its frontiers has constantly met the social space of war.

In this sense the condition of Cyprus is exemplary.

An island at the heart of the Mediterranean, at the centre of military strategies and balance, a nation divided for more than thirty years, that knows the terrible condition of having its own capital city, Nicosia, divided by a wall that separates the ‘Greek-Cypriot’ side from the ‘Turkish-Cypriot’ side. Such a division is managed military by the UN blue helmets, present on the Island since 1964. The island is divided into a Greek-Cypriot part (Republic of Cyprus, that has become member of the European Union in 2004) and Turkish-Cypriot part (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, self-proclaimed in 1983 and recognized only by Turkey).

Besides one fifth of Cyprus territory is occupied by English military forces, settled in the South-Western area of the Island, on the area that is in front of Israel.

The historical events report about mutual actions of ‘ethnic’ war, which bursted even more violently after the independence from the United Kingdom, occurred in August 1960. The Greek-Cypriot community tended to claim the principle of *enosis*, of clear pan-Hellenic matrix, aiming to the re-unification with the ‘mother-land’ Greece. While the Turkish-Cypriot community was mostly aiming to reach a substantial autonomy. In 1974, the day after an attempt of coup-d’état perpetrated by the Greek military junta, at the power in Greece since 1967, the armed Turkish forces invaded the island, occupying the Northern part<sup>3</sup>.

Up to here we have made a kind of academic presentation of the events. A different thing is the perception, the elaboration of the social device that we can find in this complex social dynamic, the technique of the exercise of power in this context of limit situation.

In the history of Cyprus, of this living and contradictory sequence of events, we can find many elements that make the Mediterranean a unique and incontrovertible laboratory of the post-modern condition.

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<sup>1</sup> F. CASSANO., *Il pensiero meridiano*, Laterza, Bari 1996

<sup>2</sup> Useful publications on the topics : M. MAFFESOLI, *Note sulla postmodernità*, Lupetti, Milano 2005 and the problematization made by Z. BAUMAN, *Il disagio della postmodernità*, Bruno Mondadori Editore, Milano 2002

<sup>3</sup> Sulle vicende recenti dell’isola di Cipro e delle sue relazioni con la Turchia abbiamo utilizzato il volume di BIAGINI ANTONELLO, *Storia della Turchia contemporanea*, Bompiani, Milano, 2005.

The path along which the story of Cyprus is developed, is evidently the path of a conflict that can be defined - each time- ethnic, or conflict of civilization, of religion, of identity.

It is thus necessary to identify the elements that constitute the essential features of an emblematic story, of that meridian kaleidoscope that can be considered as a crucial field of the contemporary context, within the frame of an age of global conflict.

The hypothesis of Alessandro Dal Lago results to be appropriate in order to trace a new horizon of reflection. According to Dal Lago war is a social fact and its transformations tend to be reflected on the overall asset of society and on the forms of social life. War and society, despite a common sense, are not incompatible. On the contrary, according to Dal Lago, “it’s right their implication that shows us that between the inside and the outside of Western society, between our apparently protected or normal existence and the conflicts present in the rest of the world, there is no solution of continuity. This is much truer when the conflicts in any part of the world tend to be more connected, overlapped, thus affecting all the other conflicts”<sup>4</sup>.

For Dal Lago, only in recent times we can assist to a systematic description of war as a social limit situation, in which concrete human beings are involved.

The definition of war as a social fact refers to two different perspectives. According to the first one war, like any other human activity, like science or art, could be understandable only within the frame of specific forms of society. Each way of making war reflects, broadly speaking, a type of social and political system. The second perspective is less evident, because it concerns the specific social nature of each activity of war. Despite rarely the sociology manuals deal with it, war is the social fact par excellence both because it puts to the test the social cohesion in the situation of death, and because it presents itself as a complex set of social processes: economic mobilization, scientific and technological innovation, discipline and training of vast armed groups, complex intellectual services ( the strategy and planning of military campaigns), articulated managing activities (the guide and control of huge operational machines that must, by definition, cope with the constitutive possibility of being destroyed or damaged) .

The assumption of Dal Lago is not limited to highlight the social complexity of the war, but also its capacity to transform the society.

