

THE PRESENT HISTORY OR THE HISTORY OF THE PRESENT

POLITICS OF HISTORICAL MEMORY

CATALANIST AND
DEMOCRAT FOUNDATION

CATDEM FOUNDATION

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PROLOGUE

THE CATALONIA THAT DECIDES

On November 20th, 2007, Artur Mas delivered a speech at the conference “Catalanism, energy and hope for a better country.” From the very beginning, after stating that no one should forget that he was also Secretary General of a nationalist political party, *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* (Democratic Convergence of Catalonia), he also wanted to make it clear what he wished to set in motion starting that very moment: “It is from the perspective of this outlook and commitment [to Catalanism and Catalonia] that I want to invite the Catalan society, particularly those who share my concerns and wish to build a new Catalan nation, to rethink, update, modernize and, in a way, re-establish Catalanism as a source of energy and a bridge of hope for a better Catalonia. Like all invitations, it is an open and integrating one that does not exclude anyone.” This is where the conversion of the Ramon Trias Fargas Foundation into today’s Catalanist and Democrat Foundation began, better known today as CatDem. To be more exact, the Foundation CatDem was given the task of bringing together various intellectuals and professionals from January 2008 until the date of this publication, who in turn had the job of making this project a reality.

Politics does not tend to be reflective. But Catalan politics is progressively becoming even less so. It is admirable that a political force would decide to create a think tank and that, on top of this, decide to leave it in the hands of people who are not members of

that political party. In fact, the Foundation CatDem is the result of a happy coincidence between the CDC's interest in finding out why - despite being the number one political force in the Catalan Parliament – it was losing electoral support election after election, and the concern of various nationalist professors and intellectuals about the lack of Catalanism's answers to globalized modernity. If, as those who have studied the issue point out, the Catalanism of the end of the 19th century and the first years of the 20th century had been one of the engines of Spanish reformism – introducing the idea that Catalonia should be the economic powerhouse but also the conductor of political change – it makes sense to ask ourselves what it should be at the start of the 21st century and the years to come. The old Catalanism had certainly been a factor of Spain's modernity for many reasons (among them, for having wanted to exercise the right of citizenship – democracy in fact – but also for having demanded a reorganization of the State), and it needs to take up this role once again to provide solutions to a complex, plural and democratically consolidated society that is the Catalonia of the third millennium. As Arthur Mas pointed out at the aforementioned conference: “The Catalanism that was born in the mid-19th century, was developed during the first third of the 20th century and intensified in the last quarter of that century, has been a success story. Success is always measured by the degree to which the initial goals are achieved. Regarding Catalanism, a great deal of what was proposed 100 to 150 years ago has been achieved. And it was achieved despite enormous difficulties, which at times may have seemed insurmountable.”

What were these grand objectives? To put it briefly, they were: the survival the Catalan nation, which depended on the recovery of the institutions of self-government and the diffusion of a national culture; the social and economic progress of Catalans (or in other words, the modernization of the country and the welfare of society) and the regeneration of Spain, subdued by the scourge of a militarism that did not allow democracy to take root until the final third of the 20th century. The death of general Franco was precisely what cleared the way for the longest democratic period in Spanish and Catalan contemporary history, which has also coincided with the spread of globalization. The changes in both Spain and Catalonia have been extraordinary. Inevitably, this would also have an effect on the emerging social model. Spain's entry into NATO and the EU; a change in Catalonia's and Spain's production model and the development of the State of the Autonomies that has allowed us to build a more or less efficient Catalan self-government, reconfigured the Spanish political scene and in consequence, the role of Catalanism beyond Catalonia and within Catalonia. Said differently, the dream of the cultural-political movement of *noucentisme* - of building a national culture dedicated to classicism, but also European and modern, next to the Catalonia-city ideal— it is clear that this dream has reached its limit. Modern Catalonia is thus the result of this movement, since it was capable of finding the necessary political support to advance its program.

But the Catalonia of today has little to do with what was central to Catalanism at least from 1906 onwards. There are controversies that are no longer relevant – such as that of bilingualism or the co-existence of Catalan and Spanish – because the reality has been so transformed that it is ridiculous to keep this debate going on the

same terms. If it is true that 300 different languages are spoken in the city of Barcelona, as reputable studies have shown, why would it make any sense to keep rehashing the same debate that is no longer based on reality? The Catalonia of the future will never again be monolingual or bilingual, but multilingual. In the same way, religious diversity, which had previously existed in Catalonia but not nearly with today's intensity, is also a characteristic of the future that awaits us. As a result, in this context - one that Eugeni d'Ors would have had difficulty imagining - we must determine the role of Catalonia's local language and what must be done for it to survive while co-existing with all the other languages in the country. And this is the attitude that we must adopt with everything.

For two years now the Foundation CatDem has been reflecting on Catalonia's future from the perspective of Catalanism, the democratic ideal and freedom. Beginning in January 2008, the Foundation's task has been to put together different teams of experts who would attempt to rethink Catalanist discourse, adapting it to the 21st century's new realities, and also to the need for political regeneration, which is something that today's Catalan society has been demanding for some time now. Therefore, we have had Commissions that have reflected on a range of topics, such as Catalan culture and identity, the presence of women in society, the international projection of Catalonia, the policies of historical memory, immigration, etc. At the same time, three Areas of Reflection were created to debate the positioning of Catalonia in a globalized world (*Catalunya Global*; Global Catalonia), the infrastructure, production and environmental models in Catalonia (*Catalunya en Xarxa*; Networked Catalonia) and the social aspects and values shared among the citizenry of our country (*Catalunya Plural*; Plural Catalonia).

