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The civil society between freedom and democracy

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Abstract: In view of a rapid succession of events in the contemporary world, on both the political and the scientific levels, it is indeed essential to say more about the subject of democracy in the civil society. If by democracy we mean not only a form of government but also a system of living, then indeed a unanimous judgment and also a general conception cannot be expected, but nevertheless the concept need not to be debased to the stage of complete meaninglessness.

1. Europe and its notion of democracy

The European countries had obviously had enough of dictatorships and totalitarian forms of governments. The Berlin-wall broke down in 1989. Europe became new. To discuss the admittedly special circumstances obtaining in Europe would obscure the actual issues, since it is now no longer possible to set geographical limits in the treatment of this subject. Doubts about the value of democracy have not come upon us from heaven or hell, but must have deeper roots in spite of all the defects which cannot be denied and in spite of justified criticism; for this reason it is not possible to take

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the easy way out and attribute them to some „spirit of times”. All the more so because other conceivable forms of society are much less in tune with human nature, man’s desire for liberty and the free expression of the personality than the system under which we live. However, a period of one generation (end of the cold war) is too short to be able to discern in the flood of events a „secular process” which has led to the increasing erosion and indeed to the break-up of traditional values.

In actual fact, if the principles of democracy – that is, freedom, law and order – are being questioned more and more insistently and more and more often, this is certainly due more to the conscious and deliberate activity of (more or less radical) minorities. But it is these groups who as a rule fight not with the intellect but with the weapons of force – ranging from the condemnation of those who do not share their opinions to anarchistic excesses. They presume to be able to construct a new society only on the ruins of the destruction of the old; in any case this society is not at all „new”, but can be observed in the flesh in existing dictatorships and totalitarian forms of government, which above all enable us to make comparisons. If the opinions of the majority are alleged to be rubbish and sense is the prerogative of the few, it does not follow that the converse is true, i.e. that only minorities possess sense. In particular, however, the aggressive minorities with whom we are here concerned cannot then feel justified in exercising power by the way of coercion. No, their intellectual intolerance makes them incapable of a considered judgment; their

argumentativeness, generally flaunted with noise and commotion, serves more for the intimidation of the sensible than any desire to enhance their own awareness.

2. The function of democracy and fundamental ethical decisions

It may, I believe, be asserted without prejudging the issue that on the whole it is a decided minority that would wish to „refunction” the democratic will of the majority, in spite of many objections to this principle, into the rule of the minority. This new vogue word is a fashionable neologism. Such neologisms of this kind are in fact intended to convey the impression that the thing in itself needs to be incarnated in a form of activity before it can take on meaning and essence. This stimulated activity represents a new way of thinking, which is prepared to condemn everything that is not in a state of continuous motion or is not being moved and changed as stagnation.

If therefore the unchanging, the established, no longer signifies anything, it is only logical to set store by practical experience and rational knowledge alone, and hence to reject ethical, moral and religious values as measures of human action and striving. A man who cannot comprehend Immanuel Kant’s „the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me” as a philosophical creed but only perhaps as a poetic piece of literature has certainly not contradicted Kant if his

intention was thereby to obtain „carte blanche” for a philosophy without values or even antagonistic to them. However, the man who thinks of the „starry heavens” only in terms of astronauts and conceives of the moral law only from the standpoint of the penal code has no understanding of this great philosopher.

Making value judgments is certainly not always the expression of objectivity and justice, but this activity must in all logic be purely arbitrary if a shallow, merely expedient pragmatism predominates over higher values. No human conscience can be so stunted as to be unable in the last analysis to distinguish between more good and more evil – unless one denies altogether that anything like the conscience exists. But the conscience cannot convincingly be branded as a backward, bourgeois notion! For that is the hope of sensible people of all nations, that this arrogantly and presumptuously flaunted „thoughtlessness” must perish through its own spiritual emptiness. This is not by any means to say that everything in the garden of the Western democracies is lovely and that no criticism is justified. But the lever of criticism requires a fulcrum, which cannot be sought in intellectual vagueness.

The reader may enquire whether this long discussion about the preconditions of democracy was necessary before embarking upon our actual subject. However, the treatment of this subject is virtually inconceivable without a statement of one’s own values and credo. For instance, anyone who does not conceive freedom as an innate right of man but thinks he can interpret it according to his own subjective feeling has

forfeited his entitlement to join in the conversation because he is only a fickle being. The ultimate essence of every community in the civil society is based on the integration of the individual in the whole, and not on the right arrogated to himself by each individual of being able to shape the world around him or her for „everyone” according to his/her conception.

3. Importance of law in the view of freedom, democracy and civil society

Not only the system in itself must certainly be protected by the law but also the freedom. This cannot mean that everyone can claim – i.e. „his/her” right to make use of freedom as he sees fit and- as increasing public insecurity shows – for example to destroy other people’s property or steal it by force. Whilst private law, as a system of rights, exists, consecrated by legislation, there is no „private” right of the type attacked. This thesis is not in dispute, but unfortunately it is also not always respected. Freedom thus requires a foundation in law, but in addition it must likewise be integrated in a social order. In this sense law and order combine to protect, but also to define, the sphere of freedom of the individual and of the civil society.

However, since the changes are continuously taking place in politics and in the society, and since these are not always accompanied by changes in the law, it cannot be denied that these have formative power, which also extends to their practical effects. Thus, from a more

philosophical standpoint, the question arises whether the state, which is supposed to guarantee law and freedom, by its perhaps involuntary increase in influence and power might not ultimately be in danger of further and further restricting the rights and liberties of its citizens, contrary to this fundamental moral law. The case is in no way altered if these citizens are prepared, or even wish, to subordinate themselves to the collectivity and even pay the price of renouncing the expression of their freedom. At this point we are bound to mention inflation, which is just one of the factors tending to bind the citizen even against his/her will. The state cannot escape responsibility and blame, particularly if it nurtures ideologies in its industrial, financial and economic policies which according not only to theory but also to world-wide practical experience cannot fail to result in a constant decline in the value of money – but must then virtually of their essence also lead to the break-up of a free and civil society.

4. The tension between the influence of the state and individual freedom

Master or slave, subject or citizen – that is here the question!?! Tempting as it is to go on arguing this point, we must discipline our ideas and return to our subject. It will now be clear that the democratic system as presupposition for a civil society – democracy of course being understood in a genuine and free sense – constantly runs the risk of causing the state to be either too

little or too much in evidence and not palpable enough or too palpable. Such scruples are foreign to totalitarian states. Perhaps, however, this comparison will show that when we speak of democracy we can only mean the form of government, society and life which stands above all the partial spheres and aspects. Let the groups in our countries who are infected by communist ideologies once and for all honestly answer the question what they think would happen if every individual group in a totalitarian state – of whatever configuration – dared to set norms and standards of its own in and for itself.

The question arises, what is then meant by democracy, and what social-political system is to exist with democratization, and how can be built up a civil society, when the break-up of the state is complete? Could it be the crippling and suppression of the parties legitimized by the people in free, equal and secret elections? Already today, these parties are tending to be undermined everywhere by minorities in their own camps, so that their capability of action is constantly diminished. Is it for example conceivable for an individual person to be subjected to different maxims in different areas of his/her life? Is the citizen a different person in the family, at work, in society, in the state or as a member of his/her church or religious community, and can his/her life be subordinated in each case to completely different set of moral standards? Is what we call good faith, whether individual or in the group, open in each case to different interpretations, if democracy is not to be just an outline system but is instead to be imbued with the spirit of

unity? And are this not the presuppositions for a real well working civil society?

As it is in private life the members of a club lay down a set of rules binding upon them, the citizens of a state, too, are bound to their set of rules, called the constitution. Apart from the purely juridical significance of this statement, it incorporates the prevailing norms of human and moral attitudes. In this wider framework, there is such infinite scope for the unfolding of human freedom that everyone can find his own station. If a person cannot make anything of this freedom, he/she cannot blame his/her failure on the democratic organization of the (civil) society. But this is a measure of the intellectual confusion which threatens to engulf more and more the people in the European countries.

Such critical remarks certainly do not justify the assertion that every democracy is already perfect in itself and on the best way to become a civil society. Democracy according to the civil society is to be seen as an institution which affords a foundation and a framework for even the fiercest arguments, which nevertheless allow of at least politically optimum solutions. If the demand for a better society, a civil society, and the democratization is not to carry the implicit aim of an intentional weakening of democracy, then the notion of the „democratized democracy” can in fact only be regarded as a pleonasm. We could then equally well speak of „capitalized capitalism”, „socialized socialism” or „liberalized liberalism”. The ambiguity or multiplicity or possible interpretations of such neologisms should be proof enough, with a little reflection, that this method is

simply useless. A fragmented and atomized democracy is in fact no longer a democracy, unless the word is to be given an entirely new connotation. Everyone knows that one can argue splendidly with words, and that a system can also be constructed with words, but what has been constructed is then a different social system, a different form of government, and in this sense also a quite different theory of the civil society.

5. Difficulties with the democracy

Also, if the critics of a free democracy were manifestly impelled by the desire to improve that which is inadequate and to perfect the existing order, they could be sure of a wide measure of agreement from many who felt the same way. However, the noisiest protagonists of civil society and democratization make it all too clear from their behaviour and activities that they want to alienate the citizen from democracy. That, as already stated, they are intend not on evolution but on revolution, and in addition even heap abuse on the state, which is bound by law and justice to maintain this free organization of life. A person who really wants to protect democracy and wants to install the civil society reinforce it from within should think of something better than mindless repetition of the word „democratization” or the word „civil society” as the assumed way to salvation. It is fundamental that the concepts of democracy and civil society will admit of no multiplications. As a nation, we always live in just one democracy and one

society, in one system of justice, and not in a number separate institutions each with completely different structures. Even if we live in a global world we live only according to one dimension, in one place in a special time (hic et nunc). And when one considers the methods by which minorities often come to power, the resistance of freedom-loving citizens must be raised in opposition to this distortion of the will of the majority, for the sake of democracy and civil society.

Basically it is almost always minorities which wish to oppress majorities today. For example, it can scarcely be denied that the democratization of the churches has not contributed to the strengthening or spiritualization of Christianity. And democratization in schools of all kinds has not really manifested itself in improved education and additions to the store of knowledge. In fact it has led to a refunctioning of truth and suppression of the free exercise of the intellect. Not least among the factors contributing to the failures and symptoms of degeneration of democracy is that it has been forgotten that democracy not only gives the citizens rights but also imposes obligations in him or her. From the moral standpoint of view, forbearance and understanding are inherent in democracy, whereas the democratized democracy can only accentuate antagonisms. Another point: when majorities are formed from free democratic elections, it cannot at the same time be democratic to support the principle of „parity” in other institutions – e.g. in the idea of an „economic and social council” – in contradiction to this vote. Indeed, this could even result

in fundamental falsification of the genuine process of formation of the democratic and the „civil” will.

Of course, the logical culmination of democracy is the rule of the official, the free election and the active participation of the human person. For whose calling is then democratization? The silent citizen and ordinary political consumer at any rate would not aspire to it, and it is unlikely that his/her voice would be heard even if he/she did. No, it scarcely be gainsaid that democratized democracy on all levels justifies a new form of regime which is fundamentally at variance with the inner law of a genuine democracy and a civil society. For why should the citizen in a democracy guaranteed by constitutional law bother to vote if his/her declared will is disregarded by pseudo-democratic institutions? No parliament, moreover, should show itself to be so bankrupt that – assembling as it does the elite of a nation – it is incapable of objective appreciation of an issue, and requires an institutionally consecrated council of experts, who could in any case if necessary be called in to advise on specific issues. There can be no middle path between acceptance and rejection of democratic forms of life. In a democracy as we understand it, human freedom is sacrosanct. In the civil society, it is, at the least, questionable. It is in any case clear that under a democratic system the citizen is also free to make his/her will known, whereas with democratization he/she is subject to a greater or lesser degree of obligation imposed upon him/her and thus is fettered in new respects. This means that this misunderstood democracy creates a perfection of power from which it is no longer possible for

the citizen to escape and which he/she cannot ward off. Opinions on this issue are not divided into bourgeois and socialist schools of thought. The tearing-up, and likewise the arbitrary mixing, of all values is bound to lead to egalitarianism, because if everyone thinks he/she can aspire to the same, the status of the personality is diminished and a fair appreciation of individual achievement is prevented. In this sense is the civil society in danger to become an egalitarian community without performance.

6. Questions of industry and work

I would like to deal, finally, with the particular problems of industrial co-determination – and especially co-determination on a parity basis – in rather more detail, as it might otherwise appear as though I were endeavouring to avoid touching on the problems of the day, in our rapid changing transition countries and the Western world. Because work and employment are key-factors also for the civil society. It is both noteworthy and characteristic that co-determination in the sense of our industrial relations legislation is rather an element of internal order and social co-operation between the employer and the employee, and for this very reason had nothing to do with any revival of the class-war. The legislators and both sides if industry realized on the basis of practical experience that it was useful and to everyone's advantage to approach problems between staff and management as far as possible on an amicable basis and

with a readiness to negotiate mutually acceptable solutions. The juridical foundations for this process were created – without eroding the entrepreneurial function by parity. This was certainly a manifestation of a democratic approach towards a civil society, yet there was no question of democratization for the institution of a new social order. This blurring of competences and responsibilities was aimed rather at areas outside that of productive industry, whence they were to permeate all layers of society and refunction them.

7. Egalitarianism as challenge of civil society

But, I myself would never attempted to hide my rejection of a democracy as egalitarianism – of a principle of parity which negates the original democratic consensus, because, to put it crudely, it leads to a system in which no one any longer knows 'who is the cook and who is the waiter'. In this sense egalitarianism is a real challenge also to the civil society, because the basis of this principle is on the concept of democracy.

Where this intellectual confusion has led in the universities is plain to all. If we apply the same principle to a national economy, it appears very unlikely indeed that the latter would be strengthened and bolstered from within. Regrettably, our age is one of many contradictions, but to draw attention to them in the free world today has virtually become tantamount to disturbing the peace. The economic failures and deficiencies of collec-

tivized economic systems in comparison to market-orientated forms of organization are now so crass that it is virtually the height of impudence and ideological delusion to recommend the peoples of the free world to relinquish this of all freedoms.

Such a conception of modernity becomes a cheap excuse for individual human failure and cowardly opting out of competition. For let there be no mistake: the democratization of democracy can only lead to more and more egalitarianism, in spite of the fact that such a process is contrary to both human nature and the purpose of creation. However, justified the achievement of a better social balance within a community may appear, an exaggerated egalitarianism which endeavours to blur and level the natural differences between industry and ability on the one hand and idleness and incapacity on the other can only be misguided. It is always the people as a whole which suffers and stands to lose from a misconceived social policy. Not even the most inventive imagination can do anything about the fact that every new endeavour to achieve a redistribution of the national income reaches a limit beyond which sense becomes nonsense and charity becomes a scourge. Without incentives and the impulse to achieve, a competitively based market economy cannot fail to be sidetracked into collectivist egalitarianism, in contrary to a civil society.

8. Ethics between society and human person

All human societies have ethical systems that define what is meant by right and wrong, fairness, justice, truthfulness, and similar ideas dealing with morality and rightness. Individuals who live in those societies learn from childhood what is considered ethical and unethical. Religious institutions, parents, teachers, and others instill a sense of fairness, justice, and general ethical behaviour. As a result, most persons develop a strong sense of ethics which then acts as one's conscience when faced with questions of right and wrong. In addition to individuals conscience as an ethical guide, societies spell out their ethics in laws, customs, and religious beliefs. When questions arise, these community standards are then used to sort out right from wrong and to define what is ethical or unethical.

The ideal civil society that is envisioned, be it the better consumer side of the society and/or a more active cultural side of the community, holds out to individuals the promise of living life as they want, irrespective of the *natura humana*, and works to fulfill that promise by transforming both social institutions and the whole of the life environment. In the process of pursuing the requisite unlimited growth for human persons, groups and nations, or even continents (like the European Union) the natural resources of our planet have been exhausted to the point of endangering the very basis for natural life, as presupposition of a working civil society. This pursuit is accompanied by a gradual de-

cline in the moral will of moderation, a recession of awareness of personal responsibility that goes hand in hand with personal freedom, and a debilitation of the sense of affinity with other communities and societies past and present. The principle of hope has driven anthropocentrism beyond the break point, and must needs give way to a principle of respect over the impending natural catastrophe that waits us.

For that reason (but not only for this), we need a civil society with well educated people, who work according to the principles of responsibility, solidarity, subsidiarity and the common good. On this basis our societies will become „more human” and „more civil” in the most positive sense we can imagine. But this needs a lot of efforts and activities of everybody, because our civil society will be as well as everybody puts his or her own energy into this project!

Rethinking Ties that Bind. Religion and the Rhetoric of Othering

Abstract: Contemporary Europe is facing this challenge when redefining its own identity and socializing institutions. This paper focuses on how current discussions on the adequacy of a reference to Judeo-Christian heritage in the new European Constitution or on the teaching of religions at schools show the resilience of old-age notions and stereotypes with respect to cultural diversity. In order to explain this resilience, the paper explores how hierarchical perceptions of otherness (mainly of Muslims) are flourishing within a dichotomized system of representing otherness. This system is analyzed from the neo-Durkeimian perspective of cultural sociology and placed in connection with the spiritual leadership of fundamentalist conservatism after the fall of the Berlin Wall and with the old trend of Orientalism underlying pervading dominant Western discourses.

Multiculturalism as an opportunity for redefining democracy

In the transition from the 20th to the 21st century a series of phenomena tied to economic globalization and population movements (Sassen, 1996) as well as the identity demands of very diverse (Castells, 1997) are opening a new horizon for citizenship. Among these phenomena, the growing multiculturalism of resident populations in the same national territory is perhaps one of the elements which most clearly obliges us to reflect on the necessity of forging a new concept of citizenship capable of providing a new project of rights, participation and belonging to a civil society which is becoming increasingly more complex and heterogeneous. The main challenge posed by an ongoing multicultural population is to renew the experience of “togetherness”.

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Religion, cultural diversity, intercultural education, cultural sociology.

The first step towards that aim concerns identity. Civil citizenship and togetherness are deeply related because there seems to be no doubt that citizenship implies some kind of collective identity, a certain type of feeling of belonging; it is difficult to think about active contribution to any kind of political project if one does not feel as a member of those who have the right to benefit from the same. The question is whether patriotism or ethnicism (very frequently tied to religion) that traditionally have served us as uniting link “with our own” is still a sufficient source to provide this identity or whether it is necessary to reformulate it more along the lines of the new multicultural horizon.

Contemporary authors as Will Kymlicka or Michel Walzer, for example, have sufficiently criticized the burden which the assumption of cultural homogeneity has had in the program of liberalism in modern politics. To their minds, this assumption has derived from an idealized model of polis understood as a union of ancestors, language, territory and very often religion (just consider the etymology of the term “com-munion”) which has not been sufficiently able to recognize the true multicultural character of the majority of political communities. This traditionally modern way of building civil identity on the basis of national cultures seems to be at odds with the new phenomena of “postnationality” (Tambini, 2000), that is to say, with the new feelings of belonging emerging from current fluxes of populations. Nevertheless, its persistence accounts for multiculturalism being perceived too often as a threat or a danger because it is supposed to undermine

the grounds of a shared identity. In a context of ongoing cultural and ethical pluralism, many Europeans feel disoriented, anxious or troubled; and the more one’s own self-identity blurs, the more difficult it is to accept others’ and to establish a rational dialogue to negotiate and redefine a new common identity (Allsayad and Castels, 2002). In relation to this, Alain Touraine (1997) has talked about a “weak principle of integration”. His point is that it is time to accept that sharing a common culture does not mean necessarily sharing the same values, not even sharing the same identity (which is not to be confused with a common identity). But how are we to do it? How can we live together and get organized without being similar and thinking the same? What do we have to share and what are we entitled not to share? These are the main questions multiculturalism poses to the renewal of civic experience and the feeling of togetherness.

Although far from being a definite answer, it may help to pave the way of our search by keeping far enough away enough easy formulas such as those arising from the idea of incompatibility of cultures or such as those arising from the idea that difference is good in itself and always enriching. A recalcitrant xenophobia is just as bad company as a forced xenophilia. We begin, then, by being convinced that, beyond any metaphysics of difference, multiculturalism must be considered from a realistic perspective independent from any previous assessment and to be considered as a simple question of fact. A problematic question, besides, because, given the monocultural and Eurocentric framework which has

characterized the institutional development of modernity, the living together of individuals with different vision of the world makes recognition and treatment of others difficult because it makes different conceptions of good and evil to coexist, and it forces us to reformulate the manner in which we define identity (who we are and who those like us are: our own).

Nevertheless, this is a difficulty which if conveniently dealt with and managed can provide an important source of renovation to civic learning. To consider multiculturalism as a difficulty does not mean, then, seeing it as a threat or as civic gangrene; rather, instead, as a challenge, that is, as a situation which offers the possibility to rethink the ties that unite us in this form of civil solidarity which must be kept alive in a strongly democratic society.

But rethinking ties that bond us to different people supposes a need to analyze the way we represent them. This is why we have to first address the logic underlying how we tend to perceive and represent what cultural difference is; that is, how we tend to classify other people.

The inner organization of symbolic representation systems

This section outlines the theoretical frame within which comments on religion in the next sections are to be settled. This frame is gained from a current trend in sociological analysis which is known as the “strong pro-

gram” of cultural sociology. This program can be contextualized within “the cultural” turn in sociological theory (Nash, 2001). Its aim is to react to Sociology’s traditional insensibility to meaning trying to bring the study of symbolic phenomena into sociological research without reducing them to the narrow-minded perspective of the theory of ideology.

The program can be described as neo-Durkheimian because it shares with Durkheim’s perspective on symbolic production the idea that cultural processes have a relative autonomy and work in their own; that the model of these processes can be found in religious representations; and, last but not least, that the causal importance of symbolic classification underlying religious representation of the world relies on the symbolic division between sacred and profane (Alexander, 1988). This perspective has striking parallels with Sausage’s emphasis on the “institutional character of language”, the autonomous organization of linguistic signs and the binary code underlying the deep grammar of that organization. But deeper and more substantial echoes of it are to be found in Lévy-Strauss’ and Mary Douglas’ anthropology. Although Lévy-Strauss did not generalize from religious to secular or civic activity, he claimed indeed that societies must be studied in terms of their symbolic systems of classification and that these systems were organized as binary oppositions. Douglas in her turn was closer to Durkheimian perspective when analyzing the classifying function of symbolic systems. In fact, her theory of pollution as a form of social control that societies use to mark deviant or dangerous ac-

tivities can be seen as an expansion of the notion of profanation Durkheim developed in his later work. After all, Durkheim's study of the elementary forms of religion was planned to show how the production of social life is impossible to separate from this deep form of classification.

For our purposes here, we stress as a basic assumption of this program that social action is always embedded in social sentiments condensed in symbols. ("Without symbols, social sentiments could only have a precarious existence", said Durkheim 1912/1965). Any social action takes always place within a preexisting frame of meanings organized along a system of analogies and antinomies defining who/what is similar or congruent with us or with the things we value, and what is dissimilar or incompatible with us or with the things we dismissed. The former are attached to "we-ness"; the later are related to otherness. And this classifies what and we are to trust and distrust. In other words, the main purpose of this program of research is to seek the latent or deep structures underlying the way we categorize our social world. An accurate appraisal of social life cannot be gained without recognizing that the inner organization of our system of symbolic representation brings us reality as a system of positions; that is, as a classified world.

Has this theoretical frame something to say on the representation of cultural diversity in civil society discourses? One of the main fields of research in cultural sociology is the study of civil society discourses (Alexander, 1998). And considering civil society as an

object of research, the strong program of cultural sociology focuses on the production of solidarity as the emotional and moral cement of social life.

As far as religion can be considered as a leading symbolic marker of cultural diversity, it is worthy to note how the production of solidarity in civic society discourse is subject to that polarized structure just described. In a former paper (Terrén, 2002) I have explored how civil society reacts to a phenomenon of racial conflict (namely the riots at El Ejido in February 2000). I researched there on the cultural basis of racism for, as the Ford Report (the first in tackling with racism a global European level) states, it is in the sphere of culture where the images that later can constitute the basis of success of the propaganda and the attitudes of the declared racism are elaborated and re-elaborated. The paper claims that different narratives arising from civil society share a common semiotic code structured on a dichotomized classification representing inclusion and exclusion at the same time. This binary code is taken as the deep symbolic structure of the civil society discourse. How does it work when dealing with "cultural others"?

Binarism in which the sacred is produced accounts for the narrative structure underlying the discourses analyzed. For this structure relies on dichotomized pairs constantly repeated in main interpretations of racial conflict: "from here / from outside", "civilization / barbarism", "friend / enemy". These are, too, the paired terms implicit in popular metaphors ("flood", "avalanche", "plague") stressing the dangers of crossing

frontiers and linking the people who cross them with “pollution” or “infection”. My research showed, then, how, in effect, analysis of discourse production of civil society on a racial conflict constitutes a fertile empirical territory for observing the tense relation between classification and solidarity. It showed as well how that sphere of “idealized togetherness” arising from the code of the sacred works in discourse through narratives representing itself as an “imagined community” (Benedict Anderson), which is always built as a symbolic territory, that is, as a space with frontiers. The analysis of competing narratives claiming for the interpretation of those riots showed what I called the “irony of solidarity”: the production of feelings and loyalties on which social solidarity is dependent cannot take place without a polarized classification of “we-ness” and “other-ness”. This dichotomized representation provided then a deep grammar of polarized categories, which give shape to the discourse of civil society on racial conflict on the basis of pure/impure, sacred/profane distinction.

The sacred, then, is a focus of difference. But symbols sacralized by the code are not the benign face of a mere abstract polarization; they are a source of feelings, emotions and dispositions without which individuals cannot adopt a compromised attitude towards others, feelings and emotions without which the affiliative tie wherein rest the feeling of belonging and the experience of togetherness would not exist. Any representation of “we-ness” as sacred or pure implies the classification of what is perceived as polluting and, as a result, threatening. And from these representations, certain differential

attitudes and dispositions to social action are to be expected, for the way we tend to treat people depends on the way we see (and classify) them.

Now the point is: can the current discussions on religion in contemporary Europe be understood within the same scheme?

The Cross and the Crescent: religious diversity as a cultural war

How to fit religions in the relationship between states and civil society is one of the challenges included in accommodating cultural diversity. Due to the traditional historical ties of European nation-states with Christian churches in their development of cultural homogeneity, religion and cultural diversity are historically tied. This fact accounts for the common association between West and Christianity on one side, and Orient and Islamism on the other. As is well known, the current *locus classicus* of this association is to be found in Samuel Huntington’s notion of “clash of civilization” (Huntington, 1993, 1996).

Redefining civic relationship with religion is one of the main tasks to be faced by the ongoing multicultural Europe. Debates on the place of religion at schools or at the European constitution are the evidence of a challenge which shows how the problem for contemporary Europe is not just being multicultural, but considering itself as such (AlSayyad and Castells, 2002).