The main reason of this capacity lies in an independent function of propelling conflicts. According to Dal Lago there has never been a war that has complied with the plans of the strategists.

And this is due to a complex of reasons: first of all it’s difficult that the plans, processed indoors by the military staffs, can really take into account the countermoves of the opponents; secondly because each war incorporates, both on the level of strategy and of tactics, inertial and uncertain factors that Clausewitz called with the term of friction and that nowadays are called ‘fog of war’ or ‘non-linear character of conflicts’ .

In order to understand the phenomenon that is absolutely unusual for the conception of war as it was in XXth century, it is necessary to identify some new conceptual instruments. Such an approach allows to consider a new perspective for an analysis of

phenomena such as the inter-ethnic war, the clash of civilisations, the religious-political conflict.

Categories that are more and more recurrent in the socio-political lexicon over the last years.

To this purpose Dal Lago recalls appropriately some conceptual categories as set by Michel Foucault: the most interesting of which are those of governmentality and of biopolitics.

Michel Foucault, in his lectures given at the Collège de France in 1978-1979, published under the title of *The Birth of Biopolitics*<sup>5</sup>, identifies primarily the methodological need to analyse that complex social practice that we call ‘government’ . Indeed we can speak about a complex technology in relation to the concept of ‘Government’ *strictu sensu*; but also the ‘art’, ‘ the art of government’ should be considered *strictu sensu*, because with the expression of ‘art of government’ Foucault doesn’t make reference simply to the way the governors have effectively governed.

Foucault hasn’t studied the real practice of government, as it has been developed, the problems that

<sup>4</sup> DAL LAGO ALESSANDRO, La guerra-mondo, in “Conflitti Globali – la guerra dei mondi”, n.1 Shake edizioni, Milano 2005.

<sup>5</sup> FOUCAULT MICHEL, *Nascita della biopolitica. Corso al Collège de France (1978-1979)*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2005; *The Birth of Biopolitics, Lectures at Collège de France (1978-1979)*, Picador USA, 2010 .

produces, the chosen tactics, the instruments used, specifically created and shaped. Foucault has started to analyse the art of governance, that is to say the reasoned way to govern better and contextually the reflection on the best possible way to govern, providing remarkable causes for reflection also about the dynamics of epochal crises, as those generated by a situation of harsh conflict, as in the case of Cyprus.

Foucault tries to determine the way in which the field of the practice of governance has been established, its different subjects, its general rules and objectives, set with the purpose of ruling in the best possible way. The approach of Foucault aims to study the rationalisation of the practice of governance in the exercise of political sovereignty.

It's evident that this interpretative grid generates a decisive swerve in the moment when it deals with the examination of a situation of conflict and the consequent organization of a double, divided reason of state,.

Often the rhetoric of war, the (so called) military reason justifies itself by recurring to universal reasons.

The importance of Foucault lies in this attempt to overturn such a vision of the world. Starting from concrete practices in order to filter the universal categories through the grid of these practices. This approach enables to avoid what in the analysis of the social facts could be defined as 'historicistic reduction', that consists in starting from the universal categories, as they are given, in order to see how history modulates them, or how it states they have lost their validity. The overturn made by Foucault consists in starting from the assumption, both theoretical and methodological, that for a moment the universals do not exist. Starting from this hypothesis Foucault asks to history and to historians, if it's ever possible to write the story without assuming *a priori* the existence of such entities like the state, the society, the sovereign, the subjects.

We could add also now, is it possible to describe the conflict, the civil war in Cyprus occurred forty years ago or the war in Iraq, today, without recurring to universal concepts like identity, religion, ethnicity, race?

Foucault had already practiced this overturn of the historic approach –for example- in his book *History of Madness*<sup>6</sup>. He didn't enquire himself on the existence of madness, in order to examine further the history, and to return us something similar to madness. The method of Foucault consisted more in saying: «Let's suppose that madness doesn't exist. Assuming this, which history of the different events and practices can we make that, at least apparently, may deal with something that is supposed to be madness?»<sup>7</sup>. This element was indicated by Paul Veyne since 1978 as a feature of Michel Foucault's research.