What must we do to guarantee that Catalonia has an important place in the world over the next few decades? How can we strengthen our country's projection to the outside world in the areas of business, science, technology, culture, development cooperation, sports, etc? Can Catalonia become a relevant actor on the international stage? What must we do to make it happen? A dozen experts from different disciplines, with solid professional trajectories and valuable personal experiences, have been working for more than a year in the Global Catalonia Ambit to find answers to these questions. The final result of this process of collective reflection can be found in the articles in the first of these volumes, and further synthesized in the 48 strategic proposals for the country with long and short-term goals. Among these proposals we can highlight the following: Catalonia's external presence is a direct consequence of its internal reality. Catalonia will only have a key role on an international level if it is successful as a country. We must encourage the desire and search for excellence (through effort, merit and the recognition of quality) in all parts of society, for all of society and not just reserved for an elite. Education must be improved, and the bar must be raised in the creation of human resources, promoting careers in science and technology, encouraging an enterprising mindset, and ensuring that Catalan society becomes English-speaking. In economic terrain, we must adopt a model of competitiveness that is responsible and sustainable, in such a way that the generation of wealth does not undermine social cohesion and the delicate environmental balance. With regard to the ICT (Information and Communication Technologies), together with the Government and the Catalan civil society, we must start up a project that will bring fiber access to all the homes in Catalonia. We must strengthen the role of the Catalan civil

society, especially at an international level, making the Federation of Internationally Recognized Catalan Organizations (FOCIR) a fundamental instrument for coordination and stimulus.

Regarding the Plural Catalonia Ambit, the experts who have helped elaborate the materials that went into this second volume point out that the national identity of Catalonia in the 21st century is strengthened through its undeniable plurality. “Plurality” is not an opposing concept to that of the notion of “identity.” Catalan culture has had to assume a strict attitude of resistance throughout many periods of its history, and this has simultaneously generated an understandable hypersensitivity about identity issues, especially linguistic ones. We must assume this legacy, but bring it up to date and proactively model it to advance towards a national plenitude that is coherent with the country’s plural reality.

A pluralist society allows its citizens, who have equal rights, to be able to enjoy vital aspects of their respective cultures and profess diverse moral codes. To acknowledge difference does not necessarily mean social atomism, but quite the contrary: we can differentiate ourselves as individuals only from a collective framework of shared values. Liberalism has been a good defender of the political equality of rights, and socialism has been a good defender of the social equality of rights. But neither classic liberalism nor socialism has been able to effectively include difference – linguistic, gender, religious, or of any other sort – nor make its political acknowledgement effective. This acknowledgement of difference inevitably goes hand in hand with the defense of pluralism. Language has been, and continues to be, the distinctive trait of Catalan identity, but more and more

Catalans are Spanish-speaking, or speakers of other languages, that feel nationally identified and politically committed to the country's aspirations of sovereignty. It is important to keep in mind that according to the thorough 2008 Inquiry on the Linguistic Uses of the Population, (*Enquesta d'Usos Lingüístics de la Població de 2008*), Catalan is no longer the primary language in Catalonia, either as a primary language or a language of communication.

Among the essential tools needed for managing pluralism, there are those supplied by judicial ordinance, that mark - with more or less precision - the framework in which we should recognize, respect and promote. The accommodating of plurality goes beyond the strictly political or cultural sphere: it also requires the appropriate legislation to make it effective. Numerous academic studies exist on the plural reality of Quebec, Flanders, Scotland, etc., which can help to correctly contextualize the topic, despite the fact that the specific conditions of each place, especially the linguistic ones, do not permit establishing generalizations that could end up being used politically.

Because identities are human constructions, it makes sense to reveal their true origins; and since the perception of plurality is not an objective truth, but also obeys extremely varied contingencies, it would make equal sense to situate it on the same plane. We freely assume certain identities just as we can freely assume certain pluralities that would have been impossible on other occasions. Along the same lines, depending on what the dominant values are at that time, the next generations might modify or model what today we simply assume.

In the Networked Catalonia Ambit, the question the participating specialists might have asked is: for Catalonia to work, what do we need to do? Faced with such a question, it is immediately tempting to fall into the trap of concretion, of the action plan, of putting the cart before the horse. In fact, this is a weakness of the Catalanism – and probably of the country and politics – of a former time: we have so idealized the *doing* of things that, too often, we have not paid enough attention to *why* we should do them.

Thus, the real question that this Ambit set out to answer was not to ask what we need to do to make Catalonia work – which is more like an electoral program -, but instead, what are the relevant themes and challenges that need to be answered in order for Catalonia to work – which is an approach that resembles a political doctrine. As a result, what does Catalanism need to reflect and decide on, what issues must be included in the agenda of the new Catalanism, one that has been renovated and situated in line with current times.

Catalanism is characterized by two elements – even defining Catalanism in its main historical trend -, which are the identification with modernity and reformism. At the same time, the values of modernity have been questioned up to the point that, today, the biggest concern is how to sustain the society and the economic model while leaving from different premises. On the other hand, we are coming to better understand that reformism, positive at the start, can become a handicap if it is not combined on key occasions with an indispensable vanguardist spirit that will allow us to take great leaps forward. These two aspects have also determined the reflection on the networked Catalonia.