After a long debate, the attempts at mentioning the Christian inheritance of Europe in its Constitution have not been successful, perhaps due to fear of a reaction from Moslems (already nowadays the second religion in Europe). But this should not be understood as a rejection of the religious in favor of a lay cultural identity. Almost half of the UE countries have state churches or concordats with the Catholic Church institutionalizing enormous privileges and a great power for them to negotiate. What has happened, then, is that, due to this tremendous capacity for pressure, the conservative elite have managed to substitute the debate revolving around identity and religion for the articulation of the state and churches. Their strategy has not had the symbolic success of the constitutional recognition of the Christian essence of Europe, but has succeed in obtaining the recognition of churches as representative bodies of civil society which ought to be taken into account with regards to the action of the states. But will every church be treated equally?¹

As socialization embodies the way a society considers itself, the educational aspect of the question affecting many European countries during recent years seems especially relevant. In Italy, the debate on crucifixes which still hang in classrooms has served to make manifest the eternal power on Earth of a church accustomed -as in Spain- to be a decisive institutional element in the moral fiber of a citizenship imprisoned in a serious deficit of secularization. In France, where between five and six million Moslems reside, the matter of *hijab* has been questioning for more than a decade the tradition of neu-

trality of a socializing state action inspired in republican laicity. That which fourteen years ago was seen as incompatible with official secularism and was left at the expense of creating regulations for the territory of each educational center (just as that which was agreed upon in the United Kingdom during the same period) is now an object of the law which prohibits the outward use of any religious symbol. Spain also, with its small number of some 600,000 Moslems, had its "*hijab* case" two years ago. Moreover, due to the associations of Islamism with terrorism, many of these countries are working on plans to control and monitor the socialization practices developed in mosques and Islamic confessional schools.

The current debate on the formal or curricular accommodation of religious diversity at schools is pervading most European systems of education. Nevertheless, it is worthy to note that the subject has specific implications in those new immigration countries with still limited experience in the reception of immigrant families, such as Italy or Spain. Concerning the latter, from where most of the empirical evidence underlying our reflection comes from, the lack of laicity in its public life, rooted in the confessional regime hold by Franco's dictatorship for forty years (1939-1975), is also to be kept in mind. The concept of laicity is still looked down upon here or even unknown although some critical movements are trying to make people aware that it carries the principle of tolerance and peaceful co-habitation of people from different cultures, traditions and religions, which corresponds to the European situation in

21st Century. Due to their communist past new EU countries have perhaps a different difficulty in accommodating religious diversity.

But even a country with a religious pluralism of the United States, where confessional schools abound, fundamentalist Christians lobby for the exclusion of the theory of evolution from teaching in schools, extending the reactionary shadow which had already begun with the attempts of Ronald Reagan and the New Right to introduce obligatory daily prayer in schools. As it happens, in June of this year the Supreme Court rejected the plea of the father of a nine-year-old girl which asked for the deletion of the expression “one nation under God” which has been included in the Pledge of Allegiance for fifty years and is recited daily by millions of United States schoolchildren.

Therefore, even if our concern is related to the new immigration countries of Europe, the subject has to be presented from a global perspective. In the global arena, the spiritual leadership that advocates a reaction of cultural closure with regards to uncertainties of the social change is lead by neo-conservative North Americans and their argument revolving around threatened Western values. Nevertheless, on this side of the Atlantic, cultural fundamentalism of this type has found followers, for example, in many who want Christianity included as a symbol of identity in the European Constitution, extending with this the idea that –as the Spanish historian Josep Fontana has pointed out- the historical construction of a European identity was always created vis-à-vis third parties (“barbarians” or “infidels”). But

the wake of this neo-conservative leadership can also be seen in political leaders or in opinions which can scarcely hide the consideration of the presence of non-Europeans in Europe as an uncomfortable necessity which can only be accepted as a labor market demand or as an object of charity; but, in any case, as can be seen clearly in the recent books by Oriana Fallaci, always with the excluding and frightened attitude of those that feeling as members of a higher civilization and counting on “the power of reason” (i.e. the sacred), they complain that immigration has become an “invasion” (i.e., a source of pollution).

Artifacts of language such as the depiction of Sadam as the new “Great Satan” or the “crusade” metaphor initially used by Bush Administration to legitimize the second Gulf War are evidence of the discursive resources expressing this trend. This belligerent use of religious images makes religion an arena of cultural war and helps to produce dialogue about it within a frame of fear and distrust. The spiritual leadership of Western conservatism speaks then for the ubiquity of dominant discourses which provide the frame within which most public discussions on cultural diversity take place in civil society. This is why most of them are related to a defensive and polarized discourse promoting a simplified, undesirable and threatening of the other, instead of addressing the need of redefining identity itself. At bottom, this is a response to the operation which Norbert Elias (1997) considers typical of the discourse of “the established”: the identification of superiority with merit and both with their self-image.

The thesis here is that religion is part of the classificatory and asymmetrical character of this sacred self-image. The clearest example is perhaps the implicit definition which is being put forth of Muslims, because, as Hentsch (1992: 1) states: “Muslim is Europe’s Other par excellence”. In fact, before his last attack on the alleged Hispanic menace to Northamerican culture, Huntington (1993) also said that since the fall of the communist regime, Muslims were reemerging as the chief enemy. The representation of Islam underlying this definition of the dangers threatening the Western sacred self-image is a stick figure now based on the fear of terrorism under Islamic flag. But this is a representation which does not do justice to the tremendous diversity of Islam² (same as it would not be fair to identify Christianity with the massacre of two hundred civilians undertaken in Uganda by God’s Liberation Army or with the defense of creationism as a pedagogical model for biology classes claimed by North American Christian fundamentalists). But the fact is that the potential for religion to act as identity marker (both as praising the “we” or sacred and as the differentiation of the outsider or profane) speaks for its use in dealing with attitudes concerning cultural diversity.

The “other” is always kind of mysterious being. It is strange because it is hard to define; because, as Shanen (1984) has shown, its image is always built on myths and thematic clusters (ancient traditions, political and economic underdevelopment, exoticism, violence, barbarism) hard to reduced to a single and reliable image and invoking simultaneous and often contradictory feelings

inviting fear, distrust and even prurient indulgence, but always at a distance. Difference tends to be more feared than appreciated at bottom, and this accounts for a great part of the debates on the accommodation of religion at schools or the European constitution, as far as they have been the arena where old stereotypes related with Islam have again been circulating under the framework of binary and asymmetrical representation I described above as the basic inner structure of our representation system.

As we deal with civic socialization and, as is well known, not only schools educate, it worthy noting how this dichotomized structure is still alive in the way evil characters are presented with non-Western cultural or racial traits in cartoons or films. The markers of these cultural products still identify evil figures with phenotypic traits related to non-Westerness. Central to the construction of this association between evil and Muslim otherness is the long ethnocentric tradition of Western literature. The depiction of the “Saracen” or the “Black Moor” as dangerous and strange is rooted in classic texts of the classical Western canon (think of the jealous and violent black moor in Shakespeare’s *Othello*, or of Muhamad’s cast into the deepest nether extremities of the *Inferno* by Dante’s *Divine Comedy*).

The point now is to confirm if there is a connection between this belligerent use of religion in marking cultural diversity and the dichotomized system of representation described above. In order to do so, it bears noting now how the current circulation of these stereotypes which have been long preserved in collective memory

(especially in countries with a significant history of relationships the Arab world, such as Spain) (Connerton, 1989) reproduces the othering cognitive practice embodied in what Edward Said (1978) called “Orientalism”.

Keeping in mind a concept of the Orient which primarily referred to the Islamic world, Said (1978: 3) defined “Orientalism” as “the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient -dealing with by making statements about it, authoring views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient”. Said’s main contribution was to show that Western discourses on the cultural others manipulate representations of the Orient to mean what defining forces wanted it to mean. This seems to fit with the “us-them” dichotomy described in section 2, insofar as what Alexander calls “we-ness” is to be thought of as a main defining force. A connection between both perspectives can be established through Hall’s theory of identity, for he suggests that the building of self-identity always generates discourses of difference and similarity (Hall, 1994). The other is always to be considered in a range of positions, that is, in a system of classification.

As long as the dominant discourses in the discussion of religious diversity continue to reproduce old cultural stereotypes in the framework of the friend/enemy dichotomy, the intercultural communication necessary for the forging of a new experience of togetherness will be thwarted.

Conclusion

Discussions on the adequacy of a reference to Judeo-Christian heritage in the new European Constitution or on the teaching of religions at schools show the challenge Europeans are facing when redefining its own identity and socializing institutions in a new multicultural context. Discussions also show the resilience of old-age notions and stereotypes with respect to cultural diversity. This paper has explored how hierarchical perceptions of otherness (mainly of Muslims) are flourishing in the current debates on the civil place of religion in contemporary Europe. I have placed these perceptions in connection with the spiritual leadership of fundamentalist conservatism pervading dominant Western discourses after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The use of belligerent images of religion helps the manipulation of otherness and the presentation of the rise of Islam as the new post-Cold War Other. The latent Orientalism of this trend is obviously linked to the dialectic of the power relations in the new post Cold War world, but this paper has focused on the basic structure of the representation system working in those discourses. Although contact with minorities and immigrants enables Europe to redefine its own identity and to forge a new feeling of belonging, the persistence of the dichotomized organization of our representation of togetherness sets important limits to our potential to rethink the ties bonding us to new incomers.

Notes:

1 For a quick view of the influence of lobbies on the Vatican and of Catholic organizations such as Opus Dei when recognizing the “religious inheritance” in the project of the European Constitution, see Terras, C., “Bajo la presión de las iglesias”, [“Under pressure from the churches”] in *Le monde diplomatique*, (Spanish versión) January 2004. It is possible to gain access to the campaign of the *Fédération Humaniste Européenne* (Free University of Brussels) against article 51 of the new bill at www.humanism.be.

2 Different types of ethnical or cultural belonging give rise to no less diverse religious experiences, including the minimal 30% of those who claim not to practice their religion or those who without turning their back on Islam consider themselves to be members of lay society. With regards to this diversity of Islam, among which liberal versions that fight to mold to the European concept of citizenship stand out, see the works contained in AlSayyad, N., y Castells, M. (2002). See the website of the international movement of moslem gays and lesbians (www.al-fatih.net) or the references made to the moslem women’s movement in www.webislam.com

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The Culturally Situated Young Romanian Viewer and the New Television

Abstract: Our aim in this paper is to identify the ways in which the new Romanian television has removed itself from its former (communist) status and orientation, and has tuned in to the global media, in turn undergoing changes prompted, on the one hand, by new communication technologies and, on the other hand, by geopolitical changes per se occurring worldwide. We intend to show how the new types of media, particularly television, having interconnected consumers everywhere into a global village, and having facilitated the segmentation of audiences and the targeting of audiences with narrowly focused messages, have impacted young Romania television viewers. We will also try to track the ways in which global media symbols interact with local specificities and are socially mediated with the direct intervention of culturally situated local young audiences. In addition, we hope to prove that young Romanian television viewers are adept managers of the multivalent television messages, which they successfully decode in ways that serve their subcultural interests and needs.

Introduction

Today's wired global village, created by the advanced technologies in communication and the resultant interconnectivity, has allowed mass media messages and symbols to become more mobile and less fixed in space and time. Television is the medium *par excellence* that can diffuse worldwide dominant messages, and has therefore been considered by media and cultural theorists an imperialist¹ vehicle. That is, it is viewed as a vehicle for injecting a particular ideology into the hearts and minds of viewers everywhere. However, later theorists in the field have decided that some credit should be given to audiences, who are active decoders rather than passive receivers of media messages, and that the effects of the media are in reality limited. This angle, too, has had its faults, for it over-credited audiences with the power of using the media wholly in their own interests

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culturally situated viewer, segmented and fragmented audiences, imported ideology, crosscultural and transcultural media symbols, encoding and decoding, localization

and to their own gratification. The new individual viewer seems to belong to a model of society² constituted by a range of subcultures whose members form shifting alliances and become different viewing subjects at different times. Under these circumstances, an analysis presuming the individual viewer's or collective viewers' tastes and interests to be invariable would build on a false foundation. Nevertheless, with some allowances for the concept of the viewer as indeterminate, we intend to focus on an ethnographic generational group, the young Romania television viewer, and to utilize some of the investigative focus provided therein.

In the following we intend to make a cursory overview of the new type of television found in Romania (since 1989), of the proliferation of television channels, domestic or imported, and how they have 'prompted' the emergence of niche audiences in general and one niche audience in particular: young television viewers, grouped into a community of taste and subcultural interests. Our intention is to gain some insight into how they react to global symbols as mediated by television. We will, hopefully, prove that young people in Romania, even if circumscribed culturally by the media, can and do appropriate the media messages in ways that show them to be literate television consumers and selective decoders of its multicultural messages.

The dexterity of these viewers emerges when confronted with the eclectic content of the television messages, with the bombarding flux of symbols that can create confusion and disorientation in the viewer who, until not long ago could consume a very limited amount

of television (2 hours per day, nearing 1989) with highly censored content, purged of any and all western cultural values.

Post-Communist Romanian Television And Young Audiences

Romanian television registered a complete turn-about after the fall of communism. At least two important directions can be mentioned in what regards its radical change. On the one hand, it rapidly adjusted to current global transformations in terms of technology and marketing policy, dramatically increasing the number of channels as well as the diversity of programs. This eventually led to the narrow circumscription of Romanian audiences by personal and cultural preferences.³ Such new channels as ACASA Channel, which targets an almost exclusively female audience, Sports Television, which targets a primarily male audience, MTV Romania, which targets young viewers, have gone beyond simply segmenting the formerly mass Romanian audience, polarize viewers into distinct factions. The interactive quality of the new media also contributed to the division of the overall audiences into niches. On the other hand, the Romanian television has reformulated its dominant messages and multiplied its content, while the newer options with multicultural values have also contributed to dividing the audience into ever-narrower viewing segments.

In keeping with worldwide media trends, this diverse content is relayed through specialty channels that respond to the particular preferences of their audiences and provide content that satisfies these diverse interests. Moreover, a transnationalisation of symbolic forms has occurred: programs, genres, styles, and stars circulate literally to reach local audiences of culturally situated viewers. This in-depth re-shaping of television naturally had an impact on Romanian audiences, young people included. The untrained public eye was flooded with imported imagery, and the viewers engaged in a simulacrum (Baudrillard) of socio-cultural reality relayed by the new television.⁴ For a time, the exported meanings were consumed, overall, indiscriminately and unselectively and the new dominant social and cultural values were readily accepted.

The packaged western ideology for young people came in the form of new imported genres: docudramas, talk- and chat-shows, reality shows, imported channel formats, either adapted or received directly via satellite: Music Television, VH1, the Discovery Channel, and National Geographic, or shows which mediated the western multicultural experience: The Osbournes, Punk'd, MTV Music awards, Star Trek, etc, some of which explicitly featured minority groups and subculture interests: women, homosexuals, racial and ethnic minorities, etc.

These developments have made it possible for cultural crossings to occur, uniting people through media imagery.⁵ Consequently, young Romanian locals have been enabled to participate in interpretative communi-

ties (e.g. become Star Trek fans) as part of an audience defined by cultural rather than geographic proximity.

On the other hand, young people, like other categories of television consumers, view TV more and more privately and independently in this world of expanded cultural offerings. They occupy niches related to their various cultural orientations, lifestyles, languages, genders, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and technological literacies.⁶ Therefore we must always make amends for individuality and idiosyncrasy, even if it is much more convenient to treat young viewers as a homogenous group, a facilitative yet false presumption.

Imported Imagery And Crosscultural Media Symbols

Young Romanian television viewers have in recent years (since 1989) been heavily and abruptly exposed to new media content, which explicitly or implicitly has adopted a agenda of conveying multicultural messages. For example, one of the Discovery Channel's logos is 'celebrating diversity,' accompanied by short stints of ethnic specifics presented by young nationals speaking their native languages (with subtitles). This new orientation of media content has been prompted by geopolitical developments (integrative tendencies, i.e. the European Union, massive immigration, professional mobility), on the one hand, and on the other hand by new communication technologies, which have practically abolished spatial separation and have connected

people worldwide into a single audience.⁷ This connection to the flux of global media messages has affected young Romanian viewers and has exposed them to cross-cultural television symbols.

Perhaps the most straightforward examples are those of Valentine's Day and Halloween, American holidays that as dominant Western values have been assimilated into the local experience. This ready acceptance of imported cultural symbols might be misconstrued as a mainstreaming effect of the media. Some representatives⁸ of the functionalist tradition of sociology in their proposal of a taxonomy of the social functions of television have identified one that they explicitly label dysfunction: heavy exposure of large masses of the population renders them politically apathetic and inert. However, the decoding of these symbols has been negotiated rather than uncritically accepted.

In the light of the above, it could be said that access to global culture and the programmatic multicultural policy of the new television have made it possible for young Romanian television viewers to participate in a shared discursive space. The new media offer them the status of transnational viewers, which status they employ to localize the media message and make their own uses of it. Media theorists emphasized the active character of audiences who decode the media messages in a way that will meet their interests and needs⁹. In the process the distance between 'the local' and 'the global' contracts, and not simply due to the broadcast technology, which diffuses the media messages across the world to be received by young audiences everywhere,

but also because of the local young audiences. Media exposure to the cultural symbol of Valentine's Day can account for a number of reactions in young people. For example, it has now become commonplace for Romanian teenagers to celebrate Valentine's day at school by sending each other romantic notes delivered by a specially assigned person who is exempted from other scholastic duties for the day. SMS messages are sent. Valentine's Day parties are organized. Also, clubs organize special theme parties: for example, local clubs announced under a common heading various parties for sweethearts, other parties, and pop or rock concerts.

In this way television's representations are recognized, interpreted, and used in the young Romanian viewer's social construction of daily life. This is called social mediation.¹⁰ Through repetition, these new icons have penetrated the individual and collective consciousness and have affected social behavior. The case of Valentine's Day is an instance of a cultural form having literally moved through space to interact with local cultural forms and settings and to change them. While traditionally this would have been prompted by the physical movement of people across geography, it is now facilitated by the new media technology.

From another angle, it could be said that young Romanian viewers are empowered by having offered to them for consumption forms of foreign popular culture currency with almost worldwide circulation. This empowerment combines with our subject's newly acquired television literacy. From here, the young local viewer can move on to develop new cultural competencies,

which enable him/her to manage the torrents of information and to be selective with the assorted cultural values in the dominant message of the media. The young viewer is a technologically sophisticated bricoleur,¹¹ who can negotiate meanings from eclectic television content and messages. So, where the new texts, imported and exotic, might incur some sort of confusion or disorientation, they have been made manageable by the television-literate young viewer. The strategies employed to re-articulate and appropriate television material are debated as features of postmodern culture.¹²

Negotiating Media Meaning By The Young Viewers

It has been noted that audiences in general, and viewers in particular, seek the pleasure of recognizing their own culture in their program choices. This has been called cultural proximity.¹³ Recent television marketing has oriented towards targeting ever narrower audiences, young people included.

However, viewing the audience, even a niche audience, as homogeneous is a misconception that was discarded early on. The focus has shifted onto the individual, who occupies different positions in the social formation having at his/her disposal different codes and subcultures and repertoires. Moreover, any one individual member of the audience can at different times be different viewing subjects as constituted by his/her determinants. The individual media consumer is a

poacher, in Certeau's terms.¹⁴ The individual young Romanian viewer makes no exception and appropriates the material produced by the media and assigns to it meanings that are in line with his/her subordinate or subcultural interests¹⁵ as defined by local circumstances.

On the other hand, audiences can be viewed as groups of people who have in common some media related behavior. For young people television viewing is one of the focal activities and articulates most of the music based subcultures, which depend, albeit not exclusively, on music broadcast by television. It can be said that young Romanian viewers, as do their peers elsewhere, share a cultural orientation towards decoding messages.

Perhaps the dynamism of the young viewer vis-à-vis television is most visible in the interactive formats: chat-shows where hosts and guests interact with call-in viewers, the organization of the screen with space allotted to SMS messages (MTV Romania, Atomic TV), or TV programs for viewer use (B1TV TV chat). Some cultural and media theorists call the use that young viewer make of this framework proposed by television programming 'the counterhegemonic act of evading containment.' While the television subject-positions the young viewer by offering him/her particular mediated symbols, and also empowers him/her by distributing popular culture products, the viewer can counteract the intentions of programmers by decoding symbols in radical ways. Thus, it has been noted that SMS messaging by young Romanian viewers displayed at the bottom of the screen is conducted in a code that overtly opposes

the standard linguistic norms or in a lexical cloaking that is esoteric or obscure to the mainstream viewer.

The counterhegemonic appropriation of the dominant message is explicable in part by the possible asymmetry in the encoding-decoding process.¹⁶ It can be explained as a conscious act of refusal on the part of the young viewer to be framed by the dominant message, but also as a signal of the lack of fit between the codes of broadcasters and receivers. The disjunction¹⁷ between the television code and the end product of decoding by the young viewers arises, on the whole, from the resistance of the young viewer to mainstreaming. Yet, the decoding is not collectively oppositional, but rather complex and diversified within this opposing stance, for young people inhabit a variety of different subcultural sections of the young audience. Basically, like other subcultures (feminists, environmental groups, gays), youth use media to endorse counterhegemonic values and lifestyles.

Glocalization

Cultural values travel easily over space and in time in today's wired global village. Valentine's Day is a case of transculturation by which a media product literally moves through space and time to interact with local cultural forms and settings. Nevertheless, the process does not conclude with the arrival of the foreign icon on new territory. The message is indigenized,¹⁸ the foreign is domesticated, and usually a hybrid form emerges. In Ro-

mania, Valentine's Day is not so much about sending cards as it is about partying and dating. Romanians have skipped the stage of writing Valentines by hand— we have no Valentine's day card industry per se — but rather send SMS messages, while the Internet savvy turn to the Yahoo greeting service.

On the other hand, early media theories suggest that the ready acceptance and swift social mediation of such foreign cultural symbols relayed by the media (celebrating Halloween or Valentine's Day in a local setting and specificity) could be written off as an international hypodermic media effect: ideology and values are injected directly into the minds of the media consumers. By circulating geographically generic American icons, and thus legitimizing them, the media frame reality and inconspicuously influence the local Romanian audience. From this angle, television could be said to have a hypodermic effect.¹⁹ However, Romanian young viewers localize the content and make their own use of it. Besides diversion and entertainment, they use it to meet a specific aspirational need of their own: identifying with Western lifestyles. The celebration of Valentine's Day on Romanian television, repeated every year and given greater amplitude by some Romanian channels to the detriment of local festivals of love (*Mărțișor* on the 1st of March or *Mother's Day* on the 8th) works similarly to the objective correlation of ads.

A third point we could make is that the active reception of such media symbols and messages prompts a renegotiation of the local identity vis-à-vis the dominant foreign culture.²⁰ This is all the more so as globalization

is now considered a cliché.²¹²¹ Ien Ang in Marris, Paul and Sue Thornham, op. cit., p. 179.

The reality of the geopolitical realignments, which also affect Romania, compounded by the crisscrossing of media vectors, evades the possibility of globalizing television viewers into a homogenous audience.

Conclusions

The young Romanian television viewer has been exposed in the past decade or so to in-depth changes of the dominant media messages conveying a radically different ideology. He/she has been equally bombarded by a multitude of cultural values and symbols through a medium that has itself been revolutionized by the progress in the broadcasting technologies. He/she has been offered an eclectic content that might at first be confusing to a local viewer with limited television experience and literacy (under the communist regime).

The proliferation of channels with their plurality of programs has made it possible for young audiences to be framed and targeted as a loyal niche audience. Whether as an individual viewer or as partaking in a collective audience coalesced into a community of needs and taste, the young Romanian is the new viewer subject, a sophisticated bricoleur who can manage the television message and discourse and integrate it with other media in his/her focal activities.

Furthermore, he/she has mastered the skills necessary to decode foreign television messages in ways that

combine the counter-hegemonic tendency featured by young people as a marginal and subordinate group with his/her newly acquired television literacy. Thus, the imported ideology relayed by media representations is socially mediated and, moreover, adapted to local features. The cultural values circulated by television are appropriated and cloaked into the subcultural garb that fit their interests. In this way they are granted access to a community of viewers that transcends geographic proximity or national delimitation.

Notes

¹ Antonio Gramsci, early 20th century Italian intellectual, used the term hegemony to stress how mass media are used by ruling elites to perpetuate their power, wealth, and status.

² John Fiske, Moments of Television: Neither the Text nor the Audience, in Marris, Paul and Sue Thornham, *Media Studies. A Reader*, p. 537.

³ Lull, James, *Media, Communication, Culture*, 2000, p. 159.

⁴ Umberto Eco distinguishes between what he calls paleo and neo television. Neo television talks less about the external world and more and more about itself, resulting in crossreferencing, intertextuality, and selfreflexivity.

⁵ Lull, James, op.cit., p. 242.

⁶ ibidem, p. 216.

⁷ Marris, Paul In Marris, Paul and Sue Thornham, op. cit., p.7.

⁸ Robert Merton and Paul Lazarsfeld 1948.

⁹ Uses and gratification theory.

¹⁰ Lull, James, op. cit., p.26.

¹¹ Jim Collins in Marris, Paul and Sue Thornham, op. cit., p. 372. Bricolage is the term used by anthropologists for the ways

in which primitive tribespeople piece together a meaningful cosmogony out of random elements they encounter in their daily lives.

¹² Umberto Eco quoted in Marris, Paul and Sue Thornham, op. cit. p. 372. He proposes a new concept of the viewing subject

– a postmodern viewer that is multiple and contradictory.

¹³ Joe Straubhaar in Marris, Paul and Sue Thornham, op. cit., p.179.

¹⁴ According to De Certeau (1948), “poaching” is a strategy for appropriating materials produced by the dominant culture industry and reworking them in terms that better serve subordinate or subcultural interests. In Marris, Paul and Sue Thornham, op. cit., p. 551.

¹⁵ John Fiske in Fiske, John and John Hartley, *Reading Television*, p. 121.

¹⁶ Stuart Hall in Marris, Paul and Sue Thornham, op. cit., p.22.

¹⁷ David Morley, *Cultural Transformations . The Politics of Resistance* in Marris, Paul and Sue Thornham, op. cit., p.474. Morley remarks on the fact that there is a wide range of decoding strategies and competencies in the audience.

¹⁸ Arjun Appadurai 1990 in Lull, James, op. cit., p. 237.

¹⁹ The cultural imperialism thesis suggests a hypodermic needle model of international effects, whereby American values are injected into television viewers elsewhere in the world.

²⁰ Sreberny in Curran, James and Gurevitch Michael (eds.), *Mass Media and Society*, 1991, p.133.

²¹ Ten Ang in Marris, Paul and Sue Thornham, op. cit., p. 179.