Foucault assigns an absolute priority, within the relationship between subject and truth, to the practice of a methodology based on a 'systematic scepticism' towards the anthropological universal categories.

One of the most useful contributions to the deconstruction of the practices of governance and of political crises, as well as of that absolute paradox represented by war, lies in Foucault's concept of 'governmentality'.

According to Foucault governmentality consists of three elements. «The set of institutions, procedures, analysis and reflections, calculations and tactics that enable to exercise this specific and rather complex form of power, that finds in the population its main target, in the political economy the privileged form of knowledge and in the security devices the essential technical instrument»<sup>8</sup>.

The second feature that characterises the governmentality is represented for Foucault by «the tendency, the line of force that, in the whole Occident and since long, continues to affirm the preeminence of this type of power that we call 'government' on all the others -sovereignty, discipline- with the consequent development, of a series of specific apparatus of government on one hand and of a body of knowledge on the other»<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> FOUCAULT MICHEL, *Storia della follia in età classica*, Rizzoli, Milano, 1998.

<sup>7</sup> FOUCAULT MICHEL, *Nascita della biopolitica*, cit., p.15.

<sup>8</sup> FOUCAULT MICHEL, *Sicurezza, territorio, popolazione. Corso al Collège de France (1977-1978)*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2005, p.88

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*

Finally Foucault identifies a third element in the definition of governmentality that should be intended as «the process, or better the result of the process, through which the state of justice of the Middle Ages, become administrative state during the XV and XVI centuries, has been gradually ‘governmentalized’»<sup>10</sup>.

For Foucault the art of governance -starting from the modern age and with more and more articulated techniques- is based on some propulsive cores that he identifies in the concepts of security, territory, population.

This articulation has produced that particular conceptual device that is known under the name of biopolitics, a formula that over the last years has known a great success and a wide use.

For Alessandro Dal Lago the supremacy of security is that device that triggers the militarization of the social control, in other terms the military management of the ‘threats’ coming from the outside (terrorist infiltrations) into the Western societies or coming from the Inside (sleeper cells). For Dal Lago the militarization of the control, we are witnessing in recent years in an ever more widespread and massive way, has two main consequences. «The first concerns the fact that certain groups of human beings, on suspicion of complicity with the enemy, escape the normal legal safeguards on which the Western world has built its self-representation as a ‘cradle of the law’. Through the Patriot Act ordered by Bush and packaged by the Minister Ashcroft, the establishment of detention camps such as Guantanamo, the evident normality of torture in Abu Ghraib prison, state the establishment of a special military regime reserved to ‘terrorists’.

The second consequence is in the real and virtual indictment of those types of people, particularly the migrants, considered apt to accept the propaganda of the enemies of freedom, because of their irregular social ‘nature’. In this sense, the detention centers (now spread all over the world) for illegal aliens or ‘illegals’, are not formally different from special military prisons, as reserved to individuals without any social legitimacy. One may also notice that now the principle of enmity (on which the militarization of control is based) tends to invest any threat to the established order (and this is true, under certain circumstances, even for the internal opposition to the West) »<sup>11</sup>.

In the ordinary experience of Cyprus we assist to the paradoxical creation of the figure of the stranger, that is constantly present and ‘other’, internal but at the same time menacingly at the doors.

If - by adopting the perspective of Dal Lago - the front takes the form of the frontier in the transitional period of all peace, which is the scenario displayed in the form of a civil conflict that started more than forty years ago? What form does the widespread social practice take in an area which is an island in the heart of the Mediterranean, few miles far from Syria, Israel, Lebanon?

Bauman has pointed out how all the societies create strangers, and how each society tends to create its own peculiar form, with specific processes of hypostatization and social figuration.

In Bauman the stranger, in a post-modern age, is perceived as an individual who is «impossible to place in the aesthetic or moral cognitive map of the lived world»<sup>12</sup>.

For Bauman, the stranger, being able to penetrate the lived world, makes opaque what should be transparent, and complicates irreparably models of behaviour that should be unequivocal, simple, absolutely shared, in order to be valid.

