

AperTO - Archivio Istituzionale Open Access dell'Università di Torino

Identity Barriers and Resemblance Networks

This is a pre print version of the following article:

Original Citation:

Availability:

This version is available <http://hdl.handle.net/2318/136070> since 2017-11-21T09:03:22Z

Terms of use:

Open Access

Anyone can freely access the full text of works made available as "Open Access". Works made available under a Creative Commons license can be used according to the terms and conditions of said license. Use of all other works requires consent of the right holder (author or publisher) if not exempted from copyright protection by the applicable law.

(Article begins on next page)

Identity Barriers and Resemblance Networks

Francesco Remotti

Università degli Studi di Torino

The first is *resemblance*: and this is a relation, without which no philosophical relation can exist. . . .

No relation of any kind can subsist without some degree of resemblance.

—David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*

Why Identity?

When compared to the word “identity,” the notion of “resemblance” undoubtedly seems much more unassuming: a word like many others in our everyday language, which does not seem worth of consideration. Identity, in contrast to resemblance, is a word that stands out, giving us pause and causing us to linger—we even feel an obligation or duty to linger. Identity not only signifies logical and philosophical thought, but also psychological, sociological, political, historical—and musicological thought. Is there any field of research today that does not employ the concept of identity in some way? It seems that, at the present time, we cannot do without identity: without identity we would seem even to be old-fashioned, disconnected from the culture of our age and from the discourse our culture constructs about itself and its cultural others. The political scientist, Wendy Brown, goes so far as to argue that we live “in the age of identity.”¹ And I myself have not hesitated to state that identity is “one of the great myths of our time,” a myth that, unlike other narrations from which we are able to distance ourselves, seizes us and even possesses us.² In the second half of the sixteenth century, Michel de Montaigne had already drawn attention to the “power” with which the ordinary ideas, in whose “sway we find ourselves,” seize us and continue to hold us, to the point that we can barely recover from their grasp and imagine that it is

¹ Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

² Francesco Remotti, *L'ossessione identitaria* (Roma and Bari: Laterza, 2010), xii.

possible to see the world with different eyes.³ It is my opinion that identity's power to possess us is something from which we should try to free ourselves.

Before criticizing identity, we should try to understand the positive reasons that lead us to employ the concept so widely. Identity is not only a simple and straightforward word, but it is also a reassuring concept, or so it would seem, and its reassuring power is determined both at the epistemological level and at the cultural level, at both the individual and collective level. When we say that something has an identity, it is as if we were stating that it enjoys an enviable consistency and unmistakable definability. Identity avoids confusion; identity has the great value of being "recognizable." Identity, it follows, guarantees recognition; identity, it would seem, provides the most basic certainty for each requirement of recognition. This link between identity and recognition is a decisive point, on which we must ponder. Each subject, whether individual or collective (i.e., each "I" and each "we"), requires recognition. At the social level, it becomes possible almost to make a subject's existence coincide with its recognition. It is a condition of a subject's social existence that it is recognized. Following Hegel, many philosophers—Axel Honneth, Charles Taylor, Paul Ricoeur, Judith Butler, to name but a few—have argued that subjects feel recognition to be a matter of life or death, and for this reason they make demands and engage in the battle to be recognized. Which weapon and what strategy could more effectively lead to recognition than the affirmation of identity? According to many of these philosophers, with the possible exception of Judith Butler, there is an inextricable link connecting recognition and identity, and this in turn means that a request for recognition is ipso facto a request that one's identity be recognized.

Is this, however, the way things really are? As I tried to demonstrate in *L'ossessione identitaria*,⁴ the connection between recognition and identity is non-essential, whereby I referred to the sense that it is not essential to think of recognition as also a recognition of identity. Recognition concerns a subject's existence, but not necessarily its identity. Recognition concerns a subject's needs, and it concerns mainly its rights, that is, the rights it will highlight and the rights whose recognition it will require. The connection between identity and recognition is not intrinsic in recognition, rather it depends on a subject's strategies. In order that more power and greater indisputability accrue to a subject's requests, the subject will assert its identity, transforming it to a recognition of identity. Still, such action remains a strategy and a choice, not a necessary and unavoidable passage. It is possible, therefore, to require recognition without insisting upon identity, even in our own

³ Montaigne, Michel de, *Montaigne's Essays*, trans. by John Florio, vol. 1 (London: Dent, 1910), 114.