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National Identity: Belonging to a Cultural Group? Belonging to a Polity

Abstract: In this paper, I began by examining national identity understood as cultural belonging. I tried to show that this kind of belonging fails to give a justifiable account of the pluralistic reality found in modern states. I then proceeded to examine the idea of belonging to a polity. My claim is that this sense of belonging is more suitable for nation-states that have multicultural societies and consider this plurality as a vital part of their national identity. If the arguments presented here are convincing, we will have to stop thinking of national belonging as belonging to a cultural group, and pay more attention to belonging to a polity and all that that entails.

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Belonging to My Cultural Community

What is national identity?¹ National identity is conventionally thought of as a social phenomenon that helps me to understand who I am, to understand my place in the chain of being and in the world I inhabit. This window to the world at large is given to me by my nation. Together with other national members we make up an entity that is extended in time, is of a continuous nature, and is characterized by the will to belong together. The latter is based on a belief that there are some commonalities (language, territory, common values, etc.) which unite us and set us apart from other groups. Such an entity, with its own tale of the past, present and future, is a nation.²

KEY WORDS:

boundaries, constitutional belonging, immigration, national identity, particularism

For many proponents of cultural nationalism, membership in a national community is thought of as a basic good of being human. This argument can be broken down into two parts. According to the first descriptive part of the argument, one can, as a “contextual” being, reflect on communal and moral attachments only from the vantagepoint offered by the nation. An Archimedean point of departure apart from national categories is not possible. To step outside the web of national relationships is to repudiate the very particularity of this moral force.³ Attempts that downplay this sense of belonging are considered ‘pathological’.⁴

According to the second normative part of the argument, a complete and flourishing life is possible only within the bounds of a nation. In other words, a good life can only be realised through national membership. In this context it should be pointed out further that nations are thought of as being ethical communities which are ruled by internal principles. Each nation has its own principles that attempt to answer to problems faced in a human life. These national, ethical principles are said to be passed on from one generation to another.

The cultural argument for national belonging links the historicity of national communities with their ethical significance. As historical communities, so the argument goes, nations bind current members with their forefathers and their progeny. By finding her place in this chain of being, an individual transcends her own mortality. In return, she has to fulfil her obligations that arise due to communal relations. Just as members of a family have a greater and more extensive responsibility

towards each other, so do members of a nation. These obligations help to dissipate the tension between self-interest and communal good. Because of their “connectedness,” members of a nation overcome their individual preferences and work for the good of the whole.

Another characteristic of nations as ethical communities is said to be the mutual responsibilities that national members have towards each other. In other words, members deserve and get preferential treatment. This is because members are bound together by ties of care and co-operation. Seen this way, a nation is a unit which generates a feeling of belonging and distributes rights and burdens of care and cooperation amongst members, not only in the present but also in the future. This point is important because the future of a national community can be guaranteed only if members seek to keep each other above board.

Of course, the above account does not automatically imply that demands of those outside the nation are to be completely ignored. Obligations to outsiders, to humanity at large, need not collide with communal ones. In fact, both can be fulfilled if the following rules are upheld: if only non-members are in need of aid, one should act according to general moral rules. The same also holds for situations in which only members need help. One should be impartial towards members. However, if members and non-members are in need of aid at the same time, one should help members first. Duties towards fellow members can be overridden only when the “needs of strangers are significantly more urgent than those of members.”⁵ In this way, special obliga-

tions towards fellow members can be restricted by demands of justice and equality.

National membership, in the cultural argument, is not exhausted merely by duties to the nation. Members also have certain rights in relation to their nation. The right to a national culture and to the enriched life offered by such a culture are two important ones. Another more controversial right is the right to a selective national identity. Relating to this, I would like to focus in the following.⁶ National membership, as we have said, is a constitutive force in human life. The status of their national community is closely linked to the self-image of its members. A national culture is considered to be satisfying when it gives individual members a sense of belonging to a worthy nation.

It is well known that nationalists tend to interpret historical events “in ways that fit their needs.”⁷ This has been interpreted as an implication of the right to a national culture.⁸ Further, “cultural affiliations should be respected because they express one’s choice regarding the kind of individual one would like to be and the kind of life one would like to live.”⁹ This collective amnesia is often found in national memories and reflects the situatedness of human life. This argument for selective, national memories can be made using the conceptual tools given to us by cultural nationalists.

However, as I pointed out earlier, this collective amnesia is controversial. Our philosophical selves do not approve of the fact that nations blot out events that they find embarrassing or ignominious. We think that such selective memories are unfair towards the ex-

ploited, and the latter are scandalized when they (or the atrocities inflicted on them) are forgotten. Members of a nation may want to think that they are distinct from the rest of humankind. They may want to believe that membership any other nation cannot be as meaningful as membership in their own. Let us note this psychological fact and yet appeal to a more differentiated view of things. As noted above, a national identity is a tale about the past. Since it bridges the past with the future, it has to also take into account the not-so-pleasant episodes which occurred in the past. Does it mean that the argument for cultural nationalism is to be discarded right here? It does not. As Poole, another cultural nationalist, rightly points out, acquiring a national identity means acquiring its history – and the rights and obligations which go with it.¹⁰ Thus, a reconstructed cultural argument would conclude that nations, in spite of their significant role in the human good, do not have a blanket right to selective identities.

Let us now come to a second important characteristic of national identity. Cultural nationalists point out the fact that national identities are malleable. One way of understanding this concept is to suggest that individuals have a right to change their national identity if they desire to do so.¹¹ Within a multinational state this involves taking on the identity of another nation within the same state. In the case of a monocultural state, this involves emigration.¹² A more plausible understanding of malleability in this context is to say that national identity can be transformed to reflect the complexities of modernity. There is nothing sacrosanct about it. Its

imaginary elements can be altered with the help of “collective deliberation and reform.”¹³

Up to this point our focus has been on the identity of nations either in a pluralistic state or in a monocultural one. However, the identity of *states* is just as important because it also gives rise to responsibilities and obligations. How does one arrive at a set of understandings that are adopted by a group of citizens to regulate their coexistence? In the case of monocultural states this is easy to explain since the nation will determine the identity of the state. (A legitimate question is whether there are in reality such monocultural states.) Things get more complicated when two or more groups in a state claim to be nations.

At the outset, let us point out that it is dissatisfactory to suggest that the identity of the majority automatically does and should determine the identity of the whole. There is no plausible justification of such a status quo. If we invoke the argument of respect for individuals and their national membership once again, this has implications for the national culture of individual nations. Since national culture is an integral part of individual life, state identity will have to take into consideration every such culture. Powerful nations cannot simply sideline the national culture of smaller or weaker nations. This leaves us with the following possibilities: the identity of a multinational state is determined by taking the common denominator of all nationalities present in such a state. Public debates help ascertain which elements are shared by and are important to all nations. Another option is that each nation claims a part

of the public sphere by expressing itself in it. Newspapers, cultural events, and the like are used as markers by various nations. It is also possible for state identity to be thought of as an amalgam of all cultures present in its midst. National identities are entities that influence and are influenced by others. The various national identities give rise to an identity formed by all. This amalgam also serves as a common base to them all.

Does this mean that every nation, regardless of the projects it pursues, can be involved in this process of public soul searching? Are authoritarian or racist nations, for example, which also offer feelings of “closeness, solidarity, and assurance” to be accepted as equal partners in this debate?¹⁴ It is very difficult to find an easy answer to this question. How are such aggressive nations to be detected? A related question is how one can keep powerful nations in check, which try to monopolize the public realm by banning weaker nations? One way of counteracting these forces would be to suggest that nations should closely monitor ongoing debates in the public realm. If members of some nations believe that there are other potentially dangerous groups in the public sphere, they should get together with the others and discuss their problems.

The presumption involved here is that there is a constant debate on such an identity and on what it means to be a member of a multinational state. This debate can become reflective only under conditions defined by deliberate considerations.¹⁵ This means that persons involved aim for fairness and for the common interests of the whole community. With the use of ratio-

nal arguments, every person will try to convince the other. She will only present those arguments that can be offered publicly. In the process of deliberation, an identity can be purged of its negative elements, especially those that exclude the other.¹⁶ Racist arguments, for example, will be filtered out right from the start and will not be incorporated in the debate.

I now want to suggest that the cultural account of national identity is fraught with weaknesses. It is, to begin with, based mainly on the contingent factor of birth. National membership is still determined by a “transgenerational, genealogical continuity.”¹⁷ As such, it runs the risk of playing a divisive role in a pluralistic society. Using Kymlicka’s phraseology, one could say that both external and internal minorities stand to lose in this version of national identity. They will not feel adequately represented in the public sphere. In the following, I will focus only on the first group to show the dynamic of exclusion that is inherent in the account of cultural belonging.

One problematic aspect of this issue is the nature of closed ethical communities. If it is believed that nations are communities that generate their own internal principles, and that since members of such communities are ruled entirely by these principles, there is no external point for reflection available to them. Members are likely to comprehend criticism levelled at them only if critics are fellow nationals or belong to nations that pursue similar projects. In both cases, such criticism will probably not be forthcoming if one believes that the ethical world of individuals is formed wholly and solely

by the nation. In such a culturally relative world, criticism by outsiders, who are members of radically different nations and who demand changes in national projects, will be turned down as being arrogant, as being a new form of colonialism, or in extreme cases perhaps even as being incomprehensible.¹⁸ Furthermore, the arguments for changes can be countered with the observation that national cultures, regardless of their ethical content, are of enormous significance to members and cannot be altered without psychological and moral loss.

In defense of cultural belonging it can be argued that nations are self-correcting entities. It can be held that they are blessed with (only) internal devices that support rules of fairness in the public sphere.¹⁹ Smaller and weaker nations should adapt themselves to the public culture, and the rest will just follow. But this is not convincing. As the praxis shows, states have very often used brutal means in the attempt to assimilate smaller and weaker nations into their fold. Methods of suppression range from hindering the expression of minority cultures to ethnic cleansing. External minorities, like immigrants, are subjected to other forms of exclusion. Especially in the West, many debates in the public sphere attempt to underline the priority of co-nationals as against immigrants. More often than not aliens are openly resented, since they are pictured as merely wanting to stake their claim to the prosperity of the West. Only a small minority is willing to take notice of and support their interests.²⁰

It is hard to see what could motivate people to be fair towards aliens. It should be remembered that a sup-

posed fairness in deliberation arises due to a sense of belonging which members feel towards each other. It does not arise because of principles external to national life. Also, nations, as ethical communities, demand special obligations of fellow members. These obligations are thought of as being different and extensive. Since one does not have this thick mesh of rights and obligations with aliens, there will be no case to treat them fairly.

A related difficulty has to do with the importance placed on historical communities. Remember, bearers of a national identity are considered to be part of a historical project which makes one what one is.²¹ Although it is granted that such a national identity can also be obtained by adoption, this remains an exception. National culture, which ensues because of such historical continuity, is considered to be unique and is passed on to future generations. (As we saw, a member of a Tamirian nation can move from one nation to another. Continuity, however, is important even for this account). It will be difficult to deal with and integrate immigrants who are not part of such a historic community.²²

At this point the proponents of cultural belonging would accuse us of moving too fast. They would ask us not to understand special obligations to one's co-nationals so myopically.²³ As mentioned above, one has obligations even to those outside the nation, provided that one has a human relationship with these persons. But this point is not convincing. Can a relationship with aliens be established when one does not share any common ties with them?²⁴ And how is a human relationship

to be established with people who, because of their vulnerable status in a new land, are more often than not absent from the public sphere?

Another difficulty has to do with the supposed malleability of a national identity. Authors arguing for the existence of such malleability will have to argue that the number of new migrants is kept to a minimum. This is because the process of immigration could influence and perhaps alter their culture(s) irreparably.²⁵ In fact, proponents of cultural belonging do argue for the right to restrict immigration of complete nations so that cultural homogeneity can be preserved.²⁶ They expect immigrants to take "on the essential elements of national character".²⁷ Immigrants are asked not to expect a privileged position in the debate because their starting position is unequal. The argument is that they are in a new land and members of the latter should be able to decide upon the terms of this debate.²⁸ They are asked to remember that members are bound by a special relationship, a special kind of belonging to the land they call their own. New members are expected to identify with the new multicultural state, to participate in its public debates, and be ready to take on a new identity under terms set by the majority.

Such a call for assimilation means that one expects immigrants to drop not only those practices that their new society regards as unjust, but also some of their foreign habits and practices so that they become like 'one of us.' Only those immigrants who are ready to accept and function according to the principles internal to the new group are to be welcomed. Notice how the ini-

tial claim was that an identity can be modernized, so that it could also include minorities. Now, the claim is that cultural homogeneity and assimilation still have their place in such an identity.

Determining the identity of a multinational state is also likely to prove difficult. We said that all nationalities present in a state are to be involved in forming its identity. But there is nothing in this account to deter dominant nation(s) from determining the identity of their state. Such nations, for example, can win each other's support and refuse to clear up their differences with smaller ones. How are the latter to enter into a dialogue with them when they are sidelined in the public sphere due to an imbalance of power? We also said that it is pertinent to be able to distinguish between ethical and unethical nations. This is easier said than done. Are the members of a nation to determine this, or is it to be determined by the members of other nations? In the first case, one wonders if members have the distance necessary to decide whether their nation's projects are ethical. In the second case, how does one ensure that the stronger nations do not classify the weaker ones as unethical, simply because they want to dominate the public sphere? Because of these shortcomings, my claim is that we will have to abandon the concept of cultural belonging. Let us now turn to the other sense of national identity and find out whether it fares better.

Belonging to a Polity

Until recently, many thinkers writing on this subject have dismissed belonging to a polity as a development specific to post-war Germany, a state which sought to make a new beginning after the ravages of Nazism. This kind of belonging is also said to be a viable option for states like Ireland, which have been wrecked by internal violence. It is, however, not associated with 'normal' states.

My contention is that this type of belonging is more promising than it is made out to be. As we said before, modern pluralistic states are home to a considerable number of minorities. In the debates on national identity, these groups are marginalized by others who claim to be indigenous to states. In the garb of nations, the dominant ethnic groups of the past continue to rule pluralistic states today. The result: minorities are increasingly becoming objects of racist violence. For some the violence ends fatally. Cultural belonging, regrettably, has no answer to such problems. Such a state of affairs has led to voter frustration, apathy, alienation, and even violence between the vying factions. The need of the hour seems to be for an identity that can account for the cultural diversity of modern pluralistic states, and at the same time create a sense of belonging between these groups. The concept of belonging to a polity could fill this need and bridge the gap between the various groups.

As we said earlier, belonging to a polity involves a sense of identification with the principles embodied by

the main institutions present in a state. To identify with these institutions means that I feel closely associated with them because of my belief that they reflect the main concerns of my life. In this right, I believe that they are valuable. This identification could arise in different ways. A sense of belonging could arise because of the simple fact that I am subjected to them. My identification could also be guided by my belief that these institutions are the most effective means to realise the goals I intend to achieve. It could also be due to my belief that my nation has created these institutions. I identify with them because they reflect my national culture, which I regard as valuable. Another possibility could be that I identify mainly with the culture surrounding these institutions and since these institutions happen to be embedded in this culture, I identify with them. Finally, this belonging could stem from my conviction that the main institutions of my state are worthy in their own right, independent of my national or cultural affiliation. That is why I consider them valuable and worthy of my identification. It is this last option which will concern us now.

Institutions involved in this kind of belonging are able to integrate the various cultures present in a state; minority cultures are not marginalized. They do not arbitrarily restrict the freedom of only some members and are not partial. Most of the members have reason to believe that their institutions are just and legitimate. Just institutions are important to this account of belonging because modern constitutional states are based on the idea that a state is a consociation of free and equal citi-

zens who have decided to come together to regulate their mutual coexistence by means of law. It is believed that there is a consensus among citizens that they are to regard each other as beings of equal worth.

Like belonging to a culture, belonging to a polity can be understood as a narrative. Yet such a story has two parts to it. Firstly, there is the element of commonality. Stories that states claim for themselves need not be absolutely different from each other, since they are based on similar institutions. To put it differently: constitutional states will agree about a core of principles central to their self-understanding. On the other hand, their praxis will accentuate different aspects of such principles and interpret them within a particular framework. This means that in practise the common element is supplemented by one of difference, e.g., state narratives also include the common culture in which such institutions are embedded. This culture serves as a “common horizon of interpretation”, with the help of which members interpret the particularistic, historical experience of their state.²⁹ It should be noted, further, that the public culture, which is a mixture of particularistic and universal elements, is open to change. This change is brought about by younger generations, which subject their institutions to close scrutiny. It could also result from new factors in the public arena, for example new forms of life which emerge in time or those which immigrants bring with them.

It is sometimes argued that such an identity is guilty of misrepresenting political reality because of the discrepancy between theory and fact. It is claimed that this

identity overlooks its own limits; for instance, the limit of its own particularity. Factors of political culture, such as political history, the vocabularies involved in political discussion, political symbols associated with the constitution, etc., are said to be givens differing from community to community. Such a political culture is accused of being just as narcissistic as any another nationalism and of having “the capacity to inspire violence and exclusion.”³⁰

As we said, this belonging is built around institutions that the members of the state believe are just. The culture surrounding these institutions may indeed be particularistic; members may use national hymns, national flags, etc., to concretize the principles of a polity in their daily life. However, institutional principles and a commitment to them will override such particular symbols. Since these principles and a commitment to them are common to all constitutional states, the exclusionary power of particular symbols will be kept down to a minimum.

A related objection attempts to criticize belonging to a polity by pointing to the genesis of liberal democracies. These were able to arise because of nations; defenders of polities now, unwisely it is said, want to transcend them. Theorists who propagate such an identity are accused of taking the nation for granted and propagating a “bloodless ideal.”³¹ They allegedly base their theories on national bonding, which makes people think of their polity as ‘our state’, and yet decide to ignore the virtues associated with national entities. The claim is also made that this sense of belonging cannot do away

with the contingency of birth; even in this model an affinity to institutions is passed on by birth.³²

Admittedly, our account cannot do away *altogether* with the contingent factor of birth. However, it does not underline the importance of historical communities, and does not claim that only heredity can guarantee good citizens. Having said this, it is also important to understand the relationship between territory and citizenship. People who share a bit of land will want to decide on the conditions of membership. The amount of time each person spends on this land is relevant to a certain degree. Claims to this land by people who spend a couple of days or months there will probably be rejected by other members. But above a certain time limit, all will have to be regarded as equals.³³ To suggest that membership in a polity must be decided by a global lottery system, so that the criterion of birth is done away with, is to miss the close relationship between citizenship and territory.

Let us recapitulate our discussion in this section. Belonging to a polity can be understood as a relation a member has to just institutions. A commitment to institutional principles will be found in states with similar institutions, even though the concretization of such principles could indeed differ from state to state. An identity based on such principles is in keeping with the equality and intrinsic worth of all human beings. It recognizes that the boundaries of a political community cannot be identical with those of a moral community. It befits pluralistic societies, and can help to integrate

those alienated members who have gone unheard in the debate on cultural belonging.

Notes:

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1 The following account is a reconstruction of arguments used in favour of cultural belonging. The main arguments have been drawn from the writings of Yael Tamir (*Liberal Nationalism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), David Miller (*On Nationality*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997; *Citizenship and National Identity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), and Ross Poole (*Nation and Identity*, London/New York: Routledge, 1999).

2 Yael Tamir, *Nationalism*, op. cit., pp. 65-66; "The Enigma of Nationalism," *World Politics* 47 (1995), 418-440, p. 422; "Reconstructing the Landscape of Imagination," in: S. Caney et al. eds., *National Rights, International Obligations*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1996), 85-101; p. 87. Her other essays are "Pro Patria Morit: Death and the State," in: R. Mckim and J. McMahan eds., *The Morality of Nationalism*, (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 227-241; "Theoretical Difficulties in the Study of Nationalism," in: R. Beiner ed., *Theorizing Nationalism*, (Albany: State of New York Press, 1999), 67-90. In his definition of a nation, Miller (*Nationality*, op. cit., p. 19) stresses the political aspect of this concept. Accordingly, a nation is said to be a community of people which aspires to be politically self-determining.

3 R. Poole, *Nation*, op. cit., pp. 105-106.

4 D. Miller, "Reflections on British National Identity," *New Community* 21 (1995), 153-166, p. 157. Miller and Tamir strive for a Humean approach in moral and political philosophy that ac-

commodates our pre-existing sentiments. According to this approach, "the unreflective beliefs of everyday life" (Miller, *Citizenship*, op. cit., p. 40) "should be at the heart of our moral thinking" (Tamir, *Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 106). See also Poole, *Nation*, op. cit., p. 106.

5 Tamir, *Nationalism*, op. cit., 99. See also Miller, *Nationality*, op. cit., p. 68, p. 79.

6 See Miller, *Citizenship*, op. cit., p. 32. A nation could also claim a right to representation in the public sphere of a state. Other rights could be a sense of loyalty from its members, acceptance of its goals and their pursuit, its defence in times of emergency, ensurance of its future by procreation or by being partial to one's fellow members, etc. More controversial rights are a readiness to sacrifice one's life if called to do so, and vengeance because of misdeeds done to it in the past.

7 Tamir, *Enigma*, op. cit., p. 438.

8 Tamir, *Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 71.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

10 *Nation*, op. cit., p. 140. Take for instance the current discussion on German national identity. It would be difficult to argue that post-war Germany has the right to bracket off the aggression it inflicted on others in the past. It seems more plausible to say that this national identity begins with just this past, so that the crimes once committed are never forgotten and never repeated again.

11 Tamir, *Nationalism*, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

12 Tamir stresses the element of choice in national membership. However, changing nations in this way is easier said than done. If one believes that national membership implies a thick web of mutual obligations between members, it is difficult to understand why a nation would let go of its members. It is quite possible that nations look down upon those seeking a new, national membership because such individuals desert their duties, and thereby undermine the concept of national loyalty. After all it is believed that one's forefathers have made enormous sacrifices for the nation, in some cases even spilt their blood to save

its honour. Other practical considerations could also lead nations to try to keep the number of such “traitors” at a minimum. The number of new entrants, for example, who would replace old members, could be marginal.

13 Miller, *Citizenship*, op. cit., p. 106. See also pp. 32-35.

14 Tamir, *Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 31.

15 Miller, *Citizenship*, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

16 Miller, *Citizenship*, op. cit., p. 35; Poole, *Nation*, op. cit., p. 81, pp. 125-126.

17 Tamir, *Enigma*, op. cit., 432; Tamir, *Reconstructing*, op. cit., p. 86.

18 Charges of moral relativism and related issues have been examined elsewhere. See, for example, S. CANEY, “INDIVIDUALS, NATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS,” IN S. Caney et al. eds., *National Rights, International Obligations*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1996), 119-138; P. Cole, “Embracing the >Nation<,” *Res Publica* 6 (2000), 237-257; T. Hurka, “The Justification of National Partiality”, in: R. Mckim and J. McMahan eds., *The Morality of Nationalism*, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press 1997, 139-157; S. LEVINSON, “IS LIBERAL NATIONALISM AN OXYMORON? AN ESSAY FOR JUDITH SHKLAR,” *ETHICS* 105 (1995), 626-645; A. MASON, “POLITICAL COMMUNITY, LIBERAL-NATIONALISM, AND THE ETHICS OF ASSIMILATION,” *ETHICS* 109 (1999), 261-286.

19 Miller, *Citizenship*, op. cit., 16; Poole, *Nation*, op. cit., p. 106.

20 See Part II of M. Dummett’s, *On Immigration and Refugees*, (London/New York: Routledge, 2001) for an interesting study of the British reaction to immigration.

21 See also W. Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular. Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 220).

22 It is said that current generations reweave the story about their nation’s past and adapt it to the needs of the day (Miller, *Nationality*, op. cit., 175). However, if the present generation is an heir to this historical tradition, changes in such identities are

likely to touch only the periphery. The core of such a historical understanding continues to be sacrosanct.

23 Poole, op. cit., p. 70.

24 Miller (*Nationality*, op. cit., p.53) believes that obligations to outsiders arise because of our common humanity. The argument that nations are closed ethical communities, however, does not allow this move. By arguing for a common humanity, one would be saying that all internal principles generated by various nations do have some shared content.

25 It should be remembered that national membership is one of the basic goods found in human life. The identity associated with it cannot be altered without causing irreparable damage to these members.

26 Miller, *On Nationality*, op. cit., pp. 128-129. See also Tamir, *Nationalism*, op. cit., 161.

27 Miller, *Citizenship*, op. cit., 30. Miller (*Nationality*, op. cit., pp. 129-130) asks immigrants to show a willingness to “accept current political structures and to engage in a dialogue with the host community.” At first sight one could argue that such demands are reasonable. He, however, makes use of a footnote to bring in his allegiance to a group’s culture. Miller (ibid.) quotes van Gunsteren, according to whom a prospective citizen must be willing to be a part of the historical community of the host nation, and must have knowledge of the language and culture of the host community, etc. (See H. R. van Gunsteren, “Admission to Citizenship,” *Ethics* 98 (1988), 731-741).

28 Poole, op. cit., pp. 126-127.

29 J. Habermas, “Struggles for Recognition in Constitutional States”, *European Journal of Philosophy* 1-2 (1993), 128-155; p. 144. Habermas is one of the main thinkers associated with this version of belonging. Aspects of this concept are found in J. Habermas, *Kleine politische Schriften VI, Eine Art Schadensabwicklung*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1987); *Die nachholende Revolution*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990); “Yet Again. German Identity, A Unified Nation of Angry DM-Burghers?” *New German Critique* 52 (1991), 84-101; “Citizenship and National Identity. Some Reflections on

the Future of Europe,” in: R. Beiner ed., *Theorizing Citizenship*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 255-281; *Kleine politische Schriften VIII, Die Normalität einer Berliner Republik*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995); *Die Einbeziehung des Fremden, Studien zur politischen Theorie*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1996).

30 P. Markell, “Making Affect Safe for Democracy. On Constitutional Patriotism,” *Political Theory* 28 (2000), 38-63, pp. 52-53.

31 M. Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory* (Cheltenham/Brookfield: Edward Elgar, 1996), p. 89.

32 M. Canovan, “Patriotism is Not Enough,” *British Journal of Political Science* 30 (2000), 413-432, p. 425. Belonging to a polity is said to be a mere *Überbau* on the concept of an ethnic nation. Its supporters are said to defend the status quo presented by political reality because they too use birth as the main criterion of membership in a polity. In my view, political theorists have to strike a fine balance between the constraints set by political real-

ity and the demands made by normative theory. Such tightrope walking may indeed fall short of delivering a gigantic vision, but does point to many small steps which, hopefully, lead in the right direction.

33 Two issues have to be distinguished here. In modern pluralistic states, there is a sizeable amount of so-called guest workers who have spent decades in their ‘host’ countries and are still excluded from membership. For all factual purposes they are treated like members. They have to pay taxes and abide by the rules of their ‘host’ countries. Formal membership, however, is often denied to them. A second group of people, which is in search of better life prospects, seeks entrance to modern, pluralistic states. Members of a polity could reason that admittance of the latter has to be reduced so that the workability of some institutions continues to be guaranteed. There are, however, good reasons for accepting the former as members of a polity.