According to Bauman, indeed, every society creates strangers, but each one creates its own typology of stranger and creates it in its own way. If with this term strangers we refer to individuals who are impossible to place in the aesthetic and moral cognitive map of the lived world, and if such strangers make opaque what should be transparent and make complicate models of behaviour that «must be simple and unequivocal; if, with their mere presence, they blur or cancel the lines of demarcation that, for the evidence of the world and thus for the spiritual balance of its inhabitants, must remain clearly visible; if, finally, their mere presence threatens the sense of security of people, producing an unpleasant sense of bewilderment, then each society knows these strangers»<sup>13</sup>. For Bauman the figure of the stranger is absolutely functional to the elaboration of pervasive and

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem

<sup>11</sup> DAL LAGO ALESSANDRO, *La guerra-mondo*, cit., pp. 17-18

<sup>12</sup> BAUMAN ZYGMUNT, *Il disagio della postmodernità*, cit., p. 20 e sgg.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem

widespread biopolitics. If «the frontiers are drawn with care and the aesthetic or moral cognitive maps of the world are traced, then it is impossible to avoid individuals that refuse to respect the divisions on which an ordinary, thus meaningful, life depends: people accused to be guilty of the discomfort and insecurity that it is hard to live with, and even harder to keep the peace of your mind»<sup>14</sup>.

According to Bauman the most horrible image that marked the XXth century, has found its most perfect expression in the image, created by Orwell, of the military boot that steps on a human face. In that century no face could feel safe at the sight of a boot, which was the demarcation line along which the new frontier passed. According to Bauman humanity cannot stand imprisonment, because every prisoner tries to escape and those who challenge the frontiers must expect the revenge of the prison officers, «many feared the boot manufactured for stepping on the foreign face, for crashing the connotations of strangeness that were impressed on you and remove from the possessors of faces that were not yet trampled any ambition to go beyond any present or future border»<sup>15</sup>.

For Bauman it's clear that one of the main features of XXth century is that the men that should be feared most were those who wear a uniform. Uniforms were the symbol of the servant of the state, a source of violence the most threatening and the most difficult to reject, the most «self-dispensed from a moral condemnation and self-absolved from its own actions and their consequences. The state dressed its officers in uniform so that they could be free to step on the right faces without committing any offence, as the order to step on them came from a state that considered itself as a source, and unique guardian and guarantor of an ordinary life: the dam that protects the order from the flood of the chaos»<sup>16</sup>.

According to Bauman the 'governmentality' that developed during the XXth century was based on the consideration that such a state -and only it- had a very clear vision of the social order and had the force and the arrogance necessary «not only to consider the other visions of the order as masks of the chaos, but also to reduce them to that condition»<sup>17</sup>.

In other words, that was the modern state and its articulated technique of domination: a state based on the need to introduce and protect the order of the existence; a state that issued laws in order to establish what was to be considered as order and that identified the idea of the order with the clarity of divisions, classifications and borders.

The typical figure of the modern stranger for Bauman was the defective product, the waste product of the normative zeal of the state; his unforgivable guilt was that the state conception of the order didn't assign him a precise place. When a division line between two zones is drawn, all the things that resist to this sub-division or to be located in one of the two parts are in 'contrast' with the purpose and prevents its fulfilment. The strangers in the modern age are 'strangers' in so far as the planned order make them a stranger element.

Strangers are those people that, according to a semantic underdetermined definition, are classified as 'undefined' and that an over-determined definition charges with more meanings that contradict each other: foreigners are therefore those who threaten the impassability of borders only with by the fact of living and who insult the majesty of the order»<sup>18</sup>.

In the experience of a civil war, which is over-determined, described and depicted as an ethnic or political and religious war, the production of the image of the foreigner as a threat finds its apotheosis.

The obsession of governmentality, of diffused techniques of domain and of social control of the bodies, the practices of biopolitics, the diagram of forces that are displaced in the territorial action are based on the harmonious order "dreamt by the modern thought and accomplished by the legislative action of the state, in which there is no place for the "neither fish nor fowl" and even for the "either fish or meat". There is not the "neither here nor there" and even the "both here and there"; there is no room for ambivalence. The act of creation of the order is then inevitably

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<sup>14</sup> Ibidem

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem



identified in a war to the death against ambivalence".