At the same time, we need a spirit of difference. Catalonia does not have to aspire to be the same as others, but to be as differentiated as others are – this does not mean focusing only on the essentials, but quite the contrary, it means searching for aspects that we can identify with, that make us valuable to interact with, and that makes it interesting to work with us. To achieve this goal, and by valuing internal diversity as an important asset, we must understand Catalonia as a unit of global projection. This means assuming that the metropolitanism of Barcelona has extended throughout the country, that Catalonia is a metropolitan phenomenon (in reference to the metropolitan phenomena that are emerging today, and not how they were a half-century ago) and that we should stop stubbornly dividing the country in two realities that are deliberately conflicting and contradictory. The success of the Catalonia-city ideal, sought by the *noucentistes*, is an undeniable fact today. In consequence, the design of how the territory should be governed, instead of being inspired by archaic models, should provide a more creative solution to these new realities.

This change of model – preparing for the future instead of insisting on out-of-date approaches – has to have an effect on other equally relevant aspects. We will give a few examples. Urban planning has to overcome a vision that focuses solely on the occupation and the transformation of new territories, to understand that the combination of urban spaces and open or free spaces shape the country's reality, and have both complementary and necessary functions. Thus urban planning must contemplate reinventing or recycling the territories that are already occupied and favoring mixed-use spaces.

Education needs to be reformed so that it can become truly useful for meeting the needs of diffuse talent, of creativity, of job flexibility, etc. Thus, it must evolve not only in tools, but above all in content. The energy model must substitute the hegemony of petrol and energy waste for a real – and mental – diversification, in which the difference between being a consumer and an energy producer is reduced, and answers to the challenges of climate change. The industrial model of past centuries has to make way for a new model built on different productive foundations, including the green economy. The list of reforms is longer, but this still means that it is of utmost importance to act in each one of these fields with a spirit of innovation and renewal.

Inevitably, we must include sustainability in the aims that we have just indicated. Otherwise it will not be long before they go out-of-date. To clarify, the sustainability that Catalanist thinking is interested in is not the kind based on local environmental conflicts, but instead, that of getting involved in answering to the great social challenges, as a convinced actor and not a resigned spectator.

Obviously, the network has an elementary role in this reformulation, but not the network that is spread out as a collection of supporting infrastructures, but instead, as a way of conceiving the territory and civil society based on interaction – far from poorly understood self-sufficiency. An interaction that stimulates the country's openness, that encourages ambivalent hierarchies, that favors all forms of interaction (not only as receivers to what is going on outside, but also as active emitters), and so on.

This focus does will not dissolve the unity of the country, on the contrary; it will allow us the possibility of putting together a plan for our country – something indispensable – that is molded by both the “yes’s” and the “no’s”. It is absurd to aspire to be good at everything, scattering our efforts in a thousand different directions, because we wear ourselves out without obtaining satisfactory results in hardly anything. We must choose, from a realistic and pragmatic perspective, what areas we can and want to excel in. This has been attempted many times, but it has been done when only looking at the “yes’s”. Success depends on the “no’s”, or in other words, on if we also know how to say no to alternative options that disintegrate our limited capabilities.

We can deduce from this that we need effectiveness and efficiency to reach the stage of execution. Here we enter the terrain of governance, of the still-pending reflection on what kind of public administration we really want – and not how we introduce variations into the State’s model already in force, which is invalid and incapable of facing the challenges, complexities and needs of this new age. Without taking significant steps – and even radical ones – in this field, it will be difficult for other ambitions to advance as well. We must also “rewrite” the way we govern and organize public administration: Catalanism cannot risk patching up the current situation anymore, one that, any way you look at it, is inoperative.

Along this line of thinking, we must demand and reformulate the complementary - and not anti-ethical – role that the public and private sectors have. We must push for collaboration between these two enterprising spheres. The public sector should not seek out a

paralyzing interventionism, and the private sector should not feel disconnected from common interests. On the contrary, there are ways that the roles of both sectors can be optimally united. This means, on the other hand, that the country's renewal cannot be in the hands of politicians alone. In fact, without coordinated participation of the different spheres that make up society, this renewal is not viable.

In the end, and as the reader will see, the Networked Catalonia Ambit argues that in the new model for our country there must be a more creative spirit about what we can become, and not one that focuses on what we could have been. Above all, there must be a sense of urgency, because postponing the changes that our society needs is not an option.

At the conference on November 20th, Artur Mas had already been aware by intuition of several of these – let us call them recipes – which the experts have displayed here. Mas said, “Where Catalanism sought the survival of the nation, we must replace it with the fully-fledged nation, to experience national plenitude. Where it favored modernization, we must now put our faith in a country that leads the way. Where the regeneration of Spain was sought, we must now also ensure Catalonia's place in the world: constructing the global Catalonia. Where we spoke of independence and self-government, we must now speak of the right to decide for ourselves about the things that belong to us.” The materials that you have in your hands right now greatly widen this brief but accurate diagnostic.

Political oversimplification has sought to reduce the project of the Meeting House of Catalanism to an attempt by CDC to hire

people that they would later incorporate, for example, into their list of electoral candidates. This was not Artur Mas's intention for the program he started up at the end of 2007. To avoid any misunderstandings, this should be made clear from the beginning. More than a handful of important names, the Meeting House of Catalanism was – and is – a concept based on three principles that are broad enough to make it easy for many people to fit inside: humanism, democracy and Catalanism. What began two years ago had more to do with the intellectual debate and with the impact that ideas should have on political actions, and less to do with general formulas or personages.