Christine A. James

Huntington or Halliburton? The Real Clash of Civilizations in American Life

Abstract: A wide variety of sources, including the Huntington literature and popular mass media, show that Huntington's "clash of civilizations" idea actually has very little value in understanding the current global political context. The central assumption of Huntington's view, that cultural kinship ties influence loyalties and agreements on a global scale, has little to do with the daily lives of American citizens and little to do with the decisions made by the current presidential administration. The mass media evidence from the United States shows that the the most important "kinship" ties are not religious or cultural, but economic. The argument involves a deeper analysis of the current trend towards religious programs on American television, a timeline of events relating to the Halliburton – Cheney relationship, and views expressed by members of the United States military in *Stars and Stripes*.

My view of Samuel P. Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis is influenced by two major facets of my own life. First, although I was raised a Roman Catholic, I took a number of Religious Studies courses as an undergraduate student, including Introduction to Islam and History of Islam. Second, as a professor in a Department of Philosophy at a regional state university in Georgia, I took part in a workshop at Emory University entitled "Teaching the Middle East" in the fall of 2003. This workshop was sponsored by the Georgia Consortium for International Studies, the Georgia Middle East Studies Consortium, and the Global Program of the University System of Georgia. I remain gratefully indebted to the workshop's organizers and participants, and I thank them for their influence on this article.

The members of this workshop addressed Huntington's work by reading his primary texts and a number of commentary articles, including Roy P. Mottadeh's *The Clash of Civilizations: An Islamicist's Cri-*

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tique (1995), Edward Said's *The Clash of Ignorance* (2001), and the article *A Fading Hell* from *The Economist* (1999). I looked forward to discussing these articles with the other workshop participants, and the wide range of reactions to Huntington was fascinating. A number of participants were skeptical of the clash of civilizations thesis, finding it too simplistic or stereotyping. But many of the participants agreed with the thesis, and when challenged, some participants brought up 9/11 as a "proof" that Huntington "must have been right." The current resurgence of American nationalism was referenced repeatedly. Other participants mentioned the current resurgence of religious television programs in the United States, evidenced by an article that appeared in *TV Guide* last fall (*TV Goes With God*, October 17-19, 2003; 40-46).

A wide variety of sources, including the Huntington literature and popular mass media, show that Huntington's "clash of civilizations" idea actually has very little value in understanding the current global political context. The central assumption of Huntington's view, that cultural kinship ties influence loyalties and agreements on a global scale, has little to do with the daily lives of American citizens and little to do with the decisions made by the current presidential administration. The mass media evidence from the United States shows that the the most important "kinship" ties are not religious or cultural, but economic. The argument involves a deeper analysis of the current trend towards religious programs on American television, a timeline of events relating to the Halliburton – Cheney relationship,

and views expressed by members of the United States military in *Stars and Stripes*.

In 1993, Huntington wrote that conflict between civilizations would be the latest phase in the evolution of conflict in the modern world; that differences among civilizations are real and basic; that "different civilizations have different views on the relations between God and man," and that civilizations are differentiated from each other most importantly by religion. (Huntington 1993, 23-24) He cites Gilles Kepel's idea of "the revival of religion", claiming it provides a basis for identity and commitment that transcends national boundaries and unites civilizations. These civilization kinship ties lead to ardent loyalties, according to Huntington; even to double-standards:

"Muslims contrasted Western actions against Iraq with the West's failure to protect Bosnians against Serbs and to impose sanctions on Israel for violating UN resolutions. The West, they alleged, was using a double standard. A world of clashing civilizations, however, is inevitably a world of double standards: people apply one standard to their kin-countries and a different standard to others". (Huntington 1993, 42)

Huntington's description and implicit justification of this double standard is one of the most disquieting claims I have read in academic literature, especially when applied in the context of basic human rights. It reminds me of a particular church policy decision I

heard about secondhand: in a nearby Christian church, a female member of the congregation was raped by a male member, and a number of other members of the church knew about the rape. Rather than report the rape to the local law enforcement authorities, the members of the church decided that the man should engage in a systematic process of “reconciliation and redemption” with the woman, instead of going through a trial and “ruining his life.” Had the man not been a member of the church, such a suggestion would never have been considered. I wondered whether or not the church would have proceeded in the same way had the woman been a child, or a person unable to give consent. At minimum, it should be acknowledged that double-standards based on religious or cultural ties are unfair and immoral; they are not a basis for good religious practice or political decision making.

Nevertheless, Huntington holds that these civilization ties will continue to gain importance in the global political context, and that the West is in the lead.

“The west is now at an extraordinary peak of power in relation to other civilizations. Its superpower opponent has disappeared from the map. Military conflict among Western states is unthinkable”. (Huntington 1993, 45)

Perhaps this describes the perception of most Americans in 1993, but the last four years and the dramatic change in the United States relationship with the United Nations have dramatically changed that perception.

The literature that emerged in response to Huntington’s clash of civilizations was immense. In *The Clash of Civilizations: An Islamicist’s Critique*, Roy P. Mottadeh argues that Huntington underestimates the variety of perspectives within cultures, and their changeability. (Mottadeh 1995, 9) He also provides a number of examples in which Western and Islamic/Muslim cultures actually have much in common, or ideas claimed as Western were actually borrowings from Muslim culture. The prevalence of free-market economies, women’s right to vote and own property, and democracy cannot be claimed as simply Western inventions; in some cases these notions were kept alive by Muslim culture, in some cases imposed by imperialism and colonialism, but in any case, they remain common ground between the two allegedly disparate civilizations. (Mottadeh 1995, 8-12) One of the most important points Mottadeh makes is found in his explanation of the distinction between Islamicists, Islamists, and militant extremists. Mottadeh identifies himself as an Islamicist scholar, while many of the concerns of Huntington only apply to a small group of Muslims properly called “Islamists.” Islamists call for a reimposition of Islamic law to varying degrees. But militant extremist Muslims are a small, vocal minority that Mottadeh says should not be allowed to set anyone’s agenda for anything...this group will remain a distinct minority, because its followers have large areas of internal disagreement, and because it has no real answers to the problems of economic and

social justice that beleaguer the majority of Muslims. (Mottadeh 1995, 14)

Huntington's central assumptions about the Muslim world only apply to this small but vocal minority. This is a group that actually stands at odds with the majority of Muslims, and the real history of the Islamic world, its free markets and its overwhelmingly democratic ideals. (This point regarding free markets and democratic values will also take on a new twist in the final sections of this paper regarding Halliburton and its contracts in Iraq, arrived at by non-free-market closed bidding.)

I'll See Your Baptist and Raise You a Catholic: The Poker Face of Religion on Television

Does Huntington still have a point regarding the popularization of religion in the West? At first glance, the article by Mark Nollinger might give this impression: a number of new television shows in the United States since 9/11 feature characters who either communicate directly with a deity or are defined by their relationships with a God-like creator figure. Interestingly, all of these main characters are young females. But on closer inspection, the article actually shows a broader cultural shift toward a generalized spirituality, rather than a specifically Western or non-Muslim religion. As Nollinger notes,

“What sets the new breed of spirituality themed programs apart is a more daring, thoughtful

and sophisticated approach to issues of God, faith and the afterlife. Ambiguity is in. Sentimentality and wish fulfillment are out... you also won't find much gospel in any of these shows, most of which are deliberately nonspecific about the spiritual forces animating their characters' universe (and thus relatively inoffensive to those who might be inclined to outrage and boycotts – an advertiser's definition of hell”. (Nollinger 2003, 44)

Nollinger's point bears fruit in comments from show creators on how they shaped their deity characters, including “the more orthodox God depicted in *Joan of Arcadia*” who “is pretty open-minded, telling Joan that it's not about religion. It's about fulfilling your true nature.” (Nollinger 2003, 44). A number of scholars interviewed for the article echo this sentiment, including a professor of Religious Studies, two Catholic clergymen, and a Baptist.

The Roots of Muslim Rage, or the Roots of Retirement Accounts?

Another issue raised by Mottadeh deserves analysis. On page 17 of the 1995 article Mottadeh discusses Huntington's use of certain concepts in philosophy of science, specifically Thomas Kuhn's notion of a paradigm shift. Essentially, Huntington holds that the Western and Muslim worlds are following two warring paradigms, and that the Western paradigm has intellec-

tually and scientifically advanced over the Muslim paradigm. In these passages, Huntington joins a number of scholars and non-scholars who misuse Kuhn. But even more importantly, Mottadeh shows that it would be fallacious to assume that normative theories and legal systems, paradigmatic or not, can actually influence social and governmental behavior. (Mottadeh 1995, 19) A few years later, Huntington revises his paradigm shift analogy by adding on a layer of complexity, producing a theoretical structure that is worthy of Kepler's epicycles:

"Mr. Huntington went even further in an article in this spring's edition of Foreign Affairs. He now argues that the world is moving towards a multipolar system made up of regions defined only rather vaguely in cultural terms; that each of these regions will contain a major power but also one or more secondary powers, with which outsiders can co-operate in order to limit the bigger regional power's freedom of action; but that co-operation across regional boundaries will be easier in some cases than others, depending on how wide the culture gap between the regions is (which implies that some civilisations are less unlike each other than the rest). In the coming century, big powers will "compete, clash and coalesce with each other in various permutations and combinations." (The Economist, 1999, 10)

I was especially interested in Huntington's discussion of Kuhn, because my own academic work has primarily involved philosophy of science. Perhaps there

are other insights that a philosopher of science can provide that will be more useful than the "clashes of civilizations" or "warring paradigms" models. In my attempts to understand how scientists work, and how their social practices are shaped, I look at many factors, including physical technologies and theories of "objective" perspectives. But in understanding scientists' research practices, I also follow the trail of funding and grant sources. The economic paper trail can enlighten us to motives for actions in a number of different ways, and I would argue that in the case of current relationships between the United States, the "West" as a whole, and the Muslim world, there is a great deal of information regarding *economic kinship relations*, rather than civilization kinship relations. This leads me to argue that kin means little in comparison to economically beneficial relationships in today's global political context.

First, a timeline of Halliburton's relationship with the United States government and military is helpful:

Halliburton Timeline:

1919; Halliburton was founded. The corporation has two major branches, an Energy Services Group and an Engineering and Construction segment; as well as relationships with numerous subsidiaries.

1942; Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown and Root's predecessor, Brown Shipbuilding Company, builds the first of 359 for the US

Navy at the Greens Bayou Fabrication Yard in Houston, Texas. Since this time, KBR has become the premier provider of logistics and support services for all branches of the military.

1965; KBR constructed Phan Rang Air Base in Vietnam.

1991; After the Persian Gulf War, Halliburton crews brought 320 oil wells under control in Kuwait in less time than expected (12 months as opposed to 18 months).

2000; In December, the California Energy Crisis is in full force in southern California. The price of electricity jumped more than 1000% in less than one month. The price of natural gas went from \$1 a therm to \$10 a therm.

2001, May 18; Greg Palast reports in the Guardian that there need not have been an “Energy Crisis.” The energy companies manipulated prices via power grids, monopoly rents, economic withholding, and physical withholding of energy resources to create artificial shortages and brown-outs. The companies involved were Williams and AES. Thomas Cruikshank, a member of the Williams board, was also the retired CEO of Halliburton who picked Dick Cheney to be his successor. Richard Darman, a member of the AES board, also worked with Dick Cheney in the first Bush ad-

ministration. Cruikshank was later proven (via Williams company documents) to have colluded with AES to keep power plants in southern California offline in 2000.

2001, Summer; Williams corporation decides to cooperate with investigators, but only after Dick Cheney meets with leaders of the energy industry to determine the official White House response to the “energy crisis.” Also at that meeting: Ken Lay, Enron Chairman, and David Lesar, Cheney’s own successor at Halliburton.

2003, March 22; Weeks before the first bombs dropped in Iraq, the Bush administration began rebuilding plans. ABCNEWS has obtained a copy of a 99-page contract worth \$600 million. “We have never in our 40-year history spent this much money in one country in one year,” said Andrew S. Natsios, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, an independent federal agency that receives overall foreign policy guidance from the State Department. The USAID contract is filled with details about plans to construct Iraqi schools, airports, roads, bridges, hospitals, power plants and more. But other details are being shielded by the USAID, which chose to conduct the bidding in secret.

2003, March 24; KBR is awarded a 7 billion dollar contract for extinguishing oil well fires in Iraq. “KBR was selected for this award based on the fact that KBR is the only contractor that could commence implementing the complex contingency plan on extremely short notice.” Firefighting duties were also subcontracted to Boots and Coots International Well Control, Inc. and Wild Well Control, Inc. There was no public bidding process before the contract was awarded. Halliburton and its subsidiaries also appear to be the only companies holding the necessary security clearances for this work.

2003, April 11; \$50.3 million has been spent on the contract. Representatives Henry Waxman of California and John Dingell of Michigan, both Democrats, call for an investigation into the way that the Bush administration is awarding contracts. It is also noteworthy that the contracts provide a massive amount of revenue for Boots and Coots, which was facing bankruptcy before the contracts were awarded, and it has been alleged that Boots and Coots deliberately inflated its pricing when the contracts were written.

2003, December 14; President George W. Bush, trying to calm a political storm, said that Vice President Dick Cheney’s former company should repay the government if it overcharged

for gasoline delivered in Iraq under a controversial prewar contract.

2004, March 14; Pentagon auditors found a Halliburton Co. subsidiary gave faulty cost estimates on a \$2.7 billion contract to serve American troops in Iraq and Kuwait, and company officials acknowledged making mistakes, Defense Department documents show.

2004, June 16; Senate Republicans defeated Democratic attempts to limit the role of private contractors in Iraq in a pair of votes that broke largely along partisan lines.

2004, June 30; Auditors looking into hefty charges rung up by Halliburton Co. and others at a beachfront hotel in Kuwait chastised the Coalition Provisional Authority for failing to better control costs. The authority’s inspector general, examining \$11 million in charges being incurred annually at the five-star Kuwait Hilton, said the Provisional Authority “did not apply adequate oversight to ensure that operating costs were minimized.”

There is a lot of material to sift through when one looks closely at the long-standing relationship between Halliburton and the military/industrial/government complex in the United States. What I find most interesting is the series of decisions made that stand in direct contrast to Huntington’s clash of civilizations thesis.

For a closer look at one example, ABC News reported extensively on the closed bidding procedures that preferentially gave Halliburton lucrative contracts – a double-standard, if you will, based not on civilizations or cultures, but on a longstanding economic relationship:

“The USAID contract is filled with details about plans to construct Iraqi schools, airports, roads, bridges, hospitals, power plants and more. But other details are being shielded by the USAID, which chose to conduct the bidding in secret. “It’s the scope and breadth that, I think, has made people take a second look at this in terms of the secrecy and the limitations of competition,” said Steven Schooner, a law professor at George Washington University. Normally, USAID puts out contracts on the Internet, and any company can bid. But to move this through quickly, the agency said it went to firms with track records and security clearances. It asked seven — about half the number that normally would have sought the business — to bid. Among the companies believed to be bidding are Bechtel, Fluor, Parsons, the Washington Group and Halliburton, Vice President Dick Cheney’s old firm. All are experienced. But in addition, all are generous political donors — principally to Republicans. The secret bidding is legal, but controversial. “If you don’t have an open process, the odds are you may not get the best price, you may not get

the best contractor, you may not have the best quality control, which may impact your mission success,” Schooner said. British troops are serving alongside U.S. troops in Iraq. But the closed process blocked British companies, as well as any foreign firm, from bidding. “We have a very keen diplomatic interest in ensuring that others not only are involved, not only will be involved, but feel as though they are part of this post-conflict exercise,” said Eric Schwartz of the Council on Foreign Relations, a Washington think tank. Also left out were international development groups, which historically have been essential to nation rebuilding because they emphasize the involvement of local people. “They must have ownership over this full development process,” said Mary McClymont, chief executive officer of InterAction, an alliance of dozens of U.S.-based nongovernmental relief organizations. “Otherwise, it’s a recipe for failure.” USAID denies politics are involved in any of this. “No political pressure was put by anybody outside the agency on us,” Natsios said. “No phone calls have been made to me by anybody.” The agency says within a year, Iraqis will have better lives because of the rebuilding. But the secret bidding process makes it impossible to know how much better, or possibly worse, things might have turned out”. *ABC News, March 22, 2003*

There are two main arguments that I have heard in defense of these bidding practices: First, some argue that these practices either do not affect the average citizens of the United States, and so we should not care if the open bidding practices were used or not. Second, some argue that because these bidding practices benefit American corporations, and indirectly some Americans who work for those corporations, we should not care if the open bidding practices were used or not.

There are a number of reasons why these arguments do not convince me. On the individual level, contractors employed under these contracts are being kidnapped and/or killed in Iraq. These individuals are asked to take massive risks in exchange for large sums of money (economic kinship ties again). But on the order of groups, there are a whole other set of reasons why these arguments are unsound. These practices do affect groups, including the groups who are native to the regions where the contracts are carried out, and including the members of the military who live and work in the products Halliburton has created – the members of the military. One example of how the military is adversely affected by business practices comes from a letter to the editor in *Stars and Stripes*, the major magazine of the United States armed forces. Michele Winter illustrates how privatized contracts and unaccompanied tours use military budgets to give economic benefit to private companies. Apparently, once again, the real kinship ties here are not Western, American, or American citizens to servicepersons. The real kinship ties are the

economic relationships between the government and corporations:

Stars and Stripes

Letters from Pacific Edition, 10/22/02-10/26/02

Tours plan par for the course

”Our civilian leadership in both the executive branch and the Department of the Army appears to be completely out of touch with servicemembers, especially those deployed downrange. It’s beyond belief that a “family values” administration would propose such a highly charged issue as unaccompanied tours at a time of sacrifice from exhaustive deployments.

The motive evidently has nothing to do with GIs’ welfare and morale. So what’s the motive? With unit rotation, who wins? The Sept. 13 issue of Stars and Stripes’s European edition included a photo of Brown & Root employees constructing a temporary camp for Marines in the Balkans. Kellogg, Brown & Root is a subsidiary of Vice President Dick Cheney’s former parent company, Halliburton. It has been contracted to provide support services — construction, maintenance, food, laundry, airfield services, supply operations, power generation and property accountability — for the Balkans and also for a “Force Provider” camp in Afghanistan, three Air Force Harvest Eagle camps

in Uzbekistan, and prisons in Guantanamo Bay. Other proposed work sites are in Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. According to The New York Times, a lucrative 10-year contract to provide worldwide support for military operations recently won from the Army by KBR “has no lid on costs, the only logistical arrangement by the Army without an estimated cost” and is “shrouded in secrecy.” In fact, Halliburton has earned millions in federal contracts over the past 10 years by supplying military support services in Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Italy and Bosnia. Earnings from current missions in the Balkans (\$2.2 billion, according to the General Accounting Office), Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Cuba would be peanuts compared with what KBR would reap from unaccompanied Army tours in Europe and South Korea, as private contracts would replace the Base Support Battalions now doing the job. KBR is already running Army support operations in the United States. Army bases in Europe and South Korea are the obvious next step.

Unaccompanied tours is not about saving money. According to The Times, “by hiring an outside company to handle much of its logistics, the Pentagon may wind up spending more taxpayer money than if it did the work itself.” Rather, it’s a scathing plan for diverting part of

the military budget to private corporate accounts. Privatization is where President Bush continues to head with our Social Security retirement despite the toll taken on self-directed Thrift Savings Plans/401(k) retirement accounts in the past 15 months due to corporate scandals, threats of war, and investors’ votes of “no confidence.” We saw how privatization worked for Enron shareholders as well as Florida state pensioners, the second biggest losers to Enron, whose trustee was Gov. Jeb Bush. His State Board of Administration continued to buy shares of Ken Lay’s Enron as the price bottomed out, resulting in a \$300 million loss for retirees. Meanwhile, Enron CEO Lay was the single largest corporate contributor to the Republican Party. It can hardly be called coincidence that Halliburton was awarded the job to study and implement privatization of routine Army support functions under then-Secretary of Defense Cheney, who, according to the public watchdog group CorpWatch, truly personifies the “revolving door” between big business and government. When Cheney left the Pentagon to become CEO of Halliburton, bringing with him lucrative federal contracts, Halliburton started to move from construction to base support. Cheney “retired” from Halliburton with a reported \$34 million bonus for his five years of service, in addition to his \$1.3 million annual salary and millions in stock

options, after the 2000 election — not bad for a guy with five military deferments (four student, one paternity).

Cheney said he “had other priorities than military service.” Yes, such as using his government position to funnel federal contracts to himself and future campaign contributors — what the rest of us in government positions have been counseled not to do because of conflict-of-interest laws. Under the Bush administration, conflict of interest went the way of deregulation, conveniently packaged to get the government off its back and its budget deficits onto taxpayers’ backs. With a near evenly split Congress, Senate probes for war profiteering will remain a World War II relic. Secretary of the Army Thomas White is no stranger to privatization or questions of ethics. The watchdog group Public Citizen (www.citizen.org) has suggested that the Army secretary engaged in conflicts of interest pursuing changes in Army energy policy that could have benefited his former employer, Enron. “Though Secretary White recused himself from dealing with Army contracts involving his former employer, he continued to play a role in advocating the privatization of energy services at Army installations,” it said. White, “a major-league Martha Stewart,” has been asked by many major newspapers to resign. Yet he remains on the public dole, able to transcend the military rules of

“perception of wrongdoing” which seem to apply to everyone but himself. Certainly government officials have resigned for lesser reasons. Pentagon adviser Richard Perle suggested that German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder resign upon winning re-election. So why is White still Army secretary? Because he’s the money pipeline between the military budget and corporate interests. He won’t be going anywhere if Bush can help it, but Army dependents in Europe might be. Most of the members of our CEO-laden executive branch bypassed the hardships of combat, unit downrange deployments and family separation by taking the path of the privileged. The nature of their business has to do with war despite never having fought in one, and wars are what Bush is promising us, ensuring a never-ending cycle of taxpayers’ money and war booty flowing into the corporate coffers of our leaders and their contributors. Unit rotation is just a part of that package.

Michele Winter,
Würzburg, Germany” <http://www.estripes.com/article.asp?section=&article=12419&archive=true>

Clearly, the perspective reflected in this letter to the editor illustrates a point about the economic ties between the Bush administration members and their public policy, and their global political decision making. I hope the examples I have given show why Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” idea actually has very little value

in understanding the current global political context. The central assumption of Huntington's view, that cultural kinship ties influence loyalties and agreements on a global scale, has little to do with the daily lives of American citizens and little to do with the decisions made by the current presidential administration. The mass media evidence from the United States shows that the the most important "kinship" ties are not religious or cultural, but economic. Ironically, Huntington might have said that the clash of civilizations represents not the last phase of conflict, but the latest phase of conflict *rhetoric*.

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The Debate over the Historical-Political Background of a Civic Multicultural Society

Abstract: Ongoing political, military and social violence gives the impression that liberal ideas of freedom, democracy and multicultural society do not serve as a barrier to the shedding of blood. This paper shows that recognizing the way powerful interests color our conceptions of truth and value and need not automatically result in a purge of all existing social-political categories. Consequently, the paper addresses many of the ambiguities that a critique of ideology and values tends to evoke, paying special attention to the prevailing explanations of world power, violence and world peace in our contemporary reality, especially in the fields of sociology and ideology. The significance of several factors in the American Weltanschauung that have a major impact on life today have been examined.

We will start with one of the major solutions to recent political, military and social violence and that is to sort out what is called *Pax Americana*, which includes civic multicultural vision, amalgamated with religious faith.

Between 1730 and 1740, the English colonies in the eastern part of the North American continent were swept up by a wave of religious revivals known as *The Great Awakening*. Under the influence of charismatic preachers, tens of thousands of people experienced an ecstatic transcendence and were “born again” and returned to the fold of Evangelical Protestantism. According to Samuel P. Huntington, the *Great Awakening* was the beginning of the birth of the American nation (Huntington, 2004). The religious movement preceded

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the war against the British colonial regime and was a necessary condition for the American Revolution. For the first time, a social and political force disguised as a religious movement swept through the different colonies and created a new, shared, national-religious consciousness, one that had nothing to do with the settlers' original British identity.

Huntington claims that alongside its immigrant nature, the American nation was, and remains, a white, religious, Puritan-Protestant one that absorbed human elements, especially from (white) Europe together with ideas from the European Enlightenment and the Age of Reason. It became an immense melting pot in which people and ideas were subjected to a blunt process of Americanization (Huntington, 2004). As long as the mechanisms of Americanization functioned properly (while also carefully selecting who would be allowed to join the nation), the United States became the fulfillment of prosperous humanity's most advanced dreams as it marched vigorously onwards towards a world hegemony.

Advancing towards a world hegemony, shedding blood and tears along the way, the ideals of *Pax Americana*, including a civic multicultural democratic vision, were implemented everywhere, either theoretically or practically. Ongoing political, military and social violence gives the impression that the liberal ideas of freedom and democratic-multicultural society do not serve as a barrier to the spilling of blood. Considering

whether the dominance of the western world in previous decade signifies the possibility that we are moving towards the establishment of a universal civilization, we will not necessarily get to a point where all of humanity nestles under the wing of one single liberal civilization. It seems that the end of history and global peace will probably remain an elusive goal and so we can look forward to worldwide conflicts followed by various attempts at a variety of solutions.

Presently, one of the major solutions to recent political, military and social violence is to set straight what is called *Pax Americana* which includes civic democratic multicultural vision, amalgamated with religious faith. There are many nations and societies anxious to be dominated by *Pax Americana* and many others who are fighting it. In many instances, those societies outside the American social-political-economic consensus are banned and neglected by the rest of the world. Eventually, these cultures will reach the conclusion that they need to learn more about American Weltanschauung and American values as well as American history in order to integrate themselves in the world society, economy and politics.

One of the first and highly popular assumptions about American society and culture is that it is replete with violence, even though Americans themselves are still ensconced in the self-content pleasing image of a moral and just nation. The debate over a multi cultural civic society and a better understanding of its original

roots leads many historians, sociologists and political scientists to characterize and clarify the differences between American and European political violence. Traditionally, the aim of the latter, based on ideas of the Enlightenment, is to bring about revolution and regime change, whereas political violence in America does not aim at changing an existing regime but rather at strengthening it. In other words, Americans are violent in support of the status quo. To a certain extent, Americans implemented ideas of the Enlightenment Movement, reaching specific goals in a way that the Europeans did not even dare to imagine. Two of the principles of the French Revolution, liberty and equality, crystallized into concepts of a decidedly economic nature in America: liberty includes the right to lead a democratic life, defend the individual and acquire, own and safeguard property. Equality is the possibility of economic opportunities for all residents of the United States.