It is clear that -in fact- until now I have never spoken about Cypriots. The adjective of another nationality tried to produce this social device of exclusion: Greek-Cypriots vs Turkish-Cypriots. It begins to appear that the anomaly, the threat, the inadequacy is represented by something that can't be defined neither Greek nor Turkish.

In this endless war, as in others in modernity, two different but complementary strategies were in turn applied (to serve the terms introduced by Claude Lévi-Strauss in *Sad Tropics*<sup>19</sup>). The first was the anthropophagic strategy consisting in devouring (literally or metaphorically) the strangers and metabolizing them, turning them into an indistinguishable substance. According to Bauman once "the anthropophagic strategy took the form of cultural cannibalism; in modern times it has been reborn in the form of assimilation and cultural cannibalism: making similar the dissimilar, fighting ways of life, ayers of memory and languages which are different from our own, prohibit any tradition and any loyalty except those useful to the authority of the order in force, imposing the duty to accept it meekly and apply a unique measure of submission and obedience, blind to the inter-human differences»<sup>20</sup>. The second strategy was *antropoemic* which consisted in "rejecting" foreigners, driving them beyond the boundaries of the ordered world, or excluding them from any contact with his legitimate inhabitants.

It was the strategy of rejection and exclusion, based on the segregation of the strangers behind the solid walls of the ghetto or behind the invisible walls -but not less tangible- built up by the prohibitions of *commercium*, *commensalium* and *conubium*, and by purges that kicked the strangers out of the fields protected by the law; or when none of the two measures was effective and not measured up with the regulative ambitions recurring to the physical elimination of the strangers<sup>21</sup>. Finally for Bauman for the modern spirit and thus for the modern state, the cultural or physical elimination of the strangers is not a destructive act, but a creative one (or better, paradoxically, it is an act of creative destruction). To destroy the chaos means to build the order; by breaking and mutilating the living beings, the future being is straightened and refined. The destruction is an indispensable component in the creation of the order, of the nation and of the state.

Under the pressure of the modern propulsion to the construction of the order, «the strangers – the current and the future ones – lived in a condition of suspended extinction, of deferment of the execution. If the order was the rule, the strangers were the anomaly to be corrected. It was known *a priori* that they were a typical phenomenon, temporary and fleeting, of the different ages (always transitory and passing) of the pre-history of an order which was still to come»<sup>22</sup>.

It's clear how constantly the issue of identity is recurrent, and how the dynamics that it moves – between global and local- have become in the last years more and more relevant in the sociological and anthropological reflection.

The deconstructionist perspective of the Italian anthropologist Francesco Remotti, traces opportunely that common line of demarcation inside the monotheistic tradition.

According to Remotti, for building, keeping and affirming the identity, "the monotheism (ancient and modern) is undoubtedly a very effective instrument: it distinguishes, separates sharply 'us/the others' and, instead of putting 'us' among the others, it puts 'us' aside, as an absolute 'unity': there is a qualitative difference between 'us', whose god is a unique God, and the 'others', whose gods cannot be but idols»<sup>23</sup>. Hebraism, Christianity, Islamism are -for Remotti- exemplary in relation to this perspective. «The 'others', the other nations, the *goim*, the 'non-circumcised' (for the Jews), the pagans (for the Christians), represent inevitably the world of impurity and error »<sup>24</sup>. Ugo Bonanate<sup>25</sup> has compared passages of the Bible and passages of the Koran, that not only prove the belief of an absolute diversity between the 'us' (represented by the believers) and 'the others', but -together

<sup>19</sup> C.LEVI-STRAUSS, *Tristi tropici*, Il Saggiatore, Milano, 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Z.BAUMAN, *Il disagio della postmodernità*, cit. ,p. 22.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem

<sup>23</sup> REMOTTI FRANCESCO, *Contro l'identità*, Laterza, Bari, 1996,p. 45

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem

<sup>25</sup> BONANATE UGO, *Bibbia e Corano. I testi sacri confrontati*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 1995.

with the universalism that accompanies it – show the aggressiveness that almost inevitably comes out of this belief. Remotti quotes the Ancient Gospel, according to which “there will be a second time, when God will come to «gather all the nations and all the languages» and will send his «sign... towards the far islands» (Isaia 66,18-19). It will be the time of the unification of human kind (a time that both Christianity and Islamism believe has already happened or is in phase of realisation)”<sup>26</sup>. Remotti indicates also how the techniques of the exercise of power, of governmentality, of the administration of the biopolitical existence in the territories of exercise of the colonial power, has known absolutely emblematic applications.