Our objectives were modest and ambitious at the same time, because it is clear that trying to conduct a debate on the future of Catalanism and how to go from traditional Catalanism (as the leaders of the 19th and 20th century saw it) to a new Catalanism, is neither easy nor does it end with the publishing of these three volumes and the booklets presented in a digital format. It seems an even more difficult undertaking if we hope to spread Catalanism to the sectors that show indifference or hostility to it today, and above all, within the younger generations. While this internal debate has been going on, people have often asked us how we were going to manage to spread Catalanism beyond its current “frontiers.” Over the last few years, however, we have noticed that there are two different ways of approaching the issue of Catalanism and the right to decide. The first talk is to talk nonstop about sovereignty through propaganda. The technique is quite simple: exalt the objective without explaining how it will be achieved, or who will call for a referendum, and on what legal grounds. Can someone really believe that the UN or the EU will

endorse a process like this if we haven't achieved a wide enough social majority to demonstrate its suitability and validity? Since 2006 and the appearance of different pro-sovereignty platforms, the idea has spread that the Catalan society is growing increasingly pro-independent. At the moment, there is no reliable indicator that can support this. What is clear is that the pro-independence movement has permeated Catalan society. However, we should not be blinded by the electoral strength of multifaceted Catalan nationalism, which could even have formed a government in 2003 and 2006, because the weakness of Catalanist coordination (or those of sovereignty, or however we may call it) is a fact, and one that everyone recognizes. In addition, the current President of the Catalan Government doesn't believe in sovereignty either, and never passes up an opportunity to say so.

The second road to sovereignty is based, in exchange, on the idea that we need to be conscious that before we do anything, we need to build up a social majority that has no qualms about accepting the sovereignty postulates. Wouldn't it have been nice if we had already passed the autonomist phase! It is easy to fool ourselves, but actually touching reality, daring to touch it, is much more difficult. If we are so convinced that the pro-independence movement is an unstoppable tsunami, why then do we go on complaining about the weakness of our day-to-day Catalan-ness? Why do we lament that Catalan is dying when there are so many advocates for sovereignty prepared to defend it? And so on. As Daniel Innerarity says: "Governments are chosen, not nations." So, we truly have a long way to go before we convince Catalonia's citizenry that sovereignty is not a whim, but a necessity. It is important to widen the social base of Catalanism beyond the political parties, to incorporate

as many people as possible into the cause, because the enemy of sovereignty is, precisely, indifference.

To advance towards sovereignty we must abandon the tacitness that enslaves Catalan politics in an ephemeral and often insignificant battle. To strengthen Catalan-ness, what is needed from the start is to promote a Catalanist hegemony and also consolidate a network of civil associations that work for people's welfare and create a better image of the pro-independence movement for those who look upon it with indifference. We will be able to determine this project's success on the day that Catalanism has shifted to incorporate the country's new needs, many of which have been highlighted in these three volumes. If we have managed to construct a discourse on the right to decide that is acceptable to the majority of Catalans, and if Catalan citizens that are not aligned with the pro-sovereignty movement have joined this project (or at least, they do not see it as attack, but instead as a political thinking that also defends their interests) then we will be ready to go even farther. This is the ultimate meaning of the proposal of the Meeting House of Catalanism. In addition, success can also be measured when we have been able to strengthen the international prestige of Catalanism and the Catalan cause; of the Catalonia that decides and that wants to decide.

AGUSTÍ COLOMINES

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INTRODUCTION

All societies, all countries, have always asked themselves about the past. But now these questions have multiplied and have become more present than ever. The 20th and 21st centuries constantly suppose a rupture of the space-time binomial, the acceleration and shrinking of the world and everyone in it. Thus, how do we (and who will) explain our present that is so rapidly becoming our past?

What has gone on to be called the “history of the present” attempts to solve a series of questions along these lines. The term already raises questions on its own: is history permanently linked to the past? Or the concept itself of “history of the present,” isn’t it a contradiction? And following this argument, is it legitimate to ask ourselves that if the journalist has replaced the historian in publishing chronicles, how can the historian of today rival the journalist, the sociologist, or the analyst with regard to the examination of events that shape our world?

In addition, it is evident that the history of the present is extremely politicized, especially in countries and when dictatorships (of those on the right or the left) left the losers and dissidents in ruins. The need to recover the immediate past is much more urgent in these societies. In general, however, the “history of the present” has a long tradition and, nominally, in addition to this concept many others have been proposed to designate this historiographic sector: “lived history”; “immediate history”; “recent history”; “very contemporary history”;

“history of our time”; “history of contemporary times.” Thus, even though there are nuances and differences in the definitions, there is a general consensus on recovering what is contemporary and the need to overcome (in what is a paradoxical play on words) the “non-contemporariness” of contemporary history. It seems evident that the history of the present is more an exercise in experimentation than a well-defined and structured body of theory and epistemology.

Along these lines, and beginning with the dissatisfaction felt by many historians when faced with academic chronological divisions, the term “history of the present” would not imply adding a new epoch to the traditional chronology of history, but instead, it is about making contemporary history more complete by getting closer to coetaneous territories and thus extending the domain of contemporaneity to our times. Chronological limits are insufficient conditions for defining it, since it is evident that the historical evolution of the 20th century is still under discussion and divides contemporary historians.

As a result, the history of present has no fixed or established chronological limitations, since it often depends on the political, cultural and national circumstances of each place. Thus, seen from different points of view, we are faced with mobile parameters, and instead of having us focus on a couple of dates, this perspective makes us focus more on certain facts and their narration.