Certain ideas appear to be crucial for better understanding the role and sources of violence in American Weltanschauung. An illustrative example of these sources is the concept of *venture* and the manifestations thereof. It was Immanuel Kant (1997), who applied the concept of venture to courage and freedom of thought and to the dynamic development of the process of self-improvement, which ultimately affords every individual his true uniqueness. Nevertheless, the idea of *risk* was given a completely different interpretation upon reaching American shores years later. In American society, a risk or gamble is connected to an individual adventure

that has to do with business. The motto engraved in 1787 on the seal of the first Senate reads: “*Mind your own business*”. This motto has been consistently associated with the perception of the western frontier as a promise of economic success. For that reason, the settlers very quickly made land a resource yielding speculative profits.

In the West, every American is a master of his or her own activities. Americans realized relatively early on that access to land did not necessarily guarantee access to wealth unless it was accompanied by access to market forces. The re-embodiment of Enlightenment ideas in America, tantamount to transforming spirit into commodities, caused a violent system in which Americans achieved the good life, a life of paradise, albeit besides hell. At the same time, the existing order of democratic liberalism is an essential implication for realizing the true American experience.

September 11th was an event that jolted American fundamental ideas and challenged the authority of its basic values. The horrifying events of that day forced people to examine their myths in order to get a handle on the crisis. One is the myth of ‘savage war’, based on the legends of the early frontier. The myth represents American history as an Indian war, in which a ‘savage’ ethnic enemy opposes white Christian civilization: an enemy whose hostility to civilization is part of its nature or fundamental character; an enemy not just opposed to interests but to ‘civilization itself’. The myth also pro-

vides a recipe for countering that threat, a model of heroic action that will bring victory and resolve crisis. “The hero of this myth is the wielder of extraordinary violence: he can win only by fighting fire with fire, evil with evil, and just fights until the enemy are exterminated or utterly subjugated. In war with such an enemy, nothing less than total victory is acceptable”. (Slotkin, 2001, p. 11)

This American imposition of evil versus good, hostile versus friendly, civilized versus savage, categorizes the American war on terrorism. It is an either/or mentality that makes the link between the absence of an interest in international diplomacy on one hand, and the Christian values and ideals on the other, very clear. Such an international standpoint is more than often comprehended by Europe as an attempt of dragging the international community into a medieval international regime, based on the rule of barely concealed force. It seems that *Pax Americana* is shaped by symbols of right and wrong values and beliefs in the realm of international relationship, similarly to values and beliefs that guide American society in its domestic programs and are often reflected in that country’s contemporary foreign policy.

An additional central idea that has had great impact on the implementations of *Pax Americana* is the phenomenon of American uniqueness which is based on several intertwined factors, one of which, that of

“plenty”, makes clear the difference between Europe and America from the very first glance (Gutfeld, 2002). Ever since the first European settlers arrived in America, they have been concerned with comparing the two continents. Some argue that this endless scrutinizing of Europe derives from feelings of inferiority in a new society vis-à-vis a rich and ancient culture; others say that Americans perceive America as superior to a Europe that is seen as old and corrupt.

Over and over again, the Americans defined their uniqueness vis-à-vis Europe, and later on towards the entire world. As compared to the plenitude of virgin land in America, land in feudal Europe or other countries in Asia or Africa had been divided up and cultivated for generations. Neither revolution nor release of land to farmers allowed for even a bit of available property. The settlers who arrived from populated and often hungry Europe saw the huge, primeval tracts of land in America as a guarantee of economic success. Even before they arrived, they had dreamed of America as the land of unlimited opportunity. The wealth of land, its resources and potential along with the economic flourishing of Americans is not just a physical-geographical characteristic of a huge country perceived as uninhabited, but also an economic success as a result of an ideological system derived from the Protestant ethos. The “plenty” serves as a source of inspiration for a religious outlook and an economic condition that produces the uniqueness of America (Gutfeld, 2002).

Paradoxically, it is the endless expanse of land that has caused the change in the concept of boundary. Land is not the only basis for connections to material wealth. The borders of America, as opposed to the concept of border prevalent in Europe, are promises of a wonderful start of prosperity and wealth. The border (or the frontier) indicates not just a physical place or area that marks the boundaries of the state and the limit of its sovereignty; it indicates a metaphysical idea that is both a process and a place, i.e. a new place and new process of adjustment to a new reality.

The notion of frontier as held by the 19th century historian Frederick Jackson Turner (1999), a founder of the Progressive Movement, saw the continued existence of democracy as contingent upon America's expanses. Like President Thomas Jefferson before him, Turner thought that an independent life in which the individual is the master of his land and his fate ensured the development of political liberty. He saw the struggle for survival by the pioneering settlers in the Wild West as the factor that had shaped their individualistic character of combining resourcefulness and inventiveness, the products of free-living conditions in a wild region, and shaping a combination of roughness, aggression and strength. The outcome of this process shapes the individualistic character either of the lone equestrian, who single-handedly grapples with a hostile nature and sometimes goes to his own town or to others overseas to help the community in their struggle against nature or to fight the bad guys, i.e. evil.

Historian and sociologist Seymour Martin Lipsett (1922) argues that the five values upon which the American experiences are based - liberty, equality, individualism, populism and laissez-faire - could not exist without the one basic condition that is unique to the United States: "plenty" (Gutfeld, 2002). The Americans concentrated on the exploitation of plenty above all; mythical individualism helped them achieve this. Consequently, America's plentitude, together with its uniqueness, caused other nations and societies to envy them, but it is also necessary in order to recognize what is involved in the sacrifice of moral values and justice for the sake of the acquisition of wealth.

Why are the American Weltanschauung and its implementations meeting resistance and are so underrated in many places across the world today? Alternatively, vice-versa, what makes it difficult for the American liberal mind to deal with the outside world beyond its shores? These questions have been frequently asked in different forms during these last years and specifically in relation to the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts. The answer to both questions is found in American history and in the American ideals of plentitude, uniqueness, laissez-faire, individualism, populism and the Protestant ethos. American idealistic nationalism justifies the assertion of superiority of the American people over other peoples as well as ascertaining the assertion of the superiority of American ideals over other ones. Implementing a reality of liberal-democratic values all over the

world leads toward a tendency to absolutize and dichotomize war and peace according to basic Western values. So it happened that the enthusiastic liberals most ready to support war providing they can turn it into a crusade for advancing humanistic ideals have been condemned by many societies and cultures.

The United States has trouble understanding revolutionary ferment in the rest of the world because it has never experienced a true revolution, fighting instead a War of Independence and not even one of natives against alien conquerors (like that of the Algerians against the French, Indians against the British, etc.). Their “revolution” was the settlers against the Mother Country. Furthermore, reflecting on past revolutions, the Americans presuppose that real revolutions are remarkable but rare. Even nowadays, as the proletariat in Third World slums continues to radicalize, the American social-political policy is to encourage and support the middle classes all over the world, middle classes that are becoming increasingly conservative and less willing to fight for the existing order.

In American eyes, the world in which we live has become a dangerous place where large numbers of people resent the freedom, democracy, wealth, power, and culture of the United States. They vigorously oppose their efforts to persuade or coerce other societies to accept American values of human rights, democracy and capitalism (Huntington, 1997). Besides, it is becoming harder and harder for Americans to be able to dis-

tinguish between true world-wide partners, (who would like to share the same *Weltanschauung* and values), opportunistic allies with whom they have no common interests, strategic partner-competitors with whom they have a mixed relationship, antagonists with whom negotiation is possible, and between unrelenting enemies who would try to destroy their civilization, culture and the democratic system (Huntington, 1981).

Culturally and as a secular political entity, the U.S. is a Protestant-Christian and not a Judeo-Christian nation. According to Huntington, (2004) secularism (unlike atheism) does not clash with religion; rather, the two complete each other, with civil religion serving as an adhesive between political secularism and religious secularism. There is quite a bit of confusion in the book regarding the essence of American religion. In some places, the term denotes a universal faith in God (Christians of all stripes, Jews, Muslims and even Hindus believe in the transcendental entity that created the world and continues to direct it); elsewhere it means Christianity in general. In many other places, it stands for Protestantism, usually American-style Protestantism, which is as unique as the rest of the country’s culture. This uniqueness is what made the U.S. into the land of promise - the goal and destination, Huntington believes, of every person on earth. Nevertheless, that is also its biggest problem. The unique American creed finds its foremost expression in the English language (as the only language uniting all Americans), in Christianity, in commitment to the religious community, in the English

legal conception and heritage, in the personal accountability of the governing figures, in individual rights and individualism in general, in the work ethic, and in the unshakable belief that individuals have a right and a duty to create heaven on earth. Huntington is himself a great believer in the American myth of the shoeshine boy who can go far in life through hard work, profound intention (both expressed in actual work and God's work) and perseverance. Certain central concepts are not part of this paradigm: democracy, capitalism and multicultural society.

The U.S., Huntington argues (2004), has not yet completely lost its Protestant core culture, but this no longer commands a hegemonic position. From a country of immigrants, the U.S. has turned into a country of Diasporas, with each ethnic group serving as a lobby for a foreign country or people. The loyalty of these groups is uncertain and even double; in some cases, their members' primary loyalty is not to the U.S. at all, even though they are its citizens and in some cases were even born and raised as Americans. As a result, the civic multicultural society turns to be a nightmare, according to Huntington. Huntington blames the economic, political, and above all academic, elites of embracing anti-patriotic and trans-national values, and of displacing their loyalty from the American nation to abstract universal values that often clash with American values and interests. Globalization, he argues, has created for these elites loci of interests and loyalty outside their own country (for example, most large American corpora-

tions have become multinational, and neither their top executives nor many of their shareholders are American). Many people outside the U.S. view globalization as "Americanization." But Huntington, like a number of conservative thinkers, sees it as the de-Americanization of American economy and values, and as the blurring of boundaries between the national and the meta-national - which to Huntington is also a-national, if not anti-national.

Huntington's approach is full of logical and conceptual contradictions. He rejects collective rights (mostly those of non-whites and non-Protestants) in support of the protection of individual rights within the U.S. in the name of liberalism. At the same time, however, he argues for the absolute privilege of national (collective) rights over the trans-national individual rights of "the world's citizens". This double standard is underscored by, on the one hand, Huntington's objection to having international bodies (the United Nations, the International Court at the Hague, and so on) investigate and sit in judgment of U.S. violations of human rights (which are distinct, individual rights) and, on the other hand, Huntington's defense of the American right to intervene anywhere in the world to protect these same values which usually include religious extremism and fanaticism. In other words, the rules of the game - in the U.S. and elsewhere - are determined according to the interests of the very stratum to which Huntington himself belongs and whose privileges must be protected.

On the domestic front, Huntington attacks the laws of affirmative action, which he sees as one of the reasons for the decline, and deterioration of Americanism. He is, as stated above, a meritocrat who believes that acceptance to educational institutions to public office and to jobs in general, as well as professional advancement, should be based solely on one's qualifications. Huntington venerates wars, which he sees as the primary cause of humanity's advancement. Huntington expresses his conclusion clear and loud: "... the worst thing that ever happened to the U.S.," he writes plainly and without flinching, "is the collapse of the evil Soviet empire; the best thing was the September 11 attacks which restored the sense of an external threat, revived American patriotism and led to the declaration of America's war on global terror." (Huntington, 2004)

It is therefore not surprising that Americans may find themselves isolated within their own world hegemony, an international consequence that seems to be similar to their past national history when the individualistic character of the lone equestrian was shaped. There is also the danger that a country of liberty can become a garrison state (Brzezinski, 1998), and all other countries in the world, which are under American influence and control, will be treated as wide enormous ranches of the Wild West. These dangers stem from the paradox that the world's first absolute hegemonic superpower is also a democratic state. Thus, flawed policies could jeopardize not only the effectiveness of

America's hegemony, but also the democratic nature and the values of its own regime.

The capacity to maintain world hegemony depends on the ability of Americans not to ignore the need for those allies who are sharing the same democratic values and on their own volition to treat other countries not as vassal states subservient to the U.S. in order to accept America's leadership. Consequently, as a counterpoint to Huntington's ambiguous and distrustful approach toward other cultures and civilizations, America's principal challenge in contemporary times is to find the golden mean between a wise reliance on allies and the superiority of American might. An important precondition for this balance is that the use of American force must not become a factor that creates resistance to, and animosity towards, the U.S, as it has been happening during the conflict in Iraq.

This change in the attitude towards other cultures should lead to the idea that American cultural hegemony will continue to be dominant and so the American *Weltanschauung*, especially because of American superiority in mass media and technology. American society must be aware of the political implications of its political, economical and technological hegemony that creates resistance against it and inflames the fear of a deluge of local cultures with American products - from Hollywood to a MacDonal'd's hamburger. The consequence of this analysis means the lone horseman's course of action which leads America's absolutely hege-

monic policy, a policy that should be moderated and even shifted toward multilateralism among equals which means not only changes in style and approach but in substance as well.

The social-political analysis in this paper addresses many of the ambiguities that a critique of ideology and values, especially in the fields of sociology and ideology, tends to evoke. It shows that recognizing the way powerful interests color our conceptions of truth and value yet need not result in a purge of all existing categories. Moreover, this recognition need not end in a call for reflection that is more critical and a mapping of relationships of power, thereby increasing a sense of anomie. This kind of critical reflection suggests that an important start to uncovering the ways that we act and think is to ignore our dependence on genuine communication. Yet, it is only a start. We must bring this assessment to life in our social actions and in our personal commitments. By being aware of what came before and what may come after, we must all strive to do so.

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The “Return” of Religious and Historiographic Discourse: Church and Civil Society in Southeastern Europe (19th – 20th centuries)

Abstract: This paper focuses on the revision of the classical thesis concerning secularism the progressive domination of the discussion around the issue of the civil society. These two poles facilitated the development of a series of historiographic approaches that particularly touched on the areas of Eastern and Southeastern Europe’s history. Here we are concerned with three central cases of historiographic discourse’s production, as indicators of the dominant “paradigm”’s change: the first concerns the role of the Russian church in the pre-Revolutionary period; the second, the issue of secularization and its relations with Islam in the Ottoman Empire; and finally the third, the problem of internal fragmentation of the Orthodox *millet* with the establishment of Greek autocephalus Church in 1833 and (self-sufficiency) and later the Bulgarian Exarchate. These new approaches were intended to solve various long-standing problems and for the most part resulted in solutions within existing opposites of historiographic schools of thought.

The dynamic re-emergence of religious phenomena within the circumstances of cultural and economic globalization, such as those shaped after the decline of state socialism (a harsh version Rousseau’s “civil religion”¹), has reformulated the conditions of production and orientation of historiographical discourse in relation to the past decades. Whether in the case of analysis of religious fundamentalism in the periphery and semi-periphery², or of theoretical approaches that treat the religious sphere as an inseparable, integral part of “civil society” in the post-industrial Western countries, the reexamination of the role of religion in relation to the construction of the social field (and to its history) seems imperative.

What will mainly occupy us are the historiographical elaborations as far as they concern the role not of the religious phenomenon in general but of the priesthoods

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in relation to the question of the emergence of public sphere in Southeastern Europe³.

There are two presuppositions of *the formation of historiographical discourse* concerning religion that were primarily shaped during the decade of the 1990's:

a) the revision of the classical thesis concerning secularism⁴. The concept of secularism according to the advocates of revisionism does not necessarily include the marginalization of the religious field as a necessary presupposition for the emergence of an autonomous public sphere. On the contrary, it considers the religious element as a component of the constitution of civil society; whether because representatives of religion can participate in supporting political and social rights against the state - obviously in the case where the religious institutions and the state are separate - or because the presence of the religious element functions to preserve a vanishing spirituality, but also one endangered, by the generalized commercialization of the social structure.

b) the progressive domination of the discussion around the issue of the civil society. The discussion about the revision is especially linked to the Anglo-Saxon domain (and here we would like to draw attention to the important role played by the translation of the classic work of Jürgen Habermas⁵ and to recall his discussion with Reinhart Koselleck in the 1960's) with the issue of the emergence of the public sphere in the civil society of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This discussion is directly associated with the dynamic return of the *concept of civil society*, which was expurgated

for the most part from the remnants of the works of Marx⁶ and Gramsci⁷. It came back and established to the scene with Ernest Gellner's later work⁸, where the analysis of the concept counterpoised with that of Umma, the Islamic community of the faithful, very clearly shows the alternatives of distinction or subjugation between the two spheres: political and religious.

These two poles (the revised position concerning secularism and the domination of the discussion about the limits of formation of civil society) facilitated the development of a series of historiographical approaches that particularly touched on the areas of Eastern and Southeastern Europe's history. Here we are concerned with three central cases of historiographic discourse's production, as indicators of the dominant "paradigm" 's change: the first concerns the role of the Russian church in the pre-Revolutionary period; the second, the issue of secularization and its relations with Islam in the Ottoman Empire; and finally the third, the problem of internal fragmentation of the Orthodox *millet* with the establishment of Greek autocephalus Church in 1833 and later that of Bulgarian Exarchate⁹. These new approaches were intended to solve various long-standing problems and for the most part resulted in solutions within existing opposites of historiographical schools of thought.

In the case of Russia, the discussion about civil society became prominent primarily during the post-Soviet period in the 1990's. Essentially, however, this discussion had already been prepared by historians of the Anglo-Saxon domain¹⁰ during the 1980's in relation to

the assessment of the role of the Russian church in the pre-Revolutionary period. The traditional view of the church as anti-Revolutionary, an organ of the czarist regime, was progressively substituted with an image of ultimately subversive institution of this regime, especially when the aristocracy attempted to use or better yet to intensify its legislative role which it had already undertaken, especially during the reign of Nicolas II. Gregory Freeze supports this contention in several of his works, mainly concerning the attitude of the lower clergy¹¹.

In the case of Turkey, the discussion was basically carried out about the collision between secularized version of Islam proposed and supported by Kemalist regime, and radical-fundamentalist Islam mainly represented by the Refah Partisi (Welfare Party) during the 90's. In this case the correlation between a radical version of the religion and the emergence of civil society, which assented to the lessening of the *authoritarian* characteristics of the Kemalist military regime¹², posed the problem at a much more advanced stage than in the Russian case, although the denunciations of fundamentalist political stream represented by Erbakan's version usually revealed this dissent in international news reports. Did it, however, has some type of impact on historiographical discourse? In my opinion, Deringil's book, "*The Well-protected Domains*" is a characteristic example. His basic argument is that, during the reign of Abdul Hamid with pan-*Islamism* as the well-known dominant and prevailing ideological scheme, the modernizing process was not discontinued, but on the contrary, the effect of bureaucratic reformation of the

Tanzimat period continued unbroken (this is the "tacit knowledge"¹³ of a service elite, who promote reforms nonetheless under the mantle of "religious vocabulary").

It is obviously a question of a reproduction of the paradigm of "permanent reformation". This was supplied in the interim by Serif Mardin's work and his attempt essentially to preserve the paradigm formulated by Niyazi Berkes concerning the process of secularization of the Ottoman State¹⁴. This secularism not only steadily failed to reject Islam but actually incorporated it into the modernizing process¹⁵, the characteristic example of which is Namik Kemal and the Young Turks. For the most part this school of thought has identified the reformation process with this secularism (i.e. the religious language of the elite in order to impose secularist reformations), while progressively incorporating into the paradigm what Mardin calls a "dream" of Western society: "the dream of civil society"¹⁶.

The case of the fragmentation of the Orthodox *millet* was studied in fact by P. Kitromilides based on the revision of a plan of Modern Greek (Neo-Hellenist) "Enlightenment"¹⁷. This resulted not only in the elevation of the Balkan dimension of the phenomenon but also in a new denominator entering the analysis: that of considering the juxtaposition between Orthodoxy and nationalism¹⁸, a position which in reality consists of the abstract authentication of the central plan of Greek historiography in the 1980's, which contrasted nineteenth century Athens (the national center) with Constantinople (the de facto center of the empire)¹⁹. This transference to the level of structural juxtaposition

of religion and nationalism led to a standardized authentication of relations of Greek autocephalus Church in relation to the *Patriarchate* of Constantinople: the first appearance of the classic example of state classification of the church within the adaptation of the scheme of national ideology (the state on the side of political protection while the church sanctifies the nation by identifying it with the chosen people).

On the other hand, the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople is considered as the protector of ecumenical ideology since it opposes the dissolution of Christian ecumenism, the representation of which it assumed after the fall of the Byzantine Empire. These two versions of Orthodoxy are juxtaposed in order to show that one is more acceptable to the dictates of civil society, which is fundamentally opposed to the reconstruction of the past through nationalist discourse.

And in these three cases the political consequences of the reconciliation between religion and *the statutory conditions of the public sphere's* emergence, in exchange for the former withdrawal from the procedures of sanctification of the national body, are evident in a world where the issues of national dominance are brought up for discussion. Moreover, religions, especially monotheistic ones, have always been more suited to an imperial environment. However, this approach wants to show religions or various versions of them as resistant to state paternalism, and portrays the subjugation of religious institutions as the beginning of a distorted process of secularism. Apart from this approach being preferred on a political level as a canonical example of separation

of church and state, it avoids investigating or rather cannot investigate the relations which the church developed with the civil society precisely during the period of its state subjugation.

Let's take the very interesting example of the fragmentation of the Orthodox *millet in the Ottoman Empire*. It is very interesting that the ideological-political stream of Neo-Orthodoxy in Greece during the last decades, movement which condemns the declaration of Greek autocephalus Church as a version of state classification of the church, is identified with the supposed counter view which considers Orthodoxy incompatible with nationalism (that is incompatible with its classification within the nation state)²⁰: the two views do not see that there is a repetition of structural classification which was also repeated in the case of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Ottoman authority (deriving legitimacy) and this likening on the part of those who support Greek autocephalus Church, mainly for reasons arising from Russian influence. If in fact the statutory conditions of the Greek autocephalus' creation were of Western origin (Catholic or Protestant), as the basic argument of the Neo-Orthodoxy's supporters had proposed, then the separation of church and state would come naturally or the canonical method of organization of Lutheranism and in particular Calvinism, would appear in relation to the church and the society in the Greek case also²¹ - the fact of delay in this process cannot be investigated by these two schools of thought.

The method of employment of the declaration of Greek autocephalus by these two schools came into dominance in actual fact with the result that neither could evaluate the quality of the secularism that it caused: as far as secularism is concerned, the state classification of the church (even as a distortion) and not the expulsion/incorporation of the church into civil society with the characteristics of individual/citizen. And this does not happen because the church must exercise not only a legislative role with the orientations of the state, participating not only in the determination of internal or of external enemies but primarily in the process of social hegemony (this limit could incorporate notions such as making normative behavior, shaping civil morals, organizing social relations). State classification is only one side of the coin: the other is that which takes place amidst the contribution of the church in the control of "civil society." This phenomenon must be interpreted on the historians' part: what are the reasons that led to the selection of the church, in East and Southeastern Europe, as the central mechanism of social production of normative discourse and exercise of social control?

Here we can certainly make use of the ideas of Serif Mardin concerning the church's role in the context of a traditional pro-modernist society, although the observation refers primarily to the workings of Islam within this context²². According to Mardin, religion and its representatives, play the role of middlemen, the intermediary between the individual and the state. And in fact, particularly in the case of Islam, which is characterized by

the lack of a classical priesthood, as is the case of the Christian church, the capacity of the *ulema* is enmeshed as law makers/legislators of secular authority, of the teacher, of the judge, - legality, knowledge of the law, and education are under the jurisdiction of the same body known for its sacred knowledge. The intermediary function was adopted by the Orthodox clergy mainly for the obvious reason of representing the Orthodox population in the Ottoman Empire and is concerned with the entire extent of so-called "privilege" (much has been said about the latter in recent years): control of the educational process, legal transactions, tax collecting responsibilities, civil domain (marriage, divorce, inheritance), the domain of civil representation before the Court remain vital for the exercise of ecclesiastical authority.

Consequently, the domain that religion occupies - and this perhaps can constitute a general observation for the whole of Eastern and Southeastern Europe - is in fact the intermediate social domain, in which the intermediary functions of the clergy are engaged. The intermediate social domain, in which the limits of public and private²³ are found and thus form the conditions for the emergence of an autonomous public sphere (and at the same time the formation of an independent economic domain) are simultaneously the realm which traditionally claims the clergy in order to propagate its authority.

Because of this we see that the clergy does not refrain from but, on the contrary, recognizes and contrib-

utes to the process of collective organization of the social civil domain: from the moment that it cannot have complete control as in the case of pro-modernist social formations, it attempts to secure its vast presence in this sphere. When possible the church invades these social formations (for example groups that cannot exclude the influence of the church) and its collaboration creates hybrid conditions. This same church creates organizations, or tolerates their function, while taking a critical stance when *bourgeois* (civil) collectivity becomes exclusive, as in the case of the Masonic orders (if in fact it is excluded from these).²⁴

In particular we must closely consider the second case because it concerns the function of all the para-ecclesiastical organizations, which according to Neo-Orthodox criticism are the result of Protestant influence. In fact especially in this case, we can diagnose a main device in the control of the “intermediary” social domain and it would be interesting to see what the criteria of distinction are between a club or society and a para-ecclesiastical organization with philanthropic aims. What are the limits of and the requirements for the development of a civil morality within these organizations?

The criticism employed by the Neo-Orthodox viewpoint is precisely that their corporate organization, which is derived from the domain of social autonomy set up through an civil legal framework, cancels the pastoral relationship with the bishop. Christos Giannaras, for example, considers these organizations as outside - and not para-ecclesiastical²⁵. Their existence calls into

question the intermediary role of the clergy in organizing the relations between God and the faithful in order to replace it. The Protestant inspiration diffusion of the priesthood to the faithful, however, can only result in the organization of the social domain with a canonical model (discipline, work ethic, etc.). But does this argument hold?

The disorganization of the role of the clergy as intermediary between God and the faithful is the condition in order for the ecclesiastical discourse as civil morality to reign in the intermediate social domain, in which it intercedes between the state and the citizen. And in this process the official church not only substitutes but also contributes enormously.

In our opinion, we have nothing to do with a dominance of the Protestant model within Orthodoxy, but on the contrary with a reorganization of the sovereign discourse of the church as preferential ally of the state within the borrowed version of the Protestant example. The element of corporate organization is borrowed from one in order to cater to executive personnel as a reservoir of the faithful, while simultaneously in any case never calling into question the role of the clergy as intermediary. And it is not abandoned exactly because it cannot abandon the process of regulating society.

This is the reason why the church does not place itself naturally in the civil society - something which the school of Neo-Orthodoxy suppresses. While it permits the church to participate in the formation of civil morality, at the same time it exclusively controls the domain of the religious market.

And if in fact it had been threshed out from the Protestant ethic, it should be receptive to multi-fragmentation and individualization and above all abandon its exclusive position in the market of religious conscience²⁶ - but for such a basic condition the critical role of the priesthood must be called into question.

The relation between these organizations and the official church, far from being a direct juxtaposition, can be characterized as follows: for the entire twentieth century there was in reality an exchange of powerful executives between these organizations and the clergy, without ever challenging the intermediary role of the priesthood between the faithful and God. The existence of these organizations was enough to make the area of civil morality autonomous.