In this sense, writing turns to be, a decisive technique. Rwanda has undergone immediately since the time of colonization a process of "ethnicization" that has produced a split.

A composite and refined kingdom, located in the heart of black Africa (like the neighbouring country of Burundi, whose destiny is very similar), at the eyes of the Europeans cannot be considered as a native product.

Remotti describes the vision provided by missionaries, administrators, ethnologists, the so-called 'Hamitic hypothesis' - to which Europeans have long given credit”<sup>27</sup>.

“This vision has provided to transform into a different ‘ethnic group’ the ‘category’ of Tutsi, with origins somehow closer to the European. The Tutsis and Hutus – as sadly renown- have fought savagely for the power, in a war that caused more than one million dead. Even there, over the green hills of Rwanda and Burundi, for both sides, the word ‘cleansing’, has sounded ominous. As Remotti highlights “the identity (the unity) of these two kingdoms (and thus the coexistence of what once were but ‘categories’ socially constructed: Tutsi, Hutu, along with Batwa at an inferior level, and Ganwa to a superior one) seems to be hopelessly lost. The question of identity has now passed the 'ethnic' (Tutsi and Hutu) that in the meantime the Europeans (first the Germans and then the Belgians) have literally invented”<sup>28</sup>.

Germans and Belgians didn't find two ethnic groups, with distinct features and the typical claiming of their respective identities; instead they have “thought, imagined, assumed and asserted and ‘written’ that the two categories of ‘tutsi’ e ‘hutu’ were two different ethnic groups, with different origins, stories and qualities: Tutsis, ‘noble’ shepherds, ‘aristocrats’, of "Hamitic" origins (from Ham, son of Noah, whose descendent had penetrated in Eastern Africa), connectable (for their Hamitic ancestry) to the biological and cultural heritage of the Europeans, had been contraposed to the Hutu, crude, indigenous peasants, subjecting and building "reigns" – which would be otherwise inexplicable in such an inland area of equatorial Africa. This "story" was not only assumed, but also written in some texts of ethnology of the beginning of XXth century: it was "taught" for decades in colleges and schools, in missions and offices. This story has "ethnicized" Rwanda and Burundi, giving shape to two different "ethnic groups", thus institutionalizing two different "identities". Ugo Fabietti reminds that in 1930 a census was made by the Belgian colonizers in order to release to each individual a document of recognition on which it was indicated (‘written’) unequivocally if the person was Hutu, Tutsi or Twa. Fabietti highlights how the criteria of racial typology (Hutu the smaller, Tutsi very tall) proved to be absolutely useless and that therefore another criterion was used, the number of bovines that were owned: “the male individuals with ten or more bovines were ‘Tutsi’, while those who had less than ten were ‘Hutu’. Forever. Those identity cards still exist and today they still represent the instrument through which the soldiers and the guerrilla fighters of the opposite ‘ethnic’ factions can identify at the check-points the ones to kill and the ones to save.”<sup>29</sup>

As already said, the writing turns out to be a crucial technique of governmentality. Speaking of this it is important to remember how the colonized realities in the Mediterranean area are suffering for this.

The case of Malta is emblematic, where the mother tongue is a variation of Arabic to which a Latin transliteration was overlapped. But this mother tongue leaves constantly the place to the colonizing

<sup>26</sup> REMOTTI FRANCESCO, *Contro l'identità*, cit., p. 46

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 55.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>29</sup> FABIETTI UGO, *L'identità etnica. Storia e critica di un concetto equivoco*, La Nuova Italia Scientifica, Roma 1995, p. 157

language: English. Thus in another neuralgic centre of the Mediterranean, in another island that has experienced centuries and centuries of invasions, the shared cultural heritage is represented by the language of the domination, of subjugation, of the administrative order. The same can be said about Cyprus.