⁴ Remotti, *L'ossessione*.

age, in which it has proved very difficult to dispense with identity and the evocation of identity, at least to the point at which identity has penetrated our minds and language. It may be difficult to dispense with identity, but it is not impossible. More to the point I wish to make here, dispensing with identity would be a very desirable, positive, and healthy undertaking.

Criticizing Identity

Why am I so critical of identity? Because identity is a treacherous word: it does not honor what it promises; it describes, indicates, or predicts a non-existent reality. Hegel argued, indeed, that there is no form of existence, whether natural or cultural, individual or collective, that respects the laws of identity.⁵ Identity signifies the maximum of what we imagine as compact, homogeneous, stable, and definable. Identity is something we can imagine; indeed, as Hume stated in the eighteenth century, it comes into existence through imagination as complete fiction, not as a description of reality.⁶ Identity, with its idea of permanence and definability, veils reality; it presents as real what in reality is fiction and myth. The veil, or perhaps we should call it a blanket, that identity drapes across the real landscape consists of only two categories: identity and alterity. On one hand, there is the substantial nucleus that we can call A; on the other, there is everything that is not A, thus becoming non-A.

Identity provides a view of the world that is dichotomous, A vs. non-A, which is an extremely elementary way of classifying the world. What could be more elementary than dichotomy? Indeed, what could be more unbalanced than a dichotomy that judges one category (A) as positive, thereby constructing the other category (non-A) only in negative terms? In a vision shaped by identity construction, alterity (non-A) is void of consistency and dignity: Its existence depends on the negation of A. Some might claim that this line of argument is mere speculation, halfway between logic and metaphysics, hence at a distance from the social, cultural, and historical realities that interest us most. With this in mind I should like to quote the political scientist, Samuel Huntington, who strenuously defends the concept of identity and the need to defend American identity. Huntington describes the ways in which each “we” becomes aware of its own identity only by instituting the “non-We” as a category of alterity: It follows, then, that the non-We actually defines the identity of the We.

⁵ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Logic of Hegel*, trans. by William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 214.

⁶ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. by David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 164–71.

“We know who we are only when we know *who we are not* and often only when we know *whom we are against*.”⁷

Identity separates, cuts between, erects walls, creates barriers and barricades. The most neutral and apparently painless of these processes is separation, an operation unavoidable for us. Before turning to *polemos*, war, which is embedded in the construction of “whom we are against,” it is helpful to take into account the sense of order and non-conflict resulting from a policy of identity. Identity can complement tolerance, that is, by recognizing and even respecting “others.” If one respects others, one also attributes an identity to them; one recognizes not only that “we” have the right to maintain and defend our identity, but also our “others” have that right. Identity is thus attributed and so to say distributed to others as well. Reciprocity thereby arises to guarantee a situation of non-conflict, which further leads to coexistence, in other words, the plurality of groups, communities, or cultures cohabiting a particular space. The result is cultural pluralism and reciprocal recognition, a result by no means trivial. Fundamental to coexistence—which in Italian is easily differentiated from *convivenza*, togetherness—is the process of separation, which in this sense means non-interference and non-participation.⁸

It is easy to perceive how coexistence relies on a very precarious balance. Tolerance may actually evaporate, when, for whatever reason, the rule of separation (non-interference) is not followed. We might ask, moreover, whether tolerance itself introduces an element that can destroy a relationship of respect. In one of his aphorisms Goethe stated that “to tolerate a person is to affront him.”⁹ Tolerating is the same as enduring, in other words, an attitude of superiority, and the superior can always decide to revoke their tolerance. At moments of crisis, when coexistence is endangered, the separation produced by identity can become exacerbated through the entrenchment of “we.” “We” hide behind our own barriers, thereby returning the others to the simple status of being “other,” kept at a distance sufficient for defending ourselves from them.

When tolerance disappears and interference turns into fear, another idea may emerge, which too is often associated with identity: purity. If identity is equated with integrity, the others produced by such identity inevitably become a menace. It is possible to defend oneself

⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 21.

