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For the first time since V!RUS was created, the interview we publish in this issue was not carried out by the journal's Editorial Committee. It would have been an immense honor to meet Professor Ecléa Bosi personally, to listen to her about her unique way of connecting research and social justice, her extremely ethical stance toward academia and society. One of the very few people to receive the maximum academic distinction from our university, Professor Bosi was honored in a beautiful speech of her friend and colleague Professor Marilena Chauí, in the ceremony of granting the title of Professor Emeritus. In her remarks, Chauí emphasizes that one of Ecléa Bosi's greatest contributions to Social Psychology was to relate "theory, method, and techniques of research and social, political and cultural militancy, from the definition of Psychology as a phenomenology of expressive acts and the relation of friendship between the researcher and the individual being studied as a person." (Chauí 2008). This is no small task since it consists of a daily challenge that pervades every act of every researcher who believes that memory, rather than a restoration of the past, can be "a generator of the future of society."

From her vast theoretical work, many very concrete actions were derived, such as the University Open to Senior Citizens Program, which gives access for people over sixty to any undergraduate course at USP. Under her initiative, communities of readers have also been created in public libraries in Sao Paulo, an idea derived from her work on the readings of working women. In this V!RUS issue, which addresses the multifaceted theme of the construction of memory, no one better than Ecléa Bosi could help us broaden our understanding of the subject.

It happens that, sadly, Professor Bosi left us earlier this year, passing away in Sao Paulo on July 10th. And even so, and for this reason, we decided to pay her a simple posthumous homage, republishing here one of her last interviews, initially published in the academic journal *Dispositiva*, of the Graduate Program in Social Communication, Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais, PUC-Minas. Conducted by Prof. Dr. Mozahir Bruck, the interview contains a set of the researcher core ideas, sent to Professor Bruck by email, discussed in a telephone conversation, and edited by him in a question/answer format. In this republishing by V!RUS, we have added references to Bosi's writings in some sections, aiming to contribute to broadening the interest and access to her work.

We wholeheartedly thank *Dispositiva* journal and especially Prof. Dr. Mozahir Bruck for their kind permission to republish this document. <sup>1</sup>

## **Memory: rooting is a fundamental human right**

Mozahir Salomão Bruck

In appreciation and recognition of her outstanding work in the field of Human Sciences, the *Dispositiva Journal* presents, in this issue, an interview with Professor Emeritus Ecléa Bosi, from the University of São Paulo. Author of several books, such as "Memory and Society: Memories of Old Men" (already in its 16th edition), "Mass Culture and Popular Culture: Readings of Working Women", "Simone Weil: The Working Condition and Other Studies on Oppression" , and "Old friends", Ecléa Bosi presents, in this interview, some essential reflections on past and memory and aspects of field research that uses oral memory.

Contrary to the apology of memory exclusively deposited in technological devices, Professor Bosi recalls that rooting is a fundamental right of the human being and that the denial of this right has severe consequences for culture and life in society. Among the many teachings that the work of Ecléa Bosi, Professor of Social Psychology at USP, has provided, it is worth noting the notion that, in addition to sensitivity and respect for listening, the researcher is committed to the fact that what he collects from the past must reverberate and fecundate the future. We conducted the following interview via a telephone conversation. Bosi was careful to ask the questions in advance, kindly preparing a text to answer them, which we edited as follows in a question/answer format.

**Mozahir Bruck** We start this interview by quoting a thought of Walter Benjamin, mentioned in his book "Memory and Society: Memories of Old Men": memory as an epic faculty, par excellence. The phrase, beyond the conceptual force it shelters, raises an issue that crosses the whole discussion about memorialism: inevitably installed in a narrative and subject to adaptations (often even unconscious), faulty, rewritten, memory is not, in the end, a process and an object of the present time?