The likening of the church to the state in the Ottoman Empire as much in the case of reformers as in the case of a section of the clergy, the repetition and its formation as representation catalytically shapes the relations of religion to the state. It is typical that whenever necessary the representatives of the clergy support the authenticity of the Holy Laws alongside the constitutionality of the General Regulations (the constitutional text which was derived from the Great Mixed (clerical) Assembly in Istanbul between the years 1858-1860), it being more necessary to act adaptable to theories of the nation state. When the Holy Laws became an object of invocation, their legislative element was not theological authenticity but the fact that they represented that version of the Christian religion most well

suited to the nation state model of constitutional monarchy. On the contrary, the General Regulations as the most important expression of the reformation (“secularism”) movement in the Orthodox *millet* should have been only to the degree that they did not provoke imbalances in the model of the “innate” constitutionality of Orthodoxy²⁷.

It seems then as if the reformations in the Orthodox *millet*, considered as its process of secularism, joined the state and the church in a relation not of classification but of reflection and mirage. The state does not classify religion - we could further say that it undermines the traditional ruling force. On the other hand, however, what is also of interest is that the religious attempt to propagate within through the adoption of the state models. In order to settle the issues of social and political hegemony within the *millet*, the representatives of the juxtaposed wing invoked a superior ideology - a symbolic reality - that organic relation between Orthodoxy and the constitutional model, precisely to legalize the defense of their proportional interests. This invocation, however, would contribute to the blurring of the boundaries between the two camps - religious and political - one of the most important peculiarities in the Balkan region that the nineteenth century bequeathed to the twentieth.

This return to Augustine, however, the likening, that is, of the religious and the political, one could call common to both the Catholic and Orthodox church at the end of the nineteenth century—a return that did not

simply want to recall the distinction between the City of God and that of Man,²⁸ but to organize the latter according to the adopted, inviolable principles of the former—did it have the wider aim of settling inter-communal clashes? In my opinion, the problem is connected to the emergence of that which we would call “civil society.”

We began with the solution given by N. Berkes to the problem of secularism with the shift of the separation of church and state in itself to that of government from religion in the context of the transition of a traditional to a modern society. In reality, however, the appeal of the constitutional scheme, which has been analyzed in the case of Greek Orthodox community, undermines the framework of application of the theory of secularism. The common representational position—Orthodoxy as the archetypal version of the constitutional monarchy—is formed as a result of internal clashes in the community and not as a generalized acceptance of a transition from a traditional to a modern society. The solution could probably be found by confronting the internal clashes in the Patriarchate as well as in the wider domain of the Orthodox millet in the Ottoman Empire (especially within the development of Literary Societies) as one version of the emergence of civil society,²⁹ and always in the context of a state that promotes the separation of the political from the religious in order to vest exclusive administration in the former. In my opinion, three complementary interpretations could be developed as a solution to this:

a) Invocation of constitutionality while giving to the “organic intellectuals” of both sides the power to resolve the issue of political and religious relations within the *millet*, allowing them simultaneously to speak for the ideal manner of organization of the state. Their response becomes the organic core of the state. This argument has special significance since constitutionality comprises the common characteristic of the restructured *millet* on the one hand and the state on the other, making “superfluous” the absorption of the politicians responsible.

b) Invocation of constitutionality also allows them all to speak. There are analogous consequences with the role of the early use of “constitutional liberalism” in the Greek State. Consequently, it comprises the condition for the development of political discourse within the Greek Orthodox community in the name of different politicians, secular-clerical groups, and general interest groups.

c) If we accept the solution to Berkes’ offered by Serif Mardin,³⁰ in other words, that religion not only in the Ottoman Empire but also in the Middle East plays the role that should be played by the absent intermediary institutions between the community (or individual) and the state,³¹ that is, it dominates the communal space within which what is called civil society emerged in the West, then the issue of the separation of the political and the religious field becomes more complex. The likening of religion to the state, from the perspective of the representatives of the Orthodox *millet*, does not only occur in order to confront the problem posed by their

separation or distinction of the political from the spiritual sphere inside the *millet*, but also to further a modification of the intermediary realm under its hegemony. This realm was threatened with extinction by institutions whether “societies of citizens” (politicians, economists, and educators) or the “public sphere” in Habermas’ version.³² For this reason, it was not a game of representation but a fierce competition between interest groups for the imposition of a hegemonic discourse that would impede the autonomy of the emerging public sphere at the same time that the *millet* was defended by the regime of hetero-determination that the Ottoman state wanted to impose on it.

The constitutional model did not prevail because the reformers proposed it as a transitional restructuring of the *millet*, but rather because the clergy espoused and developed a version promoting constitutional monarchy. Their target was not only to impede the dominance of the secular within the various transformations, but to avoid the formation of a public sphere without their knowledge, which one way or another in Eastern and Southeastern Europe was inherent in the emergence of an ethnic discourse.³³

In the case of the Ottoman Empire, religion did not contribute to the emergence of the public sphere in the manner of the radical democratization brought by the spread of Protestantism in Western Europe.³⁴ On the

contrary, if the representatives of the church had wanted to preserve their own welfare they would have followed the familiar path of state classification (either in the version of nation-building or in the prospective preservation of the imperial model with whose ecumenical profile it certainly agreed), in order to avoid as much as possible its withdrawal from the intermediary social sphere which it controlled, a sphere which was as threatened by centralizing tendencies of the Ottoman State as by the emerging civil community. Finally the Church in the East was allied with the State (either the ethnic state or the imperial state) in order to impede as much as possible the formation of a public sphere in a social realm to which it once legitimately belonged. It did not, however, necessarily take the character of prohibitive and restrictive measures. The form of constitutionality allowed the members of the different persuasions that clashed in the Patriarchy to contribute to the restructuring of the intermediary sphere, to propagate the likening of the religious to the political at the same time that they were struggling for hegemonic presence at the center of the emerging institutions of “civil society” (the attempt to control the collective organization of the millet), caring simultaneously to maintain as far as possible the relative untouched autonomy of the millet against the Ottoman political power (the Privileged).

Notes:

1 Jean – Jacques Rousseau, *The social contract and other later political writings*, edited and translated by Victor Courevitch, Cambridge, U.K.; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

2 Youssef M. Choueiri, *Islamic fundamentalism*, Boston, MA : Twayne, 1990, Ahmad S. Moussalli (ed.), “Islamic fundamentalism : myths and realities”, Reading, U.K.: Ithaca Press, c1998.

3 Geoff Eley, “Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century” Craig Calhoun (~.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, The MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts-London 1992, ~. 289-339.

4 Charles Taylor, “Modes of Secularism” in Rajeev Bhargava (ed.) *Secularism and its Critics*, Dehli: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 31-53.

5 Jürgen Habermas , *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere : an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, c1989) [*Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit : Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*] .Neuwied, Berlin : Luchterhand, 1962.

6 Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of right"* [Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts], translated from German by Annette Jolin and Joseph O'Malley. Edited with an introd. and notes by Joseph O'Malley, Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press, 1970.

7 Chantal Mouffe (ed.), *Gramsci and marxist theory*, London ; Boston : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.

8 Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: The Civil Society and its Rivals*, London : Hamish Hamilton, 1994.

9 See for example, P. Kitromilides, “‘Imagined Communities’ and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans”; in P. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-Eastern Europe*, Hampshire 1994, chs. 11, 12, and most recently, Dimitrios Stamatopoulos, *Reform and Secularization: towards a reconstruction of the History of the*

Ecumenical Patriarchate in the 19th century, Athens: Alexandria 2003 (in Greek).

10 See the Gregory Freeze’s article and the bibliography which was cited there, Gregory L. Freeze, “Subversive Piety: Religion and the Political Crisis in Late Imperial Russia”, *The Journal of Modern History*, 68:2 (1996) 308-350.

11 It’s important here to recall that Selim Deringil pointed out that the authoritarian clerical regime at the end of the 19th century was common in the Ottoman Empire of Abdul Hamid, in Russia under Nicolas I and Alexander III and in the Japan of Mitsuhiro of the Meiji Dynasty. See Selim Deringil, *The Well-protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*, London; New York: I.B. Tauris 1998, pp. 16-17.

12 Nilüfer Göle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Policies: the Case of Turkey” Norton Augustus Richard (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East*, vol. 2, (New York-Köln: E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1996) pp. 17-43.

13 Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, p.166-170.

14 Niyazi Berkes, *The development of secularism in Turkey*, Routledge, 1998² (1st edition Montreal 1964).

15 Davison Andrew, *Secularism and revivalism in Turkey: a hermeneutic reconsideration*: Yale University Press, New Haven, 1998, p.153-154.

16 ^erif Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam” John A. Hall (ed.), *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995) pp. 292-293. See also by the same author, “Ideology and Religion in the Turkish Revolution,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2 (1971) pp. 197-211. For a similar “dream” on behalf of the great opponent of the Ottoman state in the North, see, Laura Engelstein, “The Dream of Civil Society in Tsarist Russia: Law, State, and Religion” Nancy Bermeo, Philip Nord (ed.), *Civil Society before Democracy. Lessons from Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham-Boulder-New York-Oxford 2000, ~.23-41

17 P. Kitromelides, *Tradition, Enlightenment and Revolution: ideological change in eighteenth and nineteenth century Greece*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1978 and, especially by the same author, *The Enlightenment as social criticism: Iosipos Moisiodax and Greek culture in the eighteenth century*, Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1992.

18 P. Kitromelides, *Enlightenment, nationalism and orthodoxy: studies in the culture and political thought of South-Eastern Europe*, Aldershot, Hampshire; Brookfield, Vt.: Variorum, 1994.

19 See the excellent analysis in E. Kofos, "Patriarch Joachim III (1878-1884) and the irredentist policy of the Greek state", *JMGS*, 4:2 (1986) 107-120.

20 See for example G. Metallinos, *Church and Polity in the Orthodox Tradition*, Armos, Athens 2000 (in Greek).

21 Ch. Giannaras, *Orthodoxy and West in Modern Greece*, Athens, 1992, p.278 (in Greek), and after for the cooperation of the supporters of Adamantios Korais, the well-known representative of Greek Enlightenment, with Western missionaries.

22 ^'erif Mardin, "Civil Society and Islam" p.293.

23 Here one could investigate the historic lack of social radicalism in Orthodoxy in contrast to the practice of the Roman Catholic clergy in social movements, e.g. Latin America. Social radicalism requires the experience of distinguishing public from the private and the incorporation of the church in the latter even if this happens in the form of a self-regulating organization.

24 Douglas Smith, *Working the Rough Stone: Freemasonry and Society in Eighteenth-Century Russia*. Russian Studies Series, No. 6. De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1999. In a chapter on "The Russian Public; or, Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century" the author demonstrates exactly how Novikov's Freemasonry fit into the new "public sphere" created by the boom in publishing and social activity, which came to characterize the latter half of the reign of Catherine II.

25 Ch. Giannaras, o.p., p.348-405.

26 See for this important issue, R. Stark & W.S. Bainbridge, *The future of religion. Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation*, Uni-

versity of California Press, 1985, and A *Theory of Religion*, New York, 1987.

27 Dimitrios Stamatopoulos, "Church as State: Representations of the Orthodox Millet and the Model of the Constitutional Monarchy", *Mnimon* 23 (2002) p.40-76 (in Greek)

28 Saint Augustine *De Civitate Dei*, XIV.28; XV.1 & 21, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, in aedibus B. G. Teubneri, ~ 1928-1929.

29 For a survey of the theoretical problem of "civil society" see Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

30 ^'erif Mardin, "Ideology and Religion", pp. 204-207.

31 This must be considered and the origin of the point developed by Sia Anagnostopoulou concerning the *millet* as "intermediary sphere". See Sia Anagnostopoulou, *Asia Minor: the Greek-Orthodox communities*. Ellinika Grammata, Athens 1998, p. 278-279 (in Greek). The "intermediary spheres" preexist the reformation and certainly preexist as well official attribution of privilege on the part of the Ottoman State.

32 In Habermas' version, the "public sphere" (development of societal organizations of the civil class including clubs, societies, Masonic orders, etc.) is distinguished from "civil society" (which includes the sphere of commercial production, essentially the domain of private economic interests). The hypothesis and especially at the of the emergence of the "public sphere" in Southeastern Europe for a time (end of the nineteenth century), which according to Habermas simultaneously began to be eclipsed in Western Europe, remains provocative. See J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, p. 5. The development of the press, the assessment of its role in the organization of political discourse in Constantinople at the end of the nineteenth century but also the corresponding spread of societal organization (educational, philanthropic, societies, etc) to which we have mentioned, can result in powerful indication of encouragement of this theoretical paradigm. For a criticism opposed to the distinction of the public from the private sphere in the work of Jürgen

Habermas and Philippe Ariès (*History of Private Life: Passions of the Renaissance*, ed. Roger Chartier, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, Cambridge Mass. 1989) based on the most recent work of Roger Chartier Joan Landes, see. Dena Goodman, “Public sphere and private life: toward a synthesis of current historiographical approaches to the Old Regime”, *History and Theory*, 31:1 (1992) pp. 1-20.

33 Geoff Eley, op. cit., p. .296.

34 See for example the role of religion in the emergence of the “public sphere” in eighteenth- century England, David Zaret, “Religion, Science, and Printing in the Public Spheres in Seventeenth-Century England” Craig Calhoun (~.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, c1992, p. 212-235.

Whose Civil Society?: The Politicization of Religion in Transitional Cuba

Abstract: For decades, the United States has supported the development of civil society in various places around the world. Promoted as integral to democracy, civil society projects have come to include religion and religious freedom as significant components. U.S. experts point to tolerance of all faiths and the presence of voluntary religious association as essential checks to state power and necessary to a free society. Because of its unique relationship with Cuba, the United States support of civil society there has addressed religion in a way unlike that in other countries. This article examines very recent developments there, placing them in larger social and historical context of politics and church/state relations.

The Bush administration's hopes of seeing an end to Fidel Castro's Cuba have intensified with the creation of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba (CAFC), which strengthens a U.S.-directed approach to building civil society there. Ambassador Roger F. Noriega, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, summarized the CAFC's mandate as having two primary areas of focus: first "to provide recommendations on ways the United States can help the Cuban people bring about an expeditious end to the dictatorship; and, secondly on how the United States could assist a free Cuban government meet its humanitarian and reconstruction challenges, if requested." In his June 11 statement, Noriega failed to mention whose request might warrant U.S. action. He did remind observers

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that the commission identified six inter-related tasks: empowering Cuban civil society; reducing financial flows to the regime; undermining the regime's "succession strategy" (i.e., from Fidel to Raul Castro); breaking the regime's blockade of information to the Cuban people; increasing public diplomacy efforts abroad to counter Cuban propaganda; and encouraging multilateral efforts to challenge the Cuban regime.¹ In influencing this change, the U.S. government is giving religion a primary role.

The placing of civil society efforts at the top of the list should come as no surprise, as the United States has been engaged in such attempts in various parts of the globe for decades. Since the Reagan administration, the U.S. has expanded its efforts to include the support of civil society as important components of its foreign policy. Such a move was promoted as instrumental in inspiring the spread of democratic values around the globe. Empowering people of various regions to voice their opinions and take action through nongovernmental organizations and citizens' associations was seen as necessary in strengthening democracy and weakening non-democratic, authoritarian regimes. The movement continued through the Clinton administration. Though Reagan, Bush, Clinton and Bush have differed in their application methods, the evangelization of democracy through the building of civil society has remained constant and strong.² However, the specificity with which the Bush administration has outlined the inclusion of

civil society in a plan to "assist" in "hastening Cuba's transition," warrants special attention.

In places where U.S. evangelization of anything is considered evidence of its imperialist tendencies, foreign backing of civil society has met with suspicion, criticism and resistance. Cuba is one of those places. Longstanding political and philosophical differences between the two nations have made it very difficult to build the common ground necessary for initiating fruitful dialog addressing an authentic role for civil society in Cuba's future that is initiated by Cubans themselves. The term "economics" has been politicized. The term "democracy" has been politicized. The term "civil society" has been politicized. And in moves toward finding a place for religion in civil society, discussions of faith, God and religious expression have become politicized.

To some observers, it may seem that religion must remain absent from any discussions of civil society. Equating what is civil with what is secular suggests that religion would naturally be excluded from this process. But centuries-long threads of political philosophy—from Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau to Hegel and Marx—have devoted much examination to religion's rich and complex relationship with civil society. These are the same threads that have profoundly influenced Cuban politics for the last four decades.³ However, the strained association with Cuba has prevented the depth of these political analyses to enter into a U.S. understanding of religion in contemporary or a post-Castro

Cuba that is complex but genuine, rather than oversimplified.

In the United States, Fidel Castro is portrayed as an evil dictator who took power by force and who abolished virtually all individual rights, among those the right to worship freely.⁴ Fundamental to perpetuating this image is the suggestion that all Cubans were pious and devout Catholics before January 1, 1959 when Castro rose to power, and that they will be once again when Castro can no longer rule through threats and intimidation. But overall, actual church attendance has historically been comparatively low. Even the U.S. Department of State recognizes: “Although much of the population is nominally Roman Catholic, historically the country has been a largely secular society without an especially strong religious character.”⁵ In reality, questions of piety versus politics pervaded Cuban and U.S./Cuban observations for at least a century before the rise of Castro, with proponents of separation of church and state portraying clerical hierarchy as conveniently and tightly tied to Cuba’s elite, and the Catholic Church in general as ignoring the reality of the poor and marginalized. Castro, a Catholic himself, was one of the greatest critics of what he saw as failures of the Church to implement true Christian principles and advance social justice.⁶

An overly simplistic view assumes no role for religion in Cuba since its emergence as a Marxist/Leninist (and therefore atheist) system in 1961. But Castro con-

demned only the counter-revolutionary activities of some members of the clergy and the traditional political role of the Church. In 1959, he said of religion and civil society:

“I do not believe there can be a single just measure in human society, not a single good work in the civil society of man, which is not based on a healthy and just religious conscience . . . It is only those who play the farce, only the hypocrites, only those whom Christ called the Scribes and the Pharisees who attempt to turn religion into a tool serving egotistical, petty, and inhuman interests.”⁷

The development of Cuba into a Marxist state can not be blamed for an absence of religion—first and foremost because religion has not been absent. It is true that Castro’s government placed restrictions on the Catholic Church and its followers regarding mass communication and political participation. But to a significant degree, Cuban Marxist thought embraced the principles of justice, equality and social liberation found in fundamental Catholic/Christian teachings.⁸ It was the political reality of clerical support for the anti-Castro hierarchy that brought revolutionary attacks on the Church. In the early 1990s the revolutionary government lifted restrictions on political participation of *creyentes*, or professed believers, suggesting there was growing room for diversity of faith in a pluralistic Cuban society.⁹ Still, many North Americans presume the Catholic Church holds no status whatsoever in Cuba.

Very importantly, there is hope in the United States that once Castro is no longer in power, Cubans will be free to choose from any number of denominations. Historically, the United States has considered religion to be a significant contributor to a more civil society, and religious association as integral to U.S. democracy, with no single sect becoming dominant. In pressing for changes in Cuba, U.S. policymakers promote the idea of religion as playing a similar role there. But there is already denominational pluralism in Cuba. Approximately 40 to 45 per cent identify themselves as Catholic, while as many as 70 per cent practice Santeria or *la regal lucumi*, which are rooted in West African traditional religion. Four different conventions of Baptists make up the largest Protestant denomination, followed closely by the Pentecostal churches, in particular the Assemblies of God. Twenty-five denominations are recognized by the State, including Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Methodists, and are members of the Cuban Council of Churches (CCC). Another 24 officially recognized denominations, including Jehovah's Witnesses and the small Jewish community, do not belong to the CCC. In the late 1990s, church attendance was increasing, with Catholic participation growing significantly with the Pope's visit in 1998.¹⁰

The U.S. Department of State's Cuba Report on Human Rights Practices released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor released in February of 2004 says this of religious association:

"The Government requires churches and other religious groups to register with the provincial registry of associations within the Ministry of the Interior to obtain official recognition. In practice, the Government refused to recognize new denominations; however, the Government tolerated some religions, such as the Baha'i Faith and a small congregation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Unregistered religious groups were subject to official interference, harassment, and repression. The Government, with occasional exceptions, prohibited the construction of new churches, forcing many growing congregations to violate the law and meet in private homes.

Government harassment of private houses of worship continued, with evangelical denominations reporting evictions from houses used for these purposes. According to the CCC [Cuban Council of Churches] most of the private houses of worship that the Government closed were unregistered, making them technically illegal. In addition, CCC Pentecostal members complained about the preaching activities of foreign missionaries that led some of their members to establish new denominations without obtaining the required permits. Because of these complaints by the Pentecostals, the CCC formally requested overseas member church or-

ganizations to assist them in dissuading foreign missionaries from establishing Pentecostal churches.”¹¹

Much of Cuba’s resistance to civil society efforts originating in the United States is based on the simple fact that they originate in the United States. There is a broad consensus among the world’s elites, including major international donors, government leaders and think tanks, about how to develop societies across the world, and influence changes in places such as Cuba. Their model consists of three primary components: democracy, civil society and private enterprise/free market economics.¹² The fact that all these aspects of international social development are U.S.-driven, creates clear and unwavering resistance in Cuba. To Cuban authorities, democracy driven by the U.S. is not democratic, a free market economy driven by the U.S. is not free, and civil society driven by the U.S. empowers the U.S. rather than Cubans.¹³ Cuban officials are willing to debate which system is more democratic and what methods might be used to broaden elements of civil society in ways that benefit Cuba. But insistence on the part of the Bush administration, or others with similar intentions, that civil society cannot succeed without free market capitalism creates a barrier to further discussion. With this in mind, it is easy to understand the level of suspicion present in Cuba when discussions of civil society as it relates to a variety of topics arise. Here, the issue of religion is a prominent one.

To some Cubans and many Latin American Catholics, the evangelization of democracy and capitalism along with civil society and religion are reminiscent of trends rooted in the 19th century. At that point in U.S.-Cuban relations, Manifest Destiny was beginning to transform into something more conventionally imperialistic. Calls for annexation in the 1850s did not succeed in adding Cuba to the list of U.S. possessions, but military intervention and occupation in 1898 paved the road toward “protectorate” status. Throughout these decades, adherence to social Darwinism helped to influence U.S. behavior toward Cuba and the rest of Latin America, and made working partners of classical liberal “democracy”, laissez-faire capitalism, and North American Protestantism. Evangelization of political economy was *ipso facto* religious. In the eyes of some Latin Americans, the culture of North America and the Protestant religion were barbaric and alien intrusions. To anti-clerical (meaning anti-Catholic) liberals, North American culture was progressive, inherently Protestant, and worthy of emulation. Political commentary from the U.S. depicted Cubans who did not regularly attend Mass (the majority) as lacking faith and conviction, and those who did attend as corrupted by a corrupted religion run by corrupted clergy. Protestants saw Cuba as ripe for settlement and conversion. Some Catholics see this as a pattern today, with Protestantism continuing to grow.¹⁴

The United States has a long history of anti-Catholicism, from the rise of the anti-Catholic/immigrant Know-nothing Party in the 1850s, to the attacks on

Catholic presidential candidates Al Smith (1928) and John F. Kennedy (1960). As a Protestant Evangelical, Bush might be considered a likely enemy of the Catholic Church as Evangelicals and Catholics have had a long relationship of antagonism. In addition, he has been criticized for bringing Evangelical intentions into the domestic and international political spheres—in issues ranging from gay marriage to Middle East apocalypse. But he has been making appeals to Pope John Paul II and anti-Castro Catholics. In his recent visit to the Vatican, Bush presented the Pope with a presidential Medal of Freedom—the highest U.S. award for a civilian—praising him for his faith and moral conviction which has “given courage to others to overcome repression and topple Communism and tyranny.”¹⁵ But the Pope has been a harsh critic of U.S. policies in the Middle East. In his 1998 visit to Cuba, many North Americans expected him to condemn Communism and support the ideals of the freedoms espoused by the geopolitics of the United States. Instead, he criticized unbridled capitalism which deepened poverty in places like Latin America.

When speaking to religious freedom in his meeting with the Cuban bishops, the Pope made the following statement:

“Respect for religious freedom must ensure the opportunities, programmes and means by which these three dimensions of the Church’s mission can be carried out so that, in addition

to worship, the Church can devote herself to the proclamation of the truth of the Gospel, the defence of justice and peace, and the integral development of the human person. None of these dimensions should be restricted; one does not exclude the others, nor should one be emphasized at the cost of the others.

When the Church demands religious freedom she is not asking for a gift, a privilege or a permission dependent on contingent situations, political strategies or the will of the authorities. Rather she demands the effective recognition of an inalienable human right. This right cannot be conditioned by the behavior of the Pastors and the faithful, nor by the surrender of the exercise of any aspect of her mission, much less by ideological or economic considerations. It is not simply a matter of a right belonging to the Church as an institution; it is also a matter of a right belonging to every person and every people.”

He added:

“Religious freedom is a very important means of strengthening a people’s moral integrity. Civil society can count on believers who, because of their deep convictions, will not only succumb readily to dominating ideologies or trends, but will endeavour to act in accordance

with their aspirations to all that is true and right.”¹⁶

The Pope would not take the side of those who sought to politicize “religious freedom”

in order to gain support of U.S. policies, or to guarantee the demise of Castro. Castro himself invited the Pope to visit, as early as 1985, and remained with him throughout much of his stay.

But the Bush administration has continued attempts to politicize the Catholic Church in its efforts to destabilize Castro. The initial CAFC report of May 6, 2004 makes this clear. First, it praises the “forthright role of the Polish Catholic Church [in creating] authentically independent civil societies, building islands of independent thought, movement, interaction, and self-reliance among the repressed peoples of Eastern Europe.” It goes on to say that this development of a “self-contained civil society within the gates of repression helped create a parallel culture that offered the people of the former Soviet Bloc alternatives to the corruption, exploitation, fear, and powerlessness that characterize life under communism. It offered them hope.”¹⁷ But the administration also sees a future for Cuba in the growth of Protestantism, as it recommends the support of religious organizations and faith-based initiatives. According to the report:

“Religious organizations, including both Catholic and certain authentically independent Protestant denominations, represent the fastest

growing and potentially strongest alternatives to the Cuban state in providing basic services and information to the Cuban people. . . . The regime has failed to live up to its commitment to loosen restrictions on the Church in the wake of the 1998 visit by Pope John Paul II Many Catholic leaders are engaged in a daily struggle with the regime to provide help, both spiritual and material, to the Cuban people. . . . [Protestant denominations] have been able to grow and develop limited humanitarian and social services. In addition, several U.S. NGOs are working to develop conferences of ministries, churches, and lay persons with a common interest in providing humanitarian aid in Cuba as a vehicle to strengthen civil society.”¹⁸

The CAFC recommends encouraging a wider array of religious organizations to provide humanitarian assistance and training to Cuban churches through streamlining licensing procedures and expanding outreach to those organizations.