⁸ Gustavo Zagrebelsky, *La virtù del dubbio: Intervista su etica e diritto*, ed. by G. Preterossi (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 2007), 118–22.

⁹ Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, *The Maxims and Reflections of Goethe*, trans. by Bailey Saunders (New York: Macmillan, 1906), 137.

through entrenchment and self-isolation, but as Barrington Moore has demonstrated, the concomitant idea of purity has led to carnage and massacre in European and global history.¹⁰ What happens in such cases? The “we” no longer limit themselves to passive defense or to avoiding interference with others, rather they take menacing and aggressive steps against them. We recognize this in policies of expulsion—ethnic cleansing in a given territory or being turned back at the borders—and in the annihilation of entire peoples and populations—the most atrocious of which being the genocides of the twentieth century. In such cases, the “we” become seized by their own identity and feel the need to effect clearer and more definitive separation from the others. Colloquially, such acts are recognized in “bumping off” (Italian, *fare fuori*)—bumping off others outside one’s own lands, or even bumping off the world and life forever. Martha Nussbaum describes such acts in India, a real pogrom, sparked on 27 February 2002, when Hindus bumped off more than 2,000 Muslims in only a few days, shouting “kill it, destroy it.”¹¹ It was with similar intent that an Italian crowd in December 2011 approached a settlement of Roma people in Turin, shouting “let’s kill them,” “we must kill,” “if there are children . . . we must set fire to them as well.” The mob action verged on pogrom, all predicated on the false accusation of rape against two Roma boys by a young Italian girl who did not wish to tell her family about losing her virginity. In this instance, the mob seeking putative revenge had at its disposal a culturally pre-packaged category of identity: Who would be better to accuse of rape than Roma?

From Identity to Resemblances

Is the world necessarily like this? Does it really consist only of many groups, multiple “we”, communities, societies, and civilizations, each hanging on to its own identity, each identity distinct and separate from all other identities? Have these groups no choice but to coexist only through the exploitation of tolerance or the augmentation of separation through acts of rejection and, ultimately, annihilation? Are these the only two possible alternatives? The answer is “yes” if we believe that relations among humans are dominated primarily by an identity principle. The answer is “no” if, in contrast, we adopt a more articulated perspective whereby we recognize that ideas and actions can be the result of different types of principles,

¹⁰ Barrington Moore, Jr., *Moral Purity and Persecution in History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

¹¹ The Muslims had been accused of setting fire to a train of pilgrims at Godhra in the state of Gujarat. See Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence, and India’s Future* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).

even if we live in the age of identity. In the pages that follow, I should like to explore this perspective according to the following theses:

- (1) Identity is an ideology, or a myth;
- (2) Identity is an ideology that shapes reality by enforcing cuts and separations;
- (3) Identity does not work in a vacuum;
- (4) The reality, affected by identity-ideology, is made of resemblances;
- (5) Identity is an ideology or myth, from which we can break free, and which we can live without; and
- (6) Breaking free from identity means letting the network of resemblance emerge.

What, then, is resemblance? It is a relationship. Identity, too, is a relationship, but whereas identity is the relation of an object *A* *only* with itself ($A=A$), resemblance forms relationships that link things together in many different ways. We describe these relationships as resemblance, but we must not forget that resemblance always implies differences: Resemblance is always a mixture of characteristics that are common and different. If two things are similar, they must also somehow be different. In this sense, resemblances between objects are always graduated—some are more alike, others less alike—and spread in many different directions. The world is a tangle of resemblances and differences, and this is true for both the natural and the social world. In one way or another, it follows, resemblance is capable of crossing borders, fences, barriers, and separations, indeed the very separations produced by the concept of identity.