As we can see, the emergence of the “history of the present” in our epoch has a lot of background causes, but is especially due to the new relationship between time and history – past and present

– and not only that of the past with history. The present rises up like an epistemological horizon, a contribution that comes from the philosophical reflections that have enriched history. Reflections that, in determined currents of thought, already have several decades behind them. We could point out, as examples within the Italian cultural context, the contributions of thinkers such as Antonio Gramsci and his famous “Past and Present”, or Benedetto Croce, for whom all of history was contemporary – and therefore, political – history.

This dictatorship of the present in relation to the past carries the risk, however, of excessively conditioning the historical account. As a result, it is not surprising that in situations of conflict, where it is clear that there has been a mutilation of politics of historical memory (as there was in Spain), the desire to reestablish the “truth” has become a priority for marking the true rupture with the old regime, even if only on an intellectual level. Today, doesn't the danger exist – as the Czech historian Karel Bartosek asked when speaking about memory of the present in post-communist regimes – that a new amputated memory could be imposed if the interpretation of the past is subjected to different political tendencies?

We must answer these questions with a challenge: to intervene with our own voice - especially when it comes to historians – in the day-to-day cultural debate. At the same time, however, the question requires us to analyze and reflect on the concept of memory and history; or silence and memory, or power and marginalization. And memory is key.

It has been said that memory is the primary material of identity; it confers identity to individuals and groups. Despite this, we cannot forget that there are many ways to understand it, as we must distinguish between individual memory, social memory, collective memory, public memory, family memory, class memory... and all of them are related to the different aspects of identity experienced in the social sphere.

1. HISTORY AND MEMORY

History and memory. They go together but must not be confused. When we speak of history we are referring to a more or less objective account of what has happened, the *established reality*. In exchange, memory belongs to the domain of what has been lived, personal experience, which does not prevent it from also being an object of historical investigation.

The past can be found where our memory has put it, where the account – one that we construct based on this memory - marks what came before and after. This fact is constantly updated according to the social events that surround us, unconsciously. Thus, the way we remember something, the pillars that support our memory, the importance that we give certain events, varies according to the social changes that happen and that influence us.

As a result, it is clear that the potential for analysis and construction of the historical account is extremely important. For example, let us examine the ample perspectives of memory as an object of study:

- As a source, and in these cases we mostly refer to oral sources.
- The relationship between memory and history, asking ourselves how memory acts for one kind of event or another.
- The analyses of how memory influences the activity of historians, on the way they narrate their investigations.
- How the memory of different actors is an element to consider in the evolution of events.

In the end, memory is a narrative about society, the trajectory of individuals and collectives, the changes and the continuities that occur when living with others. Memory is a way of creating an explanation, and as a consequence, a way of giving things meaning.

In relation to this issue, the Italian historian Alessandro Portelli mixes the memory of events with the hypotheses of desires using a uchronic perspective in which the protagonist of the events imagines what would have happened if a historical event had never taken place.

According to Portelli this uchronic dimension helps us better understand the historical process; by believing in a different past, we continue to stimulate the belief in a different future. Remembering is not merely reliving what has happened. The person that remembers is making a judgment and manifesting their desires. As a result, all historians should agree with Portelli's warning: "Not everything narrated in this book is certain, but everything has been narrated truthfully."

This is the debate that has surrounded memory in recent years. The French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs was a great theorist on the social dimension of memory. He died on March 16th 1945 in the camp at Buchenwald, in the arms of a then very young Jorge Semprún, who narrates it in his book *La escritura o la vida* (Writing or Life).

As we had alluded to previously, Maurice Halbwachs distinguished between collective and politics of historical memory. To be more precise, for the Frenchman *collective* memory was a "current of continuous thought, of a continuity that has nothing artificial about

it, since it does not come from the past but from what is still alive or capable of remaining alive in the consciousness of the group that is sustaining it," while history was situated slightly outside of groups, below or above them, and obeyed a need for schematization.

In consequence, in the continuous development of collective memory there is not a clear or neat separation between how we should look at this past and present. What is more, uncertainties are never resolved. Thus, it is never truly collective, because at heart the greatest determining factors of this collective memory are almost always those basic and immediate nucleuses human beings belong to: the family, the town, the social class and even more clearly, the ideology. At times when we study, talk about or promote memory, these kinds of variables are not taken into account and we end up proposing a unilateral collective memory that in truth is still an unreliable memory - when there is only one memory, when people try to explain that there is only one, it almost always ends up being a deception.

Let us look at a specific case to see the consequences on community memory. The conflict of Northern Ireland; two communities (Catholics and Protestants), two memories (Irish and British). In the book *Remembering in Northern Ireland: Victims, Perpetrators and Hierarchies of Pain and Responsibility*, Marie Smyth, professor from the University of Wales, makes four reflections on how to approach this issue:

- Can there be healing between individuals, groups or nations without those who have injured others, or whose communities have injured others, expressing both a readiness to take up the burden of guilt and regret?

- Can you build the future of society if society is not willing to acknowledge its past? Is the past what you base the building of the future on?
- Can there be a healing process, a process of reconciliation, without all of us addressing honestly and openly hurts we have caused?
- If we are to overcome our past, must we come to terms with it? Can we do so if we don't know the truth about it?

So, what do we do with the past? This is a recurring question that should be accompanied by others. Are there some kinds of suffering more morally intense than others? Can we build a future without recognizing the pain that certain groups have suffered and without identifying the reasons? In Chile, Argentina and South Africa, for example, investigation commissions were established to resolve the issue of repression. In Chile and Argentina, they were also created to help forget the past. In South Africa, the Commission of Investigation and Reconciliation was a part of the solution that included concessions of amnesty. In Northern Ireland, the issue of managing the past is still pending, as in the Spanish State, and as in other places around the world.