The Bush administration has also attempted to politicize religion in the arrest of 75 Cuban dissidents in March of 2003. The arrests nearly simultaneously coincided with the U.S. attack on Iraq, calling into question both timing and motivation. According to U.S. State Department officials, Castro orchestrated his move slyly as all eyes were on the Middle East. Cuban officials contend that the dissidents had been receiving support

from the United States, behavior which signified growing U.S. intentions to infiltrate Cuba, and perhaps even invade and occupy as was to be carried out in Iraq. The Cuban government's detention of the 75, and subsequent swift sentencing to an average of 20 years in prison, served to justify the expansion of U.S. intervention in Cuba—if not militarily, then by empowering a civil society that might take out Castro. The State Department continually referred to them as prisoners of conscience—including religious conscience—while the Cuban government contended it was simply protecting the nation against U.S. covert action, in a very tense geo-political atmosphere.

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Cuba had remained on the State Department's list of states sponsoring international terrorism. Immediately, Castro made public statements urging the United States to remain calm, and claiming that the attacks were in part a consequence of the United States having applied "terrorist methods" for years. In a report two months later, the State Department claimed that Castro's subsequent statements had become increasingly hostile. According to newspaper reports, a Cuban spokesman described the U.S. response to the events of September 11 "fascist and terrorist" and that the United States was using the attack as an excuse to establish "unrestricted tyranny over all people on Earth."¹⁹ Castro himself reportedly claimed that the U.S. government was run by "extrem-

ists" and "hawks" whose response to the attack could result in an "infinite killing of innocent people."²⁰

The State Department continued to link Cuba with terrorism in following months, and reiterated this connection in the CACF promotion of U.S.-sponsored civil society efforts. Secretary of State Colin Powell opens his foreword to the "Report to the President: Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba" this way:

"Over the past two decades, the Western Hemisphere has seen dramatic advances in the institutionalization of democracy and the spread of free market economies. Today, the nations of the Americas are working in close partnership to build a hemisphere based on political and economic freedom where dictators, traffickers and terrorists cannot thrive. As fate would have it, I was in Lima, Peru joining our hemispheric neighbors in the adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter when the terrorists struck the United States on September 11, 2001. By adopting the Democratic Charter, the countries of our hemisphere made a powerful statement in support of freedom, humanity and peace. Conspicuous for its absence on that historic occasion was Cuba."²¹

The CACF report goes on to condemn the Castro regime for prohibiting access to computer and media equipment to journalists and religious organizations. However, it explains the U.S.'s own unwillingness to

supply such things in recent years by referring to Cuba as “a state sponsor of terrorism.”²² The global tension that swept the world in March of 2003 generated a fear strong enough to spur the arrests. Cuban officials accused the dissidents of conspiring with U.S. diplomats on the island to undermine the Cuban government. According to Cuban diplomat Dagoberto Rodriguez, “We have moved against people who were acting in favor of an international entity, an entity that has declared Cuba an enemy nation. We hope that the majority of the American people will understand our reasons for defending our sovereignty, defending our independence, defending and maintaining our identity.”²³

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have both condemned the imprisonment of the dissidents, claiming they are prisoners of conscience. The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) condemned them as well, and chastised the U.S. Agency for International Development (US AID) for seeking to fund dissident groups, and included in its recommendation the support of U.S. religious groups to develop relationships with “a broad range of Cuban individuals and groups . . . This broader and less politicized approach is more likely, in the long run, to increase tolerance and open political space in Cuba.”²⁴

Much of the concern regarding civil society in Cuba surrounds appointment of Jim Cason as head of the U.S. interests section in Cuba in September 2002. In this position, Cason helped to increase U.S. support for

Castro’s opponents, meeting regularly with opposition members and journalists in his Havana home, and traveling throughout the country to meet with the Cuban people. He reportedly logged more than 6,000 miles in just the first few months of his arrival on the island.²⁵ In a presentation to the Cuban Transition Project at the University of Miami, Cason justified his activities in Cuba, referring to many of those arrested as “leading civil society figures” and “Cuban patriots”. He maintained that the arrests were aimed in part at crippling Project Varela and decapitating the Assembly to Promote Civil Society.²⁶

Ambassador Noriega and others in the Bush administration have vehemently defended Cason’s activities in Cuba. According to Noriega, “Mr. Cason has done a superb job to support democratic development and civil society in Cuba. That is our policy in Cuba, and, in fact around the hemisphere. Jim was implementing bipartisan U.S. policy, and we all have every reason to be very proud of his work there.” He added, “Our hemisphere will be a safer, happier place when Castro leaves the scene, whether by natural processes or, as is the goal of U.S. policy, as the result of the will of the Cuban people and the concerted action of advocates of peaceful change in Cuba.”²⁷

Perhaps the opposition groups to benefit most from Cason’s support was Project Varela, named for Felix Varela y Morales, an activist Catholic priest in early 19th century Cuba. One of the greatest examples of the

politicization of religion in Cuba is illustrated in the exploitation of Varela's name. Padre Varela was an educator who embraced much of Enlightenment philosophy and revolutionized the curriculum at the Colegio Seminario in Havana. A politician and promoter of social justice, he traveled to Madrid to appeal to the Spanish Cortes for the abolition of slavery and for an autonomous Cuban government. For this he was condemned to death and fled to the United States to live in exile.²⁸ His philosophy and action appeal very much to the Fidel Castro who calls for human rights, equality, justice, and Cuban nationalism.²⁹ In 1961, Castro vehemently condemned the actions of those Catholic clergy who opposed his revolution and who participated in the Bay of Pigs invasion. But by 1963, he was publicly supporting the ideals of Varela.³⁰

Varela also appeals to Castro's opponents, both inside and outside Cuba, particularly because of his life of exile for speaking out against the government.³¹ This is clearest in the work of the Varela Project, the creation of the Christian Liberation Movement inside Cuba. Founded in 1988 by a group of secular Catholics, the movement has grown in size and momentum, and in the last three years has secured more than 11,000 petition signatures to bring changes in the Cuban political system. According to one supportive Miami group, the Varela Project is a Christian-inspired political-civil movement that is open to non-believers. Its purposes include the following:

“* To get a Cuban's [sic] participation in the process of the changes needed in our society. Cubans are the doers, not only spectators of such reality. The solution to the problems of Cuba is a responsibility of all Cubans.

* To start a civic road that would lead us in the accomplishment of changes and therefore be able to demand a respect of the Civil and Human Rights.

* To promote the exercise of constitutional legal rights on behalf of citizens and a highly [sic] regard for the same on behalf of the Government and all official institutions.

*A qualitative change of law within the law, FROM THE LAW TO THE LAW. That is through the demand from all citizens, amend the law and the constitution and be able to go forward peacefully, toward a society that supports itself within the right and solidarity, social justice and economic freedom.

*The re-encounter again of our brothers from the Diaspora, an undividable part of our people.

*The Christian Liberation Movement develops a private freedom project that consists of: the practice of freedom of speech, overcome fake and a two-side morale [sic] and a recovery of self-esteem and creation of a conscience toward your own dignity and to respect that same dignity in your fellow-being.”³²

The historical Varela holds tremendous respect from Cuban non-Catholics, Cuban Catholics, non-Cuban Catholics, and the Catholic hierarchy both in and out of Cuba. Pope John Paul II made a point to visit to his grave at the University of Havana on his visit to the country.³³ But there is religious and political division on the Varela Project, particularly within the Cuban Catholic Church. Two figures instrumental in developing Catholic civil society have gained differing levels of support from different factions. Oswaldo Paya has directly confronted the Cuban government through his leadership of Project Varela. As a result, Paya has earned only limited support from the Catholic hierarchy,³⁴ and has earned overwhelming support from the U.S. State Department. As recently as May 2004, Secretary of State Colin Powell referred to Paya as courageous (equating his work with that of Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma and Morgan Tsvangirai in Zimbabwe). According to Powell, “On every continent, we are making important, long-term investments in democracy. . . . We are working with nongovernmental organizations, faith-based groups, opposition parties, minority communities, and labor movements to develop dynamic civil societies. . . . We stand in solidarity with the extraordinary men and women around the world who take great personal risks to shed light on human rights abuses and press for democratic change.”³⁵

On the other hand, Dagoberto Valdes has not directly confronted the Cuban government and has in fact secured official Catholic backing. Valdes is the Director

of the Center for Civic and Religious Formation, and President of the Catholic Commission for the Culture of Pinar del Rio. In addition, he is a member of the Executive Secretariat of the Union of the Catholic Press of Cuba (Catholics produce 14 publications, none of which is censored), and of the Vatican’s council on Peace and Justice. His work is far more representative of the future of the Church in Latin America and in Europe.³⁶ Furthermore, Valdes has proven his to be genuine and legitimate endeavors intended to authentically combine religion and civil society in the future of Cuba. Spokesmen for the U.S. State Department never mention him.

It appears that outsiders have decided that the only Cuban entities which deserve the name “civil society” are those they consider human rights groups under their definition. In fact, those that do gain support are clearly among the most dissident of the dissident organizations. According to Cuban intellectual and author of *Looking at Cuba: Essays on Culture and Civil Society* Rafael Hernandez Rodriguez, groups that authentically represent the traditionally marginalized—Afro-Cubans, women, etc.—and who actively call for the recognition of rights among those people, are essentially ignored, as are those who intend to work within the system. Rather, the so-called human rights groups that the U.S., in particular, chooses to support are quite vague in their mission statements, calling for such reforms as “opening the system” or “saving the country”.³⁷ And in looking more closely at the logic of recent statements,

the anti-Castro rhetoric contained within those statements, and the financial backing of that sentiment, it becomes increasingly clear that the U.S. government is determined to “save Cuba” through its own design of civil society.

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Why Roma do not Declare their Identity – Careful Decision or Unpremeditated Refusal?

Abstract: One of the main problems one is faced while dealing with Roma issues is to find reliable statistics. The Roma refuse to declare themselves as Roma, if they participate at all in the research. Whether it is a problem related to their Roma identity, if their refusal is a well thought action we will try to find out in this paper. We will discuss the issue of Roma identity, we will present data showing the discrepancy between the official number of Roma living in different countries and approximations made by competent organizations, as well as reasons one can consider for Roma's refusal to declare their identity. Theoretical aspects related to decision making will also be reviewed in the final attempt to establish whether the attitude Roma have towards declaring their identity is a result of a difficult decision making process, or just an instant rejection reaction.

MOTTO: “In dealing with issues of discrimination and trying to document violations, one frequently encounters vexing issues relating to the collection and use of ethnic data. Ethnic data evoke memories of registration of “undesirables,” and also raise many ethical and legal issues. But without statistical data, it is very hard to have a clear picture of patterns of discrimination, to design programs of assistance for the Roma, or to evaluate those programs” (“Report on the Situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area”, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, The Hague, 2000, p.3)¹

Introduction

It is a common occurrence in research about Roma issues to find notes commenting on the statistics. To the official number there are always added one or more approximations, official or unofficial. Why is it such a

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problem to gather accurate data about the Roma population? Why don't they declare their identity? Is it a problem related to the identity itself, or is it an intended refusal? Is this fact a result of a complex decision making process, or does it just occur naturally, without any reason behind?

These are a few of the questions we will try to answer in this paper. We will discuss the issue of Roma identity, we will present data showing the discrepancy between the official number of Roma living in different countries and approximations made by competent organizations, and we will consider possible reasons for the

COUNTRY	OFFICIAL NUMBER ¹	OFFICIAL ESTIMATIONS	OTHER ESTIMATIONS
Albania	-	-	100,000 (2.9%)
Bosnia-Herzegovina	-	-	100,000 ²
Bulgaria	312,000 (3.7%) ³	-	-
Cyprus	500-1,000 (0.7-1.3%)	-	-
Croatia	-	-	18,000 (0.37%)
Czech Republic	33,500 (0.3%)	-	300,000 (2.9%)
Greece	-	160,000-200,000 (1.5-1.9%)	350,000 ⁴
Hungary	143,000 (1.3%) ⁵	-	250,000-800,000 (2.4-7.8%)
Macedonia	-	-	200,000 (10.3%)
Moldova	20,000-25,000	-	-
Poland	15,000 (0.03%)	-	-
Romania	409,723 ⁶	1.8 million (7.9%)	2.5 million ⁷
Slovakia	80,600 (1.5%)	-	350,000 (6.6%)
Slovenia	2,293 (0.11%)	-	7,000 (0.35%)
Turkey	50,000 (0.08%)	-	-
Yugoslavia	137,265 (1.3%)	-	500,000 (4.8%)

¹ As available in 2000. The results of 2000 census, to take place in the majority of the cases, are not available.

² Before 1992

³ 1992 census

⁴ MRG-G estimation

⁵ 1990 census

⁶ 1992 census

⁷ Minority Rights Group, 1997

Roma's refusal to declare their identity. Theoretical aspects related to decision making will also be reviewed in the final attempt to establish whether the attitude Roma have towards declaring their identity is a result of a complex decision making process, or just an instant rejection reaction.

How does the data about Roma look?

Roma is a population group² inhabiting many countries around the world, but the majority is settled in Europe, and more exactly, Central and South Eastern Europe. In a report on the Roma living in Romania (it is believed that it is the largest group living in one country), data was also available concerning the number of Roma living in 15 other countries in the region. It looks as follows:

SEE TABLE ON PAGE 91

(Source: *** - "The minorities in South-Eastern Europe. The Roma from Romania", the Center for Documentation and Information about the Minorities in Europe (CEDIME-SE), 2000)

As one can see, in almost all cases there is at least one alternative estimate of the number of Roma living in any particular country. Additionally, according to research done in Slovakia in 2000, "in the 1991 census, when Roma had a chance to claim their ethnicity for the first time, only 75,802 citizens declared Roma nationality. The number of Roma is under-reported mostly because of the self-reporting method of the cen-

sus. According to a 1989 survey by city and local council of the state administration, 253,943 Roma (4.8%) lived in Slovakia. These statistics, however, registered only socially handicapped citizens. Therefore all experts assume that the number of Roma living in Slovakia is higher; at present the official estimates range between 480,000 to 520,000 (more than 9% of the country's inhabitants)" (Vasecka, 2000, par. 16)

In other words, even if sometimes quoting the same sources for data on Roma, for the same country and the same year, the numbers can differ. At a micro level, it is common practice to have the evidence on the Roma population differ according to the purpose for which the data was gathered (the number of self-declared Roma was significantly higher when the evidence was used for the payment of state support).

This is the situation when individuals refuse to declare their identity. However, it is also the case that the individuals do not exist according to state. In other words, there is a large number of Roma who do not have any identity proving documents. In research done by the Research Center for the Quality of Life (RCQL) in 2000, in which I took part as a field researcher, in an area allegedly inhabited by around 30 Roma, we found more than 1000, most of which did not have even a birth certificate.

How is it possible that such a situation is common in numerous places in Europe? The problem is widely known among scholars dealing with Roma issues, politicians, and Roma advocates. As considered during a

meeting on the issue, organized by the PER (Project on Ethnic Relations) in Strasbourg, France, May 2000, “during the past few years, the issue of the collection and use of data on Romani³ communities has been a ‘hot topic’ in debates throughout Europe” (ibid, pp. 3). What is to be done? We can start with assessing how much of the problem is due to the fact that Roma refuse to declare their identity, and how much of this refusal is rationally based.

Why is data about the Roma so difficult to gather?

Why are there so many versions of Roma population estimates? The refusal to accept the collection of data about the Roma has led to several indignant positions. As one person states, “one cannot claim that the Roma are equal to other groups and at the same time deny the right to collect data on them for social policy or scientific purposes” (PER, 2000, pp. 11). The Roma are resistant to being part of statistics for many reasons. Roma scholars, Roma leaders, and Roma advocates give an entire list of possible explanations. These can be classified into a few main categories relating to their underlying arguments. However, one cannot tell how much they actually apply in the real situation and how much they are merely a way for those interested in the issue to justify the difficulty of putting together reliable data on Roma. We have grouped the reasons related to past ex-

perience, present experience, attitude towards the state, identity, and others, as following:

A. *past experience* related explanation: “The Roma have been especially sensitive about data collection of any kind since it was used against them by the Nazis during World War II” (PER, 2000, pp. 1)

B. *present experience* related explanations: here are several reasons to be mentioned:

- *fear of discrimination*: “the Roma do not trust the state’s census because of their experiences with discrimination, segregation, and violence. Many Roma hide their identity out of fear of discrimination” (PER, 2000, p. 22)

- *fear of data being misused*: “more recently, figures purporting to show Roma misbehavior have been used by some governments as a basis for declaring the Roma unfit for citizenship” (PER, 2000, p. 1)

- *fear of data being used for limiting their freedom of movement right*: “the request for more data on Roma by Central and Eastern European governments is connected with these governments’ efforts to control the migration of Roma, which they perceive as dangerous” (PER, 2000, pp. 10)

- *fear of data being used against them*: “for the Roma, even official statistics are perceived as an instrument of power that can be used against them” (PER, 2000, pp.16). Here one can discuss about crime or unemployment data related to Roma: “The data on unemployment, for example, are used by the police as an indicator of the potential criminality level in the Romani settlements.” (PER, 2000, pp. 11)

C. *attitude towards the state* related explanation: “they do not trust the state and its agencies” (PER, 2000, pp.6)

D. *identity* related explanation: “many Roma do not identify themselves as being Roma” (PER, 2000, pp.22).

E. *other* explanations:

- “The Roma are reluctant to be counted, and they criticize census data for not being reliable” (PER, 2000, pp. 22)
- “they are unclear about the legal standards for the protection of personal data” (PER, 2000, pp. 6)
- “it is a new experience [to declare one’s identity in censuses]” (PER, 2000, pp. 21)
- they do not see the benefits of being counted (PER, 2000, pp.22)

As one can see, there is an entire range of possible explanations given by informed individuals for the refusal of Roma to declare their Roma identity. All of them, with the exception of the one relating to identity itself, can be considered as “external.” Roma refuse to declare themselves as such out of distrust in the agencies related to the census, fear of different types of discrimination and misuse of the data, or just because they do not have sufficient information about the process. All of these are results of bad experiences, bad communication with the authorities, and most of all, lack of information. The Roma have seen themselves denied jobs because of their nationality/ethnicity/race.

This is the example according to which they have to judge. They do not know what benefits they can get from being counted. During the research mentioned earlier (conducted in 2000 by RCQL), we were telling the people that the data was being gathered in order to assess the amount of help they need. This explains why so many of them were willing this time to declare their identity, and why, accordingly, we found 30 times the individuals than expected.

However, there is still the issue of identity. What does the fact that they do not consider themselves as Roma mean? Is their identity that weak, or is it just a way to avoid the previously mentioned problems? Or is there some other reason behind it?

Roma identity

In a study from 1994 conducted in Slovakia, the “main conclusion was that the Romani identity issue had become an internal matter for the Roma and externally the Roma had attempted to adjust to the majority population culture” (Vaceska, 2000, par # 162). What does this indicate? That the Roma know that they are Roma, but declare themselves to be someone else? As Vaceska (2000) discusses, “many Roma in Slovakia do consider themselves to be Slovaks or Hungarians and identification with the majority is more significant than their “Rominpen” – Roma identity” (ibid, par # 162). The situation is not unique. In Romania, “the exact numbering of the population is an extremely difficult

process, given the fact that lots of the Roma declare themselves as Romanians or Hungarians; this phenomena takes places, according to Florin Moisa (2000) because of the negative connotations associated to the Roma identity” (CEDIME-SE Report on Roma, 2000, par # 43).

Why do Roma declare themselves to be Hungarians, Romanians, or Slovaks? How can one tell at all that they are not what they declare themselves to be? According to the regulations of data gathering, each individual has the right to declare his or her own identity as he or she feels. Still, in the case of the Roma an alternative method is always used, called “hetero-identification,” meaning that the individual is identified as Roma by people in the proximity, on the basis of certain criteria. Most commonly, these criteria relate to “traditional way of life” or “physical traits” (PER, 2000, pp. 14-15). Even though there is a number of objections against this procedure, it is used almost exclusively, since scholars consider “self-identification [to be] the most unreliable among classification systems” (PER, 2000, pp.15). As a Bulgarian researcher says, “the trouble is that in most cases the surrounding population refuses to accept this declared non-Gypsy identity, and stubbornly continue [sic] to relate to them as gypsies” (PER, 2000, pp.15).

The question is: who is right? The individual who says that he or she is not Roma, or the others who agree on the fact that he or she is? The Roma scholar, Nicolae Gheorghe argues that, “the Roma populations go through an

‘ethno genesis’ process, building a new ‘Roma’ identity ... trying a ‘symbolic’ change, from the ‘slave’ status, to one equal to that of a citizen in a constitutional state, with the right of self identifying as belonging to the Roma minority” (CEDIME-SE Report on Roma, 2000, par # 66).

This is an issue than can be discussed. In several cases, the “Roma” denomination was refused by Roma themselves (this is mostly the case with those declaring their identity and living the traditional way of life). Another explanation, given by Vaceska (2000), is that the Roma sometimes “forget” their roots and try their best to become assimilated into the majority of the population. Why? One can say that besides all the reasons already mentioned there is one more: they are ashamed. Being Roma, or Tsigan (as they are most often called) is not often something to be proud of. Many of those who want to ascend the social and economic ladder might want to leave the name and its negative associations behind. Being rid of the Roma identity might also mean being rid of the bad resonance it has.

In an attempt to create a typology of Roma, 5 categories of Roma identity were found, relating to self-identification, hetero-identification, the way of life, and context (official and unofficial):

F. Roma that have all the traditional characteristics and who identify themselves as Roma in all situations and researches, both official or unofficial

G. Roma that have all the traditional characteristics that others identify as Roma. They declare themselves as Roma only in unofficial contexts

H. “modernized Roma”: they have lost all the traditional characteristics, changed the life style, but declare themselves as Roma in all situations

I. “modernized” Roma, who only sometimes declare themselves as Roma and who are only sometimes identified by others as Roma

J. “former Roma” that lost all the traditional traits and who never declare themselves as Roma (CEDIME-SE Report on Roma, 2000, par # 65)

In order to make the situation clearer according to the main elements we have identified (self-identification, hetero-identification, the way of life, and context - official and unofficial), we will create the following table:

Out of these 5 categories, 2 of them describe Roma that declare themselves as such in all circumstances (type A and C). There are 3 remaining categories, in which the self-declaration as Roma happens sometimes (B and D), or never (E). In the last case it is questionable that the person is Roma at all and whether others would identify him or her as such. Cases B and D are the biggest problems. In these cases the self declaration as Roma depends on the situation. This is the situation of the majority of Roma.

An interesting and perhaps important question is, what makes these people decide on when to declare themselves as Roma and when not to? In both cases we have to deal with consciously adopted attitudes. In both cases the Roma know that they are Roma (in case B,

Element ¹ Type	Self- identification	Contexts for self- declaration as Roma	Hetero- identification	Way of life
A	Yes	all	-	yes
B	Yes	unofficial	Yes	yes
C	Yes	all	-	no
D	Yes	sometimes	Yes	no
E	No	-	-	no

¹ all the elements except for “context” refer to the Roma identity and way of life

they identify themselves as such in unofficial situations, and in D they sometimes declare themselves as such). What lies behind their decisions?

The decision making process.

According to R.W.Scholl (2002), there are four ways of thinking about the choice process: cognitive, affective, evaluative, and mixed. While in the first case the decision is taken after evaluating a set of characteristics of the subject it is decided about, the basis for decision making in the affective approach is the feelings that the subject produces in the one who is making the decision. The evaluation model can be described in the following terms: “attitudes are often stored in the form of evaluations without the cognitive and affective information that acted to form the evaluation. Using this approach, candidates would be rank ordered on the basis of evaluation, that is, the overall evaluation of goodness or favorability” (Scholl, 2002, par # 4). Finally, under the denomination of “mixed models,” the author mentions that the previously described cases are ideal types, and that in reality the approaches range on an axis having cognition and conflict as ends, and affection as a passing element (ibid, par # 5).

Considering this classification, one can easily agree that in our case we have to deal with a rather cognitive approach. Anna Song (2004), in her material “Psychological factors in Decision-Making,” also considers the “cognitive” choice, this time as the opposite of the ra-

tional choice (as understood in rational choice theory, according to which individuals are rational beings that always make rational decisions in a way that would minimize the effort while maximizing their benefit).

According to Song, there are several factors that influence the decision making process. The first two are determined by the **social environment**. They are “risk shift” and “group think,” and refer to the influence the group can have on a subject while making decisions. The first case refers to the tendency of the group to take a risk when an individual would not. The second refers to the submission of the individual to the group’s decision, even when not in agreement (Song, 2004, par # 16). Is this the case in this situation? Perhaps it sometimes is. The process of collecting data is a rather individual one. Still, sometimes the Roma declare their identity even if they do not want to, if there are people around pressing them to do so (either other Roma who have already declared themselves as such, or neighbors or friends who are familiar enough with the respondent to allow themselves to influence the decision).

Thirdly, one can mention certain **biases**: “at the first interception of information, humans apply what they want and expect to see” (Song, 2004, par # 7). Furthermore, Plous distinguishes between motivated and unmotivated biases (ibid.). One can discuss this factor, as far as it is understood, in terms of “social desirability.” In other words, if the respondent considers it to be beneficial for him/her to declare the Roma identity, he/she will do it. This is the case of motivated bias.

Fourthly, there is effort justification: “the more effort and resource an actor has spent on a situation, the more likely that actor will continue to its spending, despite obvious losses or harm” (Song, 2004, par # 9). In the same category as the previous 2 (**judgment altering**) factors, there are also heuristics: “short cuts in the way of processing information” (ibid, par # 11). There are two types of these: representative and availability. These describe decisions based on similarity with a previous situation, or on the ease with which we can find one while making the decision (ibid, par # 13-14). This is the case of refusal to declare one’s identity as Roma. If the individual has in the past had negative experiences because of his/her identity, it is probable that this time the individual will declare another identity rather than Roma, or may refuse to declare any identity at all.

Sixthly, there is the search/persuasion process: “information about the challenger/defenders must be gathered in order to persuade and make the opponent perceive that the desired choice is the best one for the opponent” (ibid, par # 18). Lastly, there is the strategy factor: “there is a manipulation of predictability of one’s own actions so that an adversary’s chooses in one’s favor” (ibid.). These last two can be considered as the **manipulation** factors, and deal with sophisticated procedures meant to convince the “opponent” to make the right decision for. This last situation does not apply in our case.

As a partial conclusion, if we consider the possible strategies of the decision making process, we find that several of them are employed by the Roma while decid-

ing whether or not to declare their identity as Roma. Whether or not they are aware of the employment of these strategies is questionable and rather improbable.

Conclusion, or how much is not declaring one’s Roma identity a cognitive choice?