The tangle of resemblance, to which I should like to turn as an illustration here, corresponds quite closely to theories of complexity. What, then, is identity? Nothing more than a way to reduce complexity. It does so in one way, but there are other ways to do so. Human cultures incorporate many programmes to reduce complexity.¹² Identity is a more extreme process of this sort. It is an attempt, albeit no more than an attempt, to reduce complexity virtually to the point of annihilation, thus canceling not only the tangle of resemblance, but also the very idea of resemblance and the word itself. In a world dominated by the simple categories of “identity” and “alterity,” which stand in opposition, there is no room left for resemblance. Individuals signified by identity are not only alike, but identical;

¹² Francesco Remotti, *Dalla complessità all'impoverimento* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 2011), chap. 6.

those signified by alterity are left confronting what makes them different from and opposed to being identical. The word, resemblance, has largely disappeared from technical and specialized discourse. When I began this essay, I referred to resemblance as unassuming, humble, and devoid of theoretical pretence: It arises from common sense. It is, nevertheless, a word that issues a challenge, which loses none of its critical importance.

The Doomed Logic of Resemblance

In order to illustrate this challenge I should like to return to the distant past, indeed, to the Athens of Pericles, the Sophists, Socrates, and Plato, in other words, to the fourth and fifth centuries BCE. Plato attributes the following thesis to the Sophist, Protagoras: “Anything resembles anything else in some way or other. There is a respect in which white resembles black, and hard soft, and all the other things that seem completely opposite to each other” (*Protagoras* 331 d).¹³ In Plato’s reconstruction, Protagoras explains that it depends on the position of the observer. It is clearly a matter of open-mindedness: “You could prove, if you wanted to, that these too are all similar to one another” (*Protagoras* 331 e). “If you wanted” . . . Clearly, it is necessary to want it; one must assume a particular position toward reality, toward all that surrounds us, and toward ourselves. This requires a point of view, that refuses to be imprisoned by the oppositions and dichotomies. Even opposites can appear similar to one another—not identical, but similar, that is linked by relationship of resemblance and difference. Protagoras suggests that opposition and contrast between categories (e.g., black and white, hard and soft) can fade and almost disappear, when we observe the resemblances that cross the borders between them. “All things resemble one another.” They are not the same, they are alike: Following Protagoras, one might assume there would be almost an element that links the opposites. Nothing is completely alone, closed in on itself, similar only to itself, so that the entire world seems an immense, complex tangle of resemblance—or better, of resemblance and difference.

It is worth remembering, here, that Protagoras was not Athenian, but rather from Abdera in Thrace. We might suppose, therefore, that Protagoras noticed elements of connection rather than barriers of identity because he was a foreigner in Athens who had traveled widely across Greece: his attention might have been focused on what crossed and connected, rather than on what divided and separated. The Athenians, Socrates and Plato, mounted a challenge to Protagoras’s networks of resemblance: They perceived a risk, that of destabilization. Plato sought to demonstrate that the world of resemblances was one of

¹³ Plato, *Protagoras*, trans. by C. C. W. Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 23.

appearances, that it was superficial, that is, nothing more than a reflection or shadow of the world of ideas. Aristotle did the same thing with his idea of substance. Plato's recourse to ideas and Aristotle's reference to substance were based on the principle of identity. For the most part, Western philosophers have declared war on resemblance: Opposed to identity, resemblance is downgraded, considered irrelevant, conceived as a class of phenomena from which one must refrain, in a word, be bumped off.¹⁴

In *The Order of Things* Michel Foucault describes an analogous situation.¹⁵ He considers the historical passage to modernity in Europe and claims that, during the Renaissance, knowledge (*episteme*) was largely dominated by the resemblance principle: **the world used to be experienced and perceived following the traces of similitude**. With the advent of modern science, resemblance lost its role as the dominant principle. Resemblance was forced to "relinquish its relation with knowledge and disappear, in part at least, from the sphere of cognition."¹⁶ Resemblance disappeared, with its infinite connections, and identity took over, thereby establishing a classificatory order in the world. In this transformation of knowledge, Foucault's passage from the Renaissance episteme to modern science, resemblance was discredited and abandoned in favor of identity. In Foucault's reconstruction, nonetheless, there is an element critical to our discussion, thus worth underscoring: Resemblance—marginalized, crushed, and annulled by the machinery of identity—does not disappear entirely. The categories of identity are unable to absorb the complex tangles of resemblance without also preserving some traces thereof. At different points, Foucault argues that, even amidst the neat and silencing categories of order imposed by modern science on the world, it is still possible to hear "the insistent murmur of resemblance."¹⁷ Resemblances may be massively reduced, but they still react with surprising forms of resistance—or better, of resilience.