2. RECOVERING MEMORY

It is a time of eulogies of memory. But the unconditional eulogy of memory, as opposed to the condemnation and the ritual we have for forgetting, can end up becoming a problematic attitude. As the thinker Tzvetan Todorov affirmed: “At times, what is at stake regarding memory is too important to leave in the hands of enthusiasm or anger.” We also have to keep in mind that because memory is impregnated with ideology, often it becomes a battleground between those strongly in favor and those vehemently opposed to the same thing.

But when the events that a group or society have lived through are of an exceptional or tragic nature – as was the case of the Francoist repression against non-Castilian cultures, for example -, then a recovery of memory is necessary. Because the duty of witnessing, or remembering, of converting our present into places of memory that make it possible to reflect on the past, is important and cannot be left in the hands of ideological manipulation.

Memory only makes sense if it brings us towards reason, towards reflection, towards a frank debate on what the past has been. If memory only serves a function, or is only a weapon of combat of the present to annihilate the memory of another or to conceal this memory, or even to encourage an imposed memory, the truth is that it does not make any sense, nor is it just – understanding *justice* to be the right for people to have what they consider to be a part of their lives treated well.

There are many different models for recovering memory. If we refer to *commemoration*, this is the act of commemorating or solemnly

remembering an event or a person. *Revision*, in exchange, is the act of revising, or examining or re-examining a thing or a fact to correct its errors, if there are any. *Reparation*, on the other hand, is the act of repairing and alleviating the damages that have been caused, making them disappear, correcting or limiting the error that has been committed in order to redo it, make up for the consequences or apologize for them.

Commemoration and *revision* are terms that have a historical dimension, and thus, a past dimension: in the case of commemoration, remembering; in the case of revision, revisiting, a reexamining of the past. In exchange, the idea of reparation is never paired with any notion that refers to the past: to repair does not have a past dimension or a historical dimension. In any case, it is a concept that is associated with the righting of a wrong, to some bit of satisfaction that can be gained in the case of an offense or affront, and thus it is an ethical concept and not a historical one, as it basically attempts to give back to or compensate those people who are unjustly offended, or whatever their situation may be.

Let's talk about commemoration. It might seem paradoxical, but the lyrics of this bolero: "Lie to me more, because your wickedness makes me happy," have significant historical meaning, as is clearly visible in the article "The Political Truth" by the Peruvian journalist Jorge Nieto Montesinos, published in 2005. The thesis of the article is quite simple and can be summed up in the following manner: "Believing that lying is essential to politics is the origin of the *plagio*" – says the journalist – "such as making a free man seem to be a slave, and also how it is impossible to achieve long-term agreements

term agreements with founders. Because anyone who operates on the basis of lies reduces their reasoning to pure calculation” – to a “is it best for me or not?” – “and leaves out objective judgment that would allow their opinion on things to be heard”. Thus, if we can only expect to hear lies coming from the mouth of a politician, why should we vote for them? This to start. But why do we have to trust them? This would be the second issue.

Politics takes an ideal and puts it into practice, nothing more. Of course it is much more than that, but here we will reduce it to the territory of election and opinion. As a result, if it is action and opinion, this means that political truth (or the socially possible truth) must be and is radically different from, for example, mathematical truth. Thus in politics two plus two is not four, because if the majority end up saying that it is six, then it ends up becoming six, even if it isn't true. But these are the rules. With commemoration the same thing happens: we commemorate what we decide to commemorate, and what we don't want to commemorate we simply ignore.

An example: In the book *Commemorations* there is a photograph of the memorial of Abraham Lincoln from 1947, where we see the North American President in that famous pose and with the inscription that speaks of “The free people...” and up on the monument there are two black men cleaning his boots. It is a good image. It is a good metaphor, surely fabricated. But what they are attempting to denounce is that even though that monument was the commemoration *par excellence* of the freeing of the slaves, in the year 1947 slaves in the United States still continued to clean the boots of the powerful. The monument had never been an element

of justice that eliminated what it claimed to commemorate. As a result, commemoration in this sense means nothing; it is an act of celebration that often serves to indicate an “us” and a “you”, a “them” and an “us”, to mark a certain kind of territory.

Commemoration is also not a static phenomenon, but instead it is a dynamic process that people create. As the French Philosopher Jean Baudrillard wrote: “Commemoration supposes memory, it happens in real time, and all of a sudden the event becomes less and less real and historic and more and more unreal and mythical,” because commemoration also has this effect. It doesn’t commemorate anything real, it commemorates something that we have converted into a myth. At the same time, although being mythical means being unreal, from a symbolic perspective it is useful to individuals.

If we are referring to reparation, to revision, let us ask ourselves if they are adequate according to which Government-controlled policies. For example, this is what happens in some ex-communist countries (such as Poland) with investigations about the supposed collaborationist past of certain people, and especially of the Government employees of the communist regime. This perversity can be repeated everywhere. The writer Oriol Pi de Cabanyes wrote an article on this issue where he said: “I accuse myself of having been a Francoist.” Why? Because everyone who had worked as a government employee under Francoism had signed a paper saying that they adhered to the principles of the *Movimiento*. If we follow this to the letter, then everyone is a collaborationist. Thus, we are faced with an extremely complicated and biased issue. Since, why do we forgive certain people for their past, but we never forgive others?

Why are politicians and top executives forgiven, and in exchange we deny this to a simple government employee, as perverse as they may have been (such as policemen were, for example)?