**Ecléa Bosi** As your question suggests, memory serves the call of the present. But we will often have to cross the enormous temporal distance between the fact narrated by the witness and what happened. This experience is always challenging, because of the changes that have occurred, especially in mentalities. Past, strictly speaking, is an absolute otherness that only becomes knowable through the voice of our deponent, our narrator. I always insist, with my students, on the training of the researcher who will interview his memoirist: when his narrative is hesitant, full of silence, he should not be in a hurry to make an ideological interpretation of what he is listening to or to fill in the pauses. It is important to emphasize that the emotive, fragmented speech of our memorialist carries meanings that bring us closer to the truth.

We must learn to love this groping speech, its pauses, its fringes, with lost wires almost irreparable (Bosi, 2003b, p. 65). Much more than a unilinear document, the witness narrative shows the complexity of the real. It offers a privileged way to understand the articulation of the movements of history with daily life. It is stunning to hear this meditative remembrance of the witness. We then understand that one can make of memory a substantial support for the construction of the present, and it becomes, for us, a real array of projects.

**Mozahir Bruck** Much is said about the fact that contemporaneity has put in crisis parameters relevant to men, such as the relationship with time and with space. With memory inextricably connected to the notion of time, can we say that memory gains today new contours and processes? When time becomes so fleeting, with the immediate moment overvalued, what is the power of memory regarding our necessary learning from the past, from what has already been lived?

**Ecléa Bosi** This is a relevant question for us to think about memory: which version of a fact should be considered correct? We were and always will be absent from the fact he is narrating. We do not have the right to refute the fact told by the memorialist, as if he was in the dock, requiring him to tell us the truth, only the truth. Like all of us, he will tell us his truth (Bosi, 2003b, p. 65). Then, in interpreting a harvest of memories, we have to think, as human scientists, of a project - what kind of knowledge are we seeking and producing. Because the rebuilt past is not a refuge, but a source, a source of reasons to fight. Thus, memory has no longer a character of a restoration of the past but becomes the generating memory of the future: social memory, historical and collective memory (Bosi, 2003b, p. 66).

We, researchers who collect the past, know that it is one of the most difficult and mysterious concepts. Past is not a succession of facts or layers that one can excavate. Memory is unaware of the chronological order. I hypothesize that it operates with great freedom, collecting facts memorized in space and time, not arbitrarily, but because they relate through indices of shared meaning. They are more intense constellations of events when, on them, the brilliance of a collective sense shines. This fierce movement of recovery of the memory in Human Sciences constitutes today a real academic fashion. The bond with the past is vital because from it is extracted the sap for the formation of identity. In this sense, there is also Simone Weil's notion of the right of rooting, for whom this is a human right similar to other rights associated with man's survival.

**Mozahir Bruck** In contemporaneity, so marked, among other notions, by the idea of deterritorialization, how to understand this right to rooting?

**Ecléa Bosi** I greatly appreciate this concept created by Simone Weil for understanding culture: rooting. The constant displacements forced upon us by modern life do not allow us to be rooted in a given space or community, but this remains a fundamental human right. As Simone Weil put it, the human being has a root for his real participation in a collectivity, which keeps alive some treasures of the past and some forebodings of the future (Weil, 1996 [1943]). The uprooting of modern life is a disaggregating condition of memory. One of the cruelest exercises of oppression in contemporary society (economic oppression) is the plundering of memories.

I think that urban planners, when planning cities, should listen to the old residents and be open to their memory, which is the memory of every street, every neighborhood. They would be thus recovering the human dimension of space, which is a most urgent political problem. The survival of a group is intimately connected to the city's morphology, and such connection disarticulates itself when urban speculation causes an extreme degree of uprooting. Inhabitants of a neighborhood carry the feeling of belonging to a tradition, a way of seeing, that animates the life of streets, squares, markets, and corners (Bosi, 2003a, p. 206). All this is well reflected in the testimonies of our memorialists. So researchers must be aware that a life story we listen to is not meant to be archived or stored in a drawer as a thing: it exists to transform the city where it has flourished (Bosi, 2003b, p. 69).

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