The age to which we refer as "modern" has produced particularly dire consequences for resemblance. Not only science, but other forms of cultural action and discourse, have reduced, even crushed, the role of resemblance. This may well be the reason, as I have suggested above, that ours is an age of identity, hence an impoverished age. We witness this in the serial production of objects, the sheer number of which invades our existence—from the most humble objects of daily life, used to satisfy our needs, to money, increasingly

¹⁴ Carlo A. Viano, *La selva delle somiglianze: Il filosofo e il medico* (Turin: Einaudi, 1985).

¹⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

abstract and dominating all relationships, to the streets and houses in which our lives are accompanied by media programming that produces a uniform mentality, to the press, and indeed to the very works of art that Walter Benjamin described as producing their own “technical reproducibility.”¹⁸ These are the characteristics of an entirely new social order. What other society has known such an invasion of commodities? And what society has witnessed such a series of commodities that are all the same? The sheer volume of commodities invading our lives is overwhelming, and so too is their sameness. In this leveling-off of products any little anomaly is conceived as a fault that makes the object a piece of junk, impossible to use. Benjamin asserts that it is the *hic et nunc*, the unrepeatability of a work of art, that disappears in the age of technical reproduction.¹⁹ Unrepeatability, moreover, is an element of resemblance. Let us consider for a moment two performances of Beethoven’s piano sonata, Op. 111, by the same pianist. It is impossible for the performances to be identical, because each has its own unrepeatability, its *hic et nunc*. They will, in fact, be similar, because as performances they are unique and impossible to repeat. Were the unrepeatability to disappear, they would be identical. Because I have turned to performance, it might be instructive to turn also to handicraft, the virtue of which Richard Sennett has asked us to reconsider, and to factory labor, whose enslavement and merciless repetitiveness Karl Marx has memorably described in *Das Kapital*.²⁰ If we further consider the modern state and its bureaucracy—what Max Weber called the “iron cage”—it is difficult to disagree with Olivier Reboul when he observes that our world increasingly becomes a “realm without resemblance,” that is, a realm in which “resemblance abandons its place to identity.”²¹

Intervening in Resemblance

In order to understand this devastation of resemblance in the modern era, it is necessary to realize that **resemblance requires to be manipulated**. If we agree with Protagoras in the philosophy of resemblance that I am trying to enunciate, especially when he states that “all

¹⁸ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility,” in idem, *Selected Writings*, ed. by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, vol. 4 (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, Harvard University, 1996).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 253–54.

²⁰ Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production London 1887* (Berlin: Karl Dietz Verlag, 1990), Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe, 366–72.

²¹ Olivier Reboul, “Réflexions sur la ressemblance,” *Les études philosophiques* 4 (1985): 515.

things resemble one another” and that each thing is similar to any other thing in one way or another, we cannot limit ourselves to mere contemplation of the tangle of resemblance. Perceiving resemblance means somehow tidying up the tangle, that is, selecting certain kinds of resemblance and discarding others. The simple act of cognition, thus, implies an intervention that reduces and narrows on one hand and selects and augments on the other. When the tangle comprises resemblance and difference, any cognitive process will lead to the accentuation of resemblance or difference, and to the mitigation of one or the other. The world of resemblance contains degrees, stretching from the macroscopic, with its imposition of resemblance and difference, to the microscopic, in which resemblance and difference are barely perceptible.

Intervening in resemblance and difference takes place not only at the cognitive level, but also, and perhaps even more so, at the level of *praxis*. Anything we do, any gesture we make, any word, idea, or sound that we utter, produces a change in the networks of resemblance. Any action affects “resemblancing” and “differentiating.” We augment certain resemblances, and we reduce some differences, but we might also augment certain resemblances while increasing differences. Please permit me to put aside abstraction for a moment, and turn to some phenomena typical of our age, that is, nationalism and ethnicity. The construction of nationalism implies a double operation: (1) Within the “we” constructed to constitute a nation, resemblance is augmented as much as possible (uniformity of customs, rules, and laws; diffusion of a single language and standardizing it through grammar; writing and the press; the invention of traditions, narratives, and shared myths); (2) beyond this national “we” otherness comes into play (borders are created; trenches are dug; barriers are built to encumber communicability).