One of the great disadvantages of the Spanish transition from the dictatorship to a democracy was the sacrifice of memory. The great majority of the Catalan and Spanish population accepted the pact of the transition to not disturb anyone's deep wounds, because only conciliation would achieve peace and democracy. Thus, there was scanty political reparation for the destruction caused by the dictatorship, apart from the paltry economic compensation given to people who had been sentenced by the courts and imprisoned for political reasons between 1939 and 1975. But this is not sufficient for evaluating the past or compensating the negative effects of repression in fields such as linguistic coercion. Thus, do we need a mechanism such as an investigation commission to help manage the past? Can we turn the page without closing the book of history? And above all, do we actually need to remember?

Because, could someone honestly think that, for example, the picture of the two most opposed politicians of Northern Ireland, Martin McGuinness and Ian Paisley, sitting next to each other on the day of the presentation of the new Government of Northern Ireland would have been possible if they had spent all day recalling that one was an assassin – this was how Paisley defined McGuinness not so long ago - and the other, a sectarian and unyielding preacher? No, it would not have been possible. Peace requires, as all mediators of conflict resolution know, a little bit of forgetfulness. It is essential.

Because as Professor Mary Smyth asked: “Are there hierarchies of pain? Is there one kind of pain that is superior to another? And thus, if there aren’t hierarchies of pain, death is always death, and therefore it doesn’t matter whether or not it was caused by a Fascist or a Communist. In the end, death will always be death.” As a consequence, we cannot try to introduce elements of this kind, ethical-moral ones, into the topic of reparation, because we will surely not understand each other and we could get hurt.

After so many years of democracy, it’s unlikely that an investigation commission will ever be set up in Spain, but this need not mean that we forego the right to remember. If nothing else, remembering will allow us to discard certain lies that spread over the eight years of José Maria Aznar’s Popular Party Government. To cite just one case: in the year 2000, Juan Ramón Lodares, philologist and professor at the Autonomous University of Madrid, published the book *El paraíso políglota. Historia de lenguas en la España moderna contada sin prejuicios*. (The Polyglot Paradise. History of Languages in Modern Spain Told Without Prejudices), which gives a distorted and biased view of politics of historical memory.

Lodares tried to show that the cliché about Spanish being an imperialist language was not only false but furthermore an invention of the periphery nationalisms, and secondly that repression of Catalan, Basque and Galician was never the linguistic genocide suggested by the Catalan, Basque and Galician historiography (which he refers to as nationalist). In other words, according to Lodares, this book tries to tell “a very simple story: the spread of the Spanish language is not a tale of laws prohibiting everything”

If we raise this issue it is because, as happens in other parts of the world, some intellectuals are in the service of power and dedicate themselves to denying and even toying with someone else's suffering, even if this suffering comes from attempts to eliminate a specific cultural expression by force - in this case, the language of a national community. Playing down the reality, the chronology and the nature of Franco's dictatorship and the repression that it exerted should be considered an offence, but in the Spanish State this is not the case.

The fact that Spanish was not recognized as the official language of the State by any of Franco's "Fundamental Laws" (a sort of Constitution) does not mean that linguistic and cultural repression of minorities did not take place. There is a great deal of evidence, which is very well documented in the book by the former senator, lawyer and historian Josep Benet, *L'intent franquista de genocidi cultural contra Catalunya* (The Francoist Attempt at Cultural Genocide Against Catalonia). And no one should be able to deny that one of the objectives of the Franco regime was the Castilian nationalization of the national communities with languages of their own. And this fact, in relation to the interpretation of the past, is also important for analyzing the current situation of the different languages of Spain.

Because the duty of witnessing, of remembering what has happened, gives us a "memory place" as defined by the French historian Pierre Nora, where the causes are no longer essential, but the effects are instead – the footprint they leave behind and its construction and deconstruction over time, which provokes

the disappearance or the reemergence of its meaning in a kind of game, oftentimes a perverse one, full of symbolism.

It is not, however, about blindly joining the “era of the commemoration of the past” that has been infiltrating us for some time now, but a memory imperative does exist from the historiographic perspective, one that cannot disappear under the “right to forget” blanket that certain historians, philosophers, sociologists and journalists are calling for. Succumbing to the temptation of agreeing to an imposed forgetfulness (which is worse than it being forgotten), can only sweeten the foul desolation that Francoism imposed on all of Spain, and above all, on those territories with their own languages and cultures. In short, it can only mean the celebration the dictatorship’s barbarity.

In the book *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile* (1978) by the political scientist Arturo Valenzuela, the thesis focuses on General Augusto Pinochet’s *coup d’état* in 1973 that evokes the arguments that were used here in 1936 to justify the Francoist uprising. Better said, there is an insistent Spanish historiographic revisionism. Undoubtedly, writes Valenzuela in reference to Chile, the military *coup d’état* can be analyzed as an act of war, through which the soldiers of that country, in accordance with an ideological and redemptional vision of their role in the Chilean society (generally masked by the argument of “national security”), got rid of the democratic authorities to “save” the country from what the members of the military coup, the military’s high commanders, perceived as a chaotic, disintegrating and anti-national process that would carry them to civil war. Following this argument therefore, for

the Chilean soldiers of 1973 or the Spanish of 1936, those who were responsible for the collapse of democracy were the legitimate authorities themselves, because through their actions they were the ones cultivating and encouraging rebellion (which is clearly what happened in 1934).