Derrida has dealt with the problem of cultural identity through the issue of language, and of mother language, in its unicity and irreplaceability in his book *The monolingualism of the other*<sup>30</sup>.

Derrida lingers on the paradoxical relationship that connects us to our origin as the place of a truth that is never given and possessed and makes it in a sort of intellectual autobiography or confession, in which, as a Franco-Maghrebi Jewish, tells his relationship with his own language, the French, as a language of the other.

The cultural and political alienation is only a face of the more general alienation that connects all of us: the original language is never possessed in its pureness; every language is yet an invention, a translation, that makes universal and communicable an origin that is not translatable in its singularity, whose otherness re-emerges in a tone or in an accent, that is always particular and uncontrollable.

Also in this attempt the perspective launched by Derrida seems to conveniently take the distance both from the eradication and the loss of memory related to the idea of a global language, and from the madness of the fierce defence of local languages as safeguard of the pure identity of a population.

The languages, for Derrida, in their plurality and singularity, are rather the place of an opening towards the other that prevents any discourse from becoming totalitarian. It's the plan of a very human form of resistance that escapes, in the life of the life, from the destruction of the techniques of domination.

The day after the suicide bombing attack to the Twin Towers, Derrida has dealt with the issue related to the so-called 'rogue-states'. In this work the French philosopher questions himself, starting from the hypostatization of the wound, about the separation, the demarcation between 'us' and 'the others'.

Derrida question himself by asking himself, by asking us: "Who am I? Who are the others of the brothers, the non-brothers? What makes them some beings apart, some excluded or degenerate, hanging around in the streets, especially in the suburbs? (But, once again, unfortunately there is no etymological affinity between "rue", road, and "roué", unscrupulous person, even if the unscrupulous person, the rogue, is always defined in relation to a road, to this normal life that is the road of a city, of urbanity and of the good customs of urban life; the rogue and the unscrupulous person upset the roads, they are pointed out, denounced, judged, convicted, shown as effective and virtual criminals, as accused, they are hunted by the citizen, by the good society, by the police, sometimes by the international law and by its armed police that watches over the law and its regulations, over all the roads, the pedestrian areas, the highways, the navigation, the air traffic, the information technology, the e-mails and the web.)<sup>31</sup> Between the democratic and the non-sociable rogue the proximity remains ambiguous and the inseparability disturbing, despite some essential differences. According to Derrida when we speak about a rogue "the order is recalled, it has already begun to report a suspect, announcing a firm, even an arrest, a summons, a charge: the rogue must appear before the law."<sup>32</sup>

And also for Derrida "the rogue is always the other, it's always the one that is pointed by the conformist bourgeois, by the representative of the moral and juridical order. It's always a second and third person"<sup>33</sup>.

The cross-roads, the Mediterranean twine marks, in the experience of Cyprus (and of its capital Nicosia divided by a wall), the horizon of an eternal wound, where the loss of a confused and indistinct trait, of a liquid identity, of a multiple and vital identity knows the essential place in which the future is envisaged and the present explodes.

<sup>30</sup> DERRIDA JACQUES, *Il monolinguismo dell'altro*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2004

<sup>31</sup> DERRIDA JACQUES, *Stati Canaglia*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano 2003, p. 99

<sup>32</sup> Ivi p.101

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem



Cyprus, like Malta, like the Balkans, like the future of Palestine, indicate a crucial place that resists in the folds of the language, in the hospitalities of the infinite languages.

On this frame the diagram of forces of the exercise of economic and political, media and cultural power consumes incessantly its deadly ritual.

The last wall in Europe, marks the wound that in the Mediterranean still forces us to look with concern at the separateness that marks our destiny. The practice of a meridian thought, certainly passes through the overcoming of the conditions imposed by the mechanism of the 'Western' dominion.

A meridian practice can only be oriented towards a secular, modern, very human liberation, that has been waiting for centuries, and that links inextricably the future practices of peace to a global and local level.

\*translation Roberta Quarta