I have already touched upon the appalling consequences that can result from such actions. As I approach my conclusion, I should like to highlight two aspects. First, internal “resemblancing” (in-group), just as external “differentiating” (out-group), can never be complete. Within the in-group many differences remain intact, and others are constantly created. The degree of differentiation toward the out-group notwithstanding, the resemblance between “we” and “they,” between “we” and the “others,” persist and continue to resurface.

Second, I should like to draw attention to the different perspectives affecting how subjects find their place in the world through internal “resemblancing” (in-group) and external “differentiating” (out-group). Specifically, there are two perspectives: *the perspective of identity* and *the perspective of resemblance*. If we adopt the former, it is inevitable to insist that “we” increasingly become homogeneous and compact, while the “others” become as different as possible. It is also inevitable that, once such expectations and aspirations fail to be met, violent reactions toward against internal uniformity and external differentiation are triggered. Such reaction may well emerge, as many thinkers have pointed

out, because the deepest antagonism is often directed toward those closest to us, hence similar to us.

The Politics of Resemblance

So, what does happen if we adopt the perspective of resemblance?

- (1) One is much more willing to admit the incompleteness of resemblancing and differentiating;
- (2) It is not disturbing to realize that “we” produce internal differences and that others, now no longer “others,” are in fact similar to us;
- (3) On the contrary, if the “politics of resemblance” are enacted, they avoid to insist on the uniformity of “we” and the total differentiation of “others,” for differences emerge within the in-group, as do resemblance links with others.

I borrow the expression “politics of resemblance” from Simon Harrison, who, while arguing that nationalism and ethnicity are no more than “denied resemblance” that are “muted” or “broken,”²² has examined how traditional enemies among head-hunting societies in New Guinea forge connections of resemblance among themselves. They name the sons of those engaged in killing enemies after their killed enemies to signify coming of age.²³ The custom among the Mae-Enga of New Guinea of endogamous marriage with their enemies—“we marry our enemies”—provides another example.²⁴ We are, thus, different from our enemy, while still similar to them. Resemblance, far from being negated, is explicitly sought after and desired—the obverse would characterize nationalism.

For societies enacting an explicit politics of resemblance, alterity does not determine the construction of others, and resemblance is neither obvious nor banal. Resemblance both mediates and results from border-crossing. And here we witness the lesson of such societies for anthropologists: the theme of *incompleteness*. These societies ascribe the phrase, “we

²² Simon Harrison, “Cultural Difference as Denied Resemblance: Reconsidering Nationalism and Identity,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, 2 (2003): 343–61.

²³ Simon Harrison, “The Politics of Resemblance: Ethnicity, Trademarks, Head-Hunting,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 8, 2 (2002): 211–32.

²⁴ Mervyn J. Meggitt, *The Lineage System of the Mae-Enga of New Guinea* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1965).

make the incomplete,” to their rituals of anthropo-poiesis.²⁵ The *logic of identity* revolves around the principle of *completeness*: We exist as a compact sphere, needing no one else, whereas others are a menace, the menace of alterity. The *logic of resemblance* is, in fact, the expression of the principle of *incompleteness*. By taking inspiration from this principle, societies seek—at times violently and through conflict—resemblance with others transformed from simple enemies into enemy-allies, no longer to be annihilated, rather necessarily drawn into living together (*convivenza*).

As opposed to coexistence (separation), togetherness (*convivenza*) implies the involvement of other people. Others become involved only insofar as we and others, beginning with the incompleteness principle and no longer hiding behind the barriers of identity, become part of resemblance networks. “Universal peace” may not be guaranteed, but incompleteness, resemblance, and togetherness conjoin to tame conflicts, making them slightly less devastating and irreversible. And they undoubtedly do this together with music, for it is music that most helps us cross boundaries and create the connections between cultures and societies, and between the forms of humanity that, however different they may be, are also similar.

(Translation by Maria Cristina Caimotto, with Philip V. Bohlman)

²⁵ Marilyn Strathern, “Making Incomplete,” in Vigdis Broch-Due, Ingrid Rudie, and Tony Bleie, eds., *Carved Flesh/Cast Selves: Gendered Symbols and Social Practices* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 41–51.