That this ideological perception was extremely important for the 20th century's tendency towards military coups is a fact, and it is also a fact that many wars were started due to military coups. Even today, however, there is another element to consider, since it is often what is used to justify all kinds of actions: the presumed power of the enemy. In Chile, as in the Spain of '36, the magnification of the "Marxist danger" was the consequence of the ideological demonization of "the red enemy" and, in Spain's case, the "the separatist enemy" was also added. It didn't matter very much if the danger was real or imaginary, because the rupture of democratic legality can never be based on such circumstances. What is historically relevant is that members of past military coups used this excuse to justify their actions, and have used it later on to vindicate themselves. There has only been a retreat, not rectification.

What the Chilean and Spanish processes have in common is that in both cases the democratic transition was controlled by the military, directly in Chile and indirectly through the monarchy in Spain, and this explains the exchange of political power and democratic legitimacy between the dictatorial regime and the opposition forces. The Chilean military government permitted that the opposition have access to the possibility of governing (in 1990 it was Pinochet who sided with democratic president Patricio Aylwin), in exchange for the

legitimacy that he conceded to the constitutional model of 1980. In Spain, the accords of 1977 and 23 F¹ represent the same thing, and the political longevity of Fraga Iribarne is the metaphor of it.

What these two transitions have in common is, precisely, the unequal fight against impunity; at some times the excess of the mystification of certain anti-Francoism struggles so debilitated the democratic forces and placed them in such a lowly position that former Francoists have been able to vindicate themselves again and again as grand patriots.

What is the problem? That from a certain historiography people have also wanted the history of Francoism to be seen from the perspective of the good guys and the bad guys. There were some good people who fought, and in exchange, there were those who were only passing through, it was an accident that they happened to be there, because in fact, they simply had to become Francoists. No one knows why, but they were there. For example, the members of the Democratic Union of Catalonia (UDC) (*Unió Democràtica de Catalunya*) weren't supposed to end up as anti-Francoists, because they were a right-wing group. But we cannot ignore that UDC resisted having any sort of contact with the communists for many years. Political attitudes, however, are always adopted for a reason because they are the consequence of something, and the reason why UDC refused to sit next to the communists was because of the brutal clashes they had had during the Civil War. We should explain history well, without making value judgments, and maybe we will better understand why things are the way they are.

1) In reference to the attempted coup made on February 23rd 1981

If we want to revise the past, we should we revise all of it. For example, not all the republicans that suffered the Civil War were from the left, or all historians. The following case is a prime example: Ferran Soldevila. He was not from the left and he stayed loyal to the Republic, as did many others whose stories have remained hidden to us, who are invisible. And the case of Manuel Carrasco i Formiguera, leader of the UDC during the Republic? He leaves Catalonia because the FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation) want to kill him, and the final paradox is that his is killed by those on the other side, the Francoists. And the Councilor of the Catalan Government, Ventura i Gassol (who was a member of the Republican Left of Catalonia (*Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*)) also had to flee from his home, *a priori*, from those on his own side. How will we approach these cases, which are also not unique?

With all of this it is clear that the myth of the two Spains in Catalonia is false, even more so than anywhere else, because from the start we would have to say that there were three Spains. Regarding the moderate Basque and Catalan nationalists, in many cases Catholic and not revolutionary at all, who found themselves stuck between the FAI and Francoism, what do we do about them? And regarding the claim to start up rehabilitation processes for people who were condemned or executed, as is the case today of President Companys? And what can be done to rehabilitate the victims?

Regardless, we need to have programs compile well-made biographies of Companys, or that shed light on the mass graves. If we do this, we will know absolutely everything, and then we will be able to revise history and rehabilitate people. Because do we

gain anything by going over old legal sentences that were made according to the - whether we like it or not – Francoist legality? If we start to revise old sentences according to the conditions of Spanish law, behind these revisions the collaborationist and the executioner will disappear. But if we do not do things well, everything will be repeated and some people will dare to claim that those who weaken democracy, who destroy it, are the same people from 1936: the reds and the separatists.

What we must reclaim, regardless, is the memory of the dead, the imprisoned and those who had to exile themselves. A memory without any kind of surprises. But we should also not forget that this commemoration has to be historic, because history is not created, history is what it is; it recreates itself. Therefore, that is both extensive and real, that brings us to a conclusion.

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de 1892 i els orígens del catalanisme (The 1892 Bases of Manresa and the Origins of Catalanism, 1992, with J. Termes), *Les raons del passat. Tendències historiogràfiques actuals* (Reasons of the Past: Present-day Tendencies in Historiography, 1998, with V. S. Olmos), *La resposta catalana a la crisi i la pèrdua de Cuba* (The Catalan Response to the Crisis and the Loss of Cuba, 1998), *Testimoni públic* (Public Witness, 2001), *Patriotes i resistent. Història del primer catalanisme* (Patriots and Resisters: a History of the Beginnings of Catalanism, 2003, with J. Termes), *Manual de sensacions* (Manual of Sensations, 2004), *Pensar la contemporaneïtat: divuit entrevistes sobre la història* (Thinking About Contemporaneity: Eighteen Interviews on History, 2005, with V. S. Olmos), and *Tots som diferents: textos normatius de la Unesco sobre diversitat cultural i lingüística* (We are all different: UNESCO normative texts on cultural and linguistic diversity, 2006, with I. Marí and A. Monjas). He is also author of the collections of poems, *Poemes de la néta del General* (Poems of the General's Granddaughter, 1993), *De formes i llegendes o la desproporció dels somnis* (On Forms and Legends or the Disproportion of Dreams, 1997) and *La ira dels dies* (The Wrath of Days, 2000).

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