It is the time to decide whether not declaring their identity as Roma is for Roma individuals the result of an intentional, carefully considered process of decision making or just a fact that has no sophisticated rational support. (By the we mean that the person does not spend time creating a strategy, and makes the decision on the spot, according to feelings and/or what he or she immediately perceives as most profitable.) We will consider each of the factors described above, and assess how much they apply to our population, formed of the Roma who do not declare themselves as such, even if they consider themselves as Roma. As grounds for the evaluation we will have the 10 reasons considered in the beginning of this paper, those related to present and past experiences, attitude towards the state, and to those described as “others.” In a comprehensive table, the situation looks as follows:

Reasons for not declaring one's Roma identity	Song's respective factor
Past experience	Heuristics
Fear of discrimination	Heuristics
Fear of data being used against them	Heuristics
Fear of data being misused	Heuristics
Fear of data being used to limit their freedom and rights	Heuristics
Distrust towards the state	Heuristics
Reluctance to data gathering	Non-applicable
Unawareness about legislation concerning data manipulation	Non-applicable
Census as a new experience	Non-applicable
Not aware of the benefits	Non-applicable

As one can see in this table, there is only one factor from Song's typology that applies in our case. In most of the cases, the decision not to declare one's Roma identity is based on the fact that one wants to avoid similar (unpleasant) experiences to those they have previously had when declaring the fact that they are Roma. The last four reasons are of a specific nature, and tend toward the rational choice theory: individuals are put in the situation in which they do not know what result would occur upon declaring their identity as Roma, therefore they decide not to take risks. They refuse to declare the fact that they are Roma. In other words, there is always a fairly good reason behind Roma's refusal to declare their identity.

Still, there are possible situations which are covered by Song's typology, but do not appear here. One such is the case when an individual refuses to declare his or her Roma identity because he/she has the feeling that it

might not be in his/her benefit. This is a trap into which all people can fall, not only Roma. Social desirability also plays quite an important role in the process of gathering data about the Roma.

What can be done in such situations? The statistics concerning the Roma seem to be of vital relevance for those trying to help the communities in their integration process, as well as economically. As the PER meeting's conclusions state, it is necessary not only to re-evaluate the data collection process, but also to inform and educate the Roma, as well as to find ways to make them trust the data gathering process and its executors. While some of the issues cannot be controlled, as is the case with social desirability, others can be directed towards everyone's benefit.

Taking into account the main reasons given by the Roma for hiding their identity, one can agree that the biggest step that can be taken is a sustained effort to di-

minish the discrimination that Roma face. Still, this is very difficult to achieve. Those who are dealing with the statistics can make the first changes. As is mentioned in the conclusions of the PER meeting, the main recommendations are the “elimination of unlawful data collection,” and “the protection of data” (ibid, pp. 28).

Other important steps that can be taken are training and educating individuals concerning the importance of having data on them. If people are aware of the benefits of “being counted,” they might be more open to participate.

Finally, and not least, the involvement of Roma organizations and representatives is a significant factor. This does not refer only to educating Roma about what is going on and convincing them to participate, but even more importantly, having Roma involved in going into the field to collect data. Seeing a Roma proud to declare him/herself as Roma might considerably help other Roma to be open and declare their identity as well.

Notes:

1 In Roma and Statistics, 2000, p. 3

2 The issue of Roma as a group can be the subject of discussion. Roma are classified as ethnic minority, national minority, social minority, racial minority, ethnic group, and other classifications according to the source. However, this is not the point of this paper. We will consider them here simply as a group, which has a (problematic) identity, and with members who refuse in most situations to declare themselves as Roma

3 Romani is an alternative designation for Roma

4 my term

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SINCRETISM IMAGINAR

If we discuss imaginary syncretism, we will do this by taking some caution measures: we are used to general speculations, to metaphors, but we have to acknowledge that the present article values specific statements, namely, when discussing religion, dogma, the absolute truth, we are actually taking into consideration the individual behind all these. It involves to state the intercultural dialogue (defined as openness toward the other), having as bases several solutions likely to be traced, because when we discuss the great concepts of culture, such in the case of Humanism, we may not be able to grasp their meaning without putting value on the specificities it presupposes. Further more, multiculturalism announces umanism without taking into account that the equivalence between syncretism and the former is the creation of the imaginary in modernity. Multiculturalism being specific to the secular cultures is actually specific to religious cultures rendered secular, where secular can return to religious, yet it is a one-way, the other way round being impossible.

Poate ar fi fost preferabil ca in locul termenului sincretism sa-l folosim pe cel de ecumenism in sensul pe care i-l da Durand: de recuperare a gândirii arhaice si integrare a sa in derelictiunea noastra de europeni. Numai ca, pe de o parte, aria de aplicabilitate a acestui termen s-ar fi restrâns, in definitiv, numai la combaterea scientismului si pozitivismului secolului al XIX-lea, iar pe de alta parte, termenul comporta un caracter profund teologic, avându-si radacina in cuvântul ecumenic, care inseamna „investit cu autoritate extinsa asupra intregii biserici crestine”¹, iar acest fapt ar fi putut fi interpretat ca un fel de declasare a celorlalte religii in raport cu cea crestina. Aceiasi problema o regasim, in sa, si la nivelul termenului sincretism care, pe de o parte inseamna „amestec de doctrine filosofice si religii diferite si contradictorii care au fost reunite in mod fortat”², iar pe de alta, „imprumutul, afirmarea sau integrarea

conceptelor, simbolurilor ori practicilor unei religii sau traditii intr-un proces de selectare si armonizare”3.

Numai ca si acest concept ne pune in reala dificultate pentru ca „daca sincretismul apare ca o strategie constructiva pentru a impiedica si a promova toleranta sau, in limbajul de astazi, cel putin dialogul, este izbitor cât de peiorativ este folosit termenul de aparatorii credintei adevarate”4, intrucât sincretismul promoveaza abandonarea adevarului absolut si inlocuirea acestuia cu diferitele modalitati de intelegere, ceea ce inseamna ca valoarea de adevar a unei credinte particulare este relativa. E vorba despre renuntarea la un singur principiu promovând pluriformitatea variantelor care reies din acesta. Este interesant de vazut faptul ca Peter van der Veer considera ca „nasterea notiuni de religie naturala drept o credinta in si o adorare a unei puteri supreme ce se regaseste in rândul tuturor fiintelor umane are legatura cu nasterea notiunii de sincretism”5.

Ambele concepte pot face subiectul analizei noastre, l-am preferat pe cel din urma din doua motive: in primul rând, sincretismul pare a fi usor maleabil la nivelul imaginarului, evident urmarind cea de a doua definitie, adica poate aduce un soi de cumpatare ecumenica fara a fi imbibat de concepte teologice caracteristice unui anumit tip de religie. In al doilea rând, desi putem intelege sincretismul „ca si politica a diferentei si identitatii si ca in aceasta calitate notiunea de putere este vitala pentru intelegerea termenului – puterea de a identifica adevarata religie”6 unde adevarata religie presupune adevarul absolut – totusi, acelasi termen poate promova toleranta, iar „rolul pe

care l-a jucat termenul de sincretism in societatile fondate pe culturi religioase este astazi jucat de termenul multiculturalism in societatile fondate pe culturi seculare”7. Discrepanta dintre cele doua posibile perspective, culturi religioase si culturi seculare, in care sincretismul comporta conotatii la prima vedere total distincte, poate fi impacata la nivelul imaginarului pentru ca echivalenta dintre sincretism si multiculturalism este creatia imaginarului in modernitate. Multiculturalismul fiind specific culturilor seculare, este in fapt specific culturilor religioase *secularizate*, unde secular poate fi intors in religios, drumul fiind cu sens unic; viceversa e imposibila. In schimb, am fi preferat termenului religios pe cel de simbolic, datorita caracterului sau neutru. Simbolul, nu restrânge aria aplicabilitatii sale, e universal in particularitatea sa, fiind manifestare arhetipala. Daca vorbim despre sincretism imaginar, o facem totusi cu o usoara retinere. Fiind obisnuiti cu speculatii de ordin general, cu metafore abstracte, trebuie sa spunem ca studiul de fata valorizeaza asertiunile particulare, restrânse, mai exact, discutând despre religie, dogma, adevar absolut avem in vedere individul din spatele acestora. Este vorba despre postularea dialogului intercultural pe baza câtorva solutii posibil de urmarit.

Odata stabilita linia in care putem forja un anumit soi de sincretism imaginar, in fapt, un posibil dialog intercultural, capabil sa se construiasca pe Imagine, pe impacarea purului cu impurul si pe existentul reflexiv, trebuie sa vedem cum anume putem realiza ceea ce se numeste sincretism imaginar. Sa urmarim solutiile pe

care le ofera rând pe rând Eliade, Durand, Caillois și Ricoeur.

Pentru a putea scăpa de vicisitudinile vieții moderne, omul nu trebuie decât să își dea seama că „în existența cea mai stearsă misuna simbolurile, omul cel mai realist trăiește din imagini” pentru că „redescoperirea spontană a arhetipurilor simbolismului arhaic e un fapt comun tuturor oamenilor, fără deosebire de rasă și de stil”. Și iată și soluția: „Metapsihanaliza, maieutica a redescoperii omului, realizată cu ajutorul simbolismului religios”. Această redescoperire a Omului nu numi că reglează propriile idiosincrasii, ci „ar contribui și la eliberarea omului modern de provincialismul sau cultural și mai ales de relativismul istoricist și existentialist”⁸. Înțelegând că e vorba de un întreg drum⁹, un soi de *bildungsroman*, mai rămâne să ne întrebăm cine va lua locul lui Socrate. Sau soluția constă în propriile descoperiri sau în descoperirile făcute împreună cu alții. Adevărul – deși resimt repulsia în fața stereotipurilor - e undeva la mijloc, întrucât în fața marilor *probleme* putem presupune unitatea spiritului omenesc, astfel încât „e suficient să se pună problema salvării, e suficient să se pună problema centrală, adică *problema*, pentru că viața cosmică să se regenereze la nesfârșit. Căci adeseori moartea ... nu este decât consecința nepăsării noastre față de nemurire”¹⁰. Ceea ce ne atrage atenția e acest ajutor pe care ni-l oferă *simbolismul religios* care în fapt e și nu e religios, (dacă prin religie înțelegem credința) întrucât „experiența arhetipurilor nu afectează experiența credinței”¹¹. Ori, până la urmă, despre ce vorbim, despre religie sau despre cultură? În cazul lui

Eliade vorbim, cu siguranță, despre manifestările simbolice ale arhetipurilor umanității actualizate în istorie prin copiile infidele ale **Imaginii**.

După ce în prealabil analizează pertinent rolul exploziei video în contemporaneitate, Durand propune soluția: ecumenismul imaginar prin intermediul antropologiei: „ceea ce antropologia imaginarului permite, și este singura care o permite, este de a recunoaște același spirit al speciei acționând în gândirea primitivă ca și în gândirea civilizată, în gândirea normală ca și în cea patologică. O dată recuperată gândirea arhaică și înțeleasă ca atare, putem spera către un nou ecumenism, „trebuie să contrabalansăm gândirea noastră critică, imaginația noastră demistificată, prin înalienabilă gândire salbatică ce întinde mâna fraternă a speciei către derelictiunea noastră orgolioasă de civilizați”¹². Ecumenismul imaginar presupune un soi de recunoaștere a celui alt, foarte diferit, de lângă mine; a aborigenului din Australia, a eschimosului din Groenlanda, a indianului din America, etc. Problema e puțin mai complicată atât timp cât eu nu mă înțeleg cu unгурul, neamțul, moldoveanul, polonezul etc, poate mai aproape de mine, întrucât reprezintă, împreună cu mine, albul caucazian atât de drag civilizației noastre. Ori, până la urmă, despre ce vorbim, despre comunități particulare sau despre comunitatea umană (umanitatea) în genere? În cazul lui Durand vorbim despre Imaginarul umanității, despre psihia universală, despre inconstientul colectiv, despre diurnul și nocturnul fiecăruia dintre noi.

Impacarea *impurului* cu *purul* în cazul lui Caillois, adică a rațiunii științifice cu imaginarul, creează „prezumția de acțiune unitară ideală, cea care își propune să angajeze *totalitatea ființei*”. E vorba de o mai veche rațiunea a rationalismului cu aberațiile fabulatorii ale imaginației. Rezolvarea problemei este mereu undeva la mijloc. Poate avem nevoie de o soluție binară care să depășească vechea trina aristotelică, soluție salvatoare, integratoare, datoare de speranță atât la nivelul comunicării interculturale (acceptare imaginativă) cât și în plan existențial (ca *traire*). Aceasta angajare a ființei cu cele două aspecte ale sale, pur și impur, ar trebui „să contribuie la o creație vie și continuă, care să aducă cu atât mai mult satisfacția tendințelor ei esențiale cu cât, în loc să ofere fiecareia o hrană incompletă, eterogenă și dispersată, ea ar fi capabilă să închege organic demnitățile lor, după cum a făcut cu eforturile lor, dând astfel revendicării lor un surplus consistent de incertitudine și forță, prin experiența trăită și înțeleasă a coerenței și solidarității lor”¹³. Numai că această creație vie și continuă presupune mai întâi cunoașterea a ceea ce vrem să împac și să închege, pentru că mereu ne situăm de partea purului, fără a ști mărja ponderii impurului care forjează mereu purul, iar echilibrul presupus de Caillois între cele două sucomba în fața nepăsării noastre originare. Până la urmă, despre ce discutăm, despre oamenii specializați capabili să înțeleagă această deficiență a firii umane scindată între pur și impur sau despre simțul comun, unde fabulație ține de povestile pe care trebuie să le citească copiii lor, iar știința ține (în cazurile fericite) de Einstein care

avea un singur tip de costum în șapte exemplare pentru fiecare dintre cele șapte zile ale săptămânii. În cazul lui Caillois, discutăm despre oamenii pregătiți pentru eforturi intelectuale majore.

În sfârșit, după cum era de așteptat, Ricœur complică extrem problema. Situată omul între conștient și inconștient, între escatologie și arheologie, între Dumnezeu și psiholog, poate recunoaște o a treia cale, cea a teologiei (în sens hegelian), dar care nu mai ține atât de mult de Hegel. E vorba despre propriile noastre construcții și monumente care nu se mai recunosc în pasul imediat următor, în acea depășire continuă, ci tocmai în acest drum prin reflecție (de la copil la adult). Dacă reușim să ne construim propriul eu, diferențiat de ego-ul cartezian - care nu face decât să ne instituie ca existenți prin deja prafuitul *cogito ergo sum* - împacând conștientul cu inconștientul, realizăm atât de dragul *existent reflexiv* ricœurian. Numai că între psiholog și duhovnic nu e cale de mijloc, teoria teologiei hegeliene a construcțiilor, monumentelor, catedralelor nu credem că poate funcționa, drumul ales e de cele mai multe ori cel mai simplu, nu avem timp să construim prin reflecție - condiționați fiind de lumea în care trăim, bunul părinte împreună cu bunul psiholog ne dau răspunsuri univoce rapid de urmat.

O întreagă pleiadă de argumente socio-economico-politice ne stau în față; de altfel, Eliade ne povestește foarte frumos despre mutilarea adevăraților simboluri ascunse în tot felul de activități cotidiene¹⁴, oriunde am privi mijeste un simbol, ne face cu ochiul, cum se zice, orice am face relevăm, inconștient desigur, o acțiune

primordială. Se poate să fie adevărat, problema e alta¹⁵: cum să facem ca noi toți, întreaga umanitate, să vedem, auzim, gustăm, atingem respectivele simboluri. Altfel spus: cum e posibilă regăsirea Imaginii, cum e posibil acest ecumenism imaginar postulat de Durand, cum e posibilă această impacare a purului cu impurul, cum e posibilă aflarea liniei de mijloc între inconstient și constient prin reflecție, cum e posibilă această regăsire a *umanității din noi* când absolut totul e de vânzare?

Imaginea, ecumenismul, impacarea purului cu impurul, reflecția nu cumva sunt de vânzare? Eliade, Durand, Caillois, Ricoeur ne abandonează în acest moment și au dreptate să o facă, pentru că, până la urmă, problema e o chestiune de ordin personal.

În sfârșit, pentru a putea ajunge la aceea cumpătare ecumenică de care vorbeam mai sus trebuie să restabilim locul simbolului, adică să-i dăm locul care se cuvine, construind apoi un soi de dialog multicultural.

„Deoarece este dificil ca simbolul să fie cu desăvârșire ignorat, declarăm ca noi - oameni adulți, normali din Occidentul contemporan - suntem scutiți de slăbiciunile legate de gândirea simbolică pe care n-o au decât *alii*: animalele, copiii, femeile, nebunii, poezii - acești nebuni inofensivi - salbaticii, stramosii - care în schimb n-o cunosc decât pe ea”¹⁶. E vorba despre celălalt, mereu ignorat și considerat om de rangul al doilea, care nu corespunde din punct de vedere, am putea spune, antropologic, întrucât are reale deficiențe de ordin rațional. Ei (salbaticul, copilul și femeia) fac parte dintr-o altă clasă de oameni, clasa celor care gândesc altfel, adică sistemul rațional e cumva eludat și

în loc de a folosi emisfera cerebrală stângă folosesc emisfera cerebrală dreaptă. „S-ar crede că o cenzură vigilență nu îngăduie să se vorbească despre simbolic decât dacă se folosește un nume de împrumut ca *nebunie, salbatic, preistoric*. Un tabu teritorial (salbaticii), temporal (homoizii și copiii), biologic (animalele și femeile) sau ideologic (nebunii și artiștii) a împiedicat admiterea simbolului în viața noastră și în special în limbajul nostru”¹⁷. Această ratacire a gândirii europene care distruge puterea simbolului transferându-l în apanajul *celorlalti* (femeie, copil, nebun, salbatic) ajunge să invalideze puterea de semnificație a gândirii simbolice, ori, noi susținem, tocmai contrariul, că dialogul multicultural este prin excelență un dialog simbolic.

Prin comunicare înțelegem dialog, așa cum C. Geertz concepe „dialogul religios ca un dialog intercultural sau mai exact ca un dialog multicultural”¹⁸ în sensul unei deschideri către celălalt diferit de mine. Această diferență, care nu este una de esență, presupune condiționari istorico-geografice și nimic mai mult, e vorba despre un soi de dialog imaginar, care se poate transforma în orice moment într-un dialog cât se poate de real, care presupune identificarea imaginilor și simbolurilor distincte unite prin fondul comun din care fac parte. Acceptarea celuilalt, scoate la iveală propriile noastre potențialități, cum ar spune Aristotel, care creează mai întâi o mai bună cunoaștere de sine, o reevaluare continuă și benefică și mai apoi o cunoaștere a celorlalti care fac parte, să spunem, dintr-o altă comunitate. Dihotomia Occident-Orient, cea mai vizibilă, pentru a nu vorbi de dihotomiile înăuntrul

occidentului – Est-Vest, Europa-America, etc. - postuleaza o ruptura totala, un soi de separare absoluta intre oamenii de aici si cei de dincolo, parca am vorbi, atunci când vorbim de Orient, de cu totul altfel de oameni. Din acest motiv, Eliade insista asupra caii de salvare prin care „omul modern este chemat sa redescopere tezaurul sau de imagini, pentru a se redescoperi pe sine, pentru a gasi caile de intrare in dialog cu alteritatea, pentru a putea sa se integreze dialogului intercultural pe care-l presupune fenomenul redefinirii globale a identitatii”¹⁹.

Modalitatile prin care aceasta redescoperire de sine, si in acelasi timp a alteritatii, se poate realiza sunt in fapt caracteristicile fundamentale pe care omul le posedea, anume imaginea si simbolul, aceasta pentru ca „imaginea prin simplitatea si profunzimea ia in stapânire lumea omului, functionând ca element de mediere intre om si lume si intre om si viata sa interioara”²⁰, iar „simbolul determina un act social si in acelasi timp se realizeaza un act de societate”²¹ si eficienta sa „tradusa in dilatarea ce se opune scurgerii timpului releva unitatea originara pe care simbolul o semnifica”²².

Se realizeaza o interdependentă între facultatile esentiale pe care omul le posedea si socialul in care acesta traieste „creator al lumii sale imagistice, omul pare a fi la rândul sau produsul social al unei lumi de imagini”²³, astfel încât vechea poveste aristotelica a întâietatii socialului asupra individului poate fi, cu unele rezerve, acceptata. Aceste rezerve tin de modul in care definim socialul, pentru ca, daca incercam o schitare a socialului ca existent dependent, cumva anterior omului, in care

acesta se naste fara a avea vreo influenta asupra sa, cadem intr-o banala greseala. Nu intram intr-o teorie a socialului, ci dorim doar sa evidentiem, in acest moment, cum anume se constituie realul societatii sau, altfel spus, identificând trei momente distincte de-a lungul istoriei (religie, monarhie, nationalism), incercam alaturi de B. Anderson sa vedem caracteristicile esentiale pe care acestea le presupun²⁴. Statele nationale moderne sunt definite ca fiind imaginate, intrucât „nici membrii celei mai mici natiuni nu ii vor cunoaste niciodata pe cei mai multi dintre compatriotii lor”²⁵, dar acest fapt nu impiedica milioanele de oameni sa moara si sa ucida pentru un ideal atât de straniu ca cel de natiune. Natiunea transforma fatalitatea in continuitate si contingenta in sens, iar menirea sa este sa transforme hazardul in sens, asa cum inaintea sa a incercat monarhia si religia. Elementele constitutive ale tuturor celor trei forme tin de imaginar. In aceste cazuri regasim ceea ce C. W. Mills incearca sa ne arate atunci când spune „imaginatia sociologica ne ajuta sa intelegem faptul ca fiecarei epoci ii este propriu un anumit stil de gândire”²⁶. Nu insistam asupra elementelor care au facut posibila, dupa cum afirma Anderson, decaderea religiei ca sistem imaginat sau a monarhiei, ci dorim sa aratam ca in decursul istoriei orice comunitate umana era tinuta laolalta prin prisma unor factori ce nu depindeau de un real concret posibil maleabil la nivelul existentei empirice, ci de imaginatia simbolica. Cum altfel am presupune aceasta unitate a comunitatilor sub stindardul religiei sau a monarhiei, atat cit „comunitatea este importanta nu numai pentru ca individul ii apartine

ci si pentru ca se constituie in cadrul ce da masura acestui om”27.

Aceasta scurta trecere in revista este necesara pentru a se putea postula acel umanism la nivelul imaginarului despre care Durand vorbea. Reglajul antropologic (sincretismul imaginar) propus se poate dovedi valabil „daca locul imaginilor particulare, a valorificarii particulare a fluxului de semnificatii, a fixarii intr-o structura concreta exclusiva de reprezentare este luat de constiinta unei unitati fundamentale”28.

Note

1 Dictionarul explicativ al limbii române.

2 DEX

3 Peter van der Veer - *Sincretism, multiculturalism si discursul tolerantei*, in Journal for the Study of religions and Ideologies, issue no. 5, summer, 2003, hihubcluj.ro/JSRI, pp. 4-20.

4 Ibidem

5 Ibidem

6 Ibidem

7 Ibidem

8 Eliade Mircea , *Imagini si simboluri. Eseu despre simbolismul magico-religios*, Ed. Humanitas, Bucuresti, 1994, pp.42-43

9 Mitul pesterii platoniciene releva suficient acest aspect.

10 M. Eliade, op. cit, p. 69.

11 Idem, p. 198.

12 G. Durand, Gilbert Durand, *Aventurile imaginii. Imaginatia simbolica. Imaginarul*, Ed. Nemira, Bucuresti, 1999, p.116.

13 R. Caillois, *Mitul si omul, Abordari ale imaginarului*, Ed. Nemira, Bucuresti, 2001, p. 137.

14 In show-urile auto mondene, unde tinerele domnisoare care prezinta bolizii i-au locul fecioarelor asezate pe pedestale inaintea sacrificarii lor.

15 Crestinismul s-a impus preluând doar imaginile pe care a construit altele noi, in fond având acelasi stramos comun, dar a facut-o mai întâi prin *sabie* sau prin *Imagini*? Care e solutia in post-modernitate?

16 T. Todorov, *Teorii ale simbolului*, Ed. Univers, Bucuresti, 1983, p. 331.

17 Ibidem.

18 Clifford, Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Ed. Fontana Press, 1993.

19 M. Eliade *Imagini si simboluri. Eseu despre simbolismul magico-religios* , ed. cit, p. 44.

20 Ibidem

21 Ibidem

22 Sandu Frunza, *Fundamentalismul religios si noul conflict al ideologiilor*, Ed. Limes, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, p. 30.

23 Ibidem

24 Benedict Anderson, *Comunitati imaginate*, Ed. Integral, Bucuresti, 2000, p. 10.

25 Ibidem

26 C. Wright Mills, *Imaginatia Simbolica*, Ed. Politica, Bucuresti, 1987, p. 23, in S Frunza, ed, cit.

27 Sandu Frunza, *Fundamentalismul religios si noul conflict al ideologiilor*, Ed. Limes, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, p. 30.

28 Idem, p. 33.

CLONAREA – BLASFEMIE SAU BINECUVÂNTARE? Structuri mitico-religioase, controverse etice si consecinte sociale

1. Structurile mitico-religioase ale clonarii

Etimologic, cuvântul clonare provine din grecescul *klon*, tradus in limba româna prin “germen”, “vlastar” sau “ramurica”. Clonarea ar fi, asadar, operatiunea de creare a unui germen dintr-un material genetic preexistent. In termenii literaturii de specialitate, procesul de clonare ar fi unul ce se refera la un “grup de celule sau organisme identice, derivate dintr-o singura celula sau dintr-un singur individ, printr-o modalitate de reproducere asexuata”¹. Accentul cade pe “celula”, inteleasa ca fiind “unitatea structurala, functionala si genetica a organismelor vii”².

A devenit astazi un truism clasificarea clonelor in *naturale* si *artificiale*. Primele, având acelasi genotip, “au

predispozitii asemanatoare la boli si prezinta, in principiu, anomalii similare”³. Cele artificiale pun in probleme mai complicate. Asupra lor nu voi insista aici, cu atât mai mult cu cât nu intentionez a aborda tema din perspectiva biologului si/sau geneticianului.

Punctul meu de vedere este unul al cercetatorului interesat de structurile mitico-religioase si de consecintele sociale ale clonarii in lumea contemporana. Tocmai de aceea cred ca o succinta referinta la momentul “Dolly” din scurta istorie a clonarii poate fi suficient de semnificativ.

In 27 februarie 1997, revista *Nature* publica un text realmente spectaculos: clonarea primului mamifer, oaia denumita Dolly. A fost “primul mamifer clona obtinut prin tehnica clonarii din celule adulte”⁴. Institutul Roslin din Scotia a fost locul istoricului eveniment, iar echipa de cercetatori a fost condusa de Jan Wilmut. Au fost necesare in prealabil mai multe incercari, in sa reusita a fost urmata de clonarea a doua vaci si a cincizeci de soareci.

Acest experiment ultramediatizat despre clonarea primului mamifer la sfârșit de secol XX contine câteva secvente procesuale apte a fi interpretate mitico-religios. Despre ce este vorba? Modificarile structurale aduse organismului lui Dolly o aratau a fi mai in vârsta decât era in realitate. E posibil ca materialul genetic sa fi “retinut” ca apartine unui exemplar ovin de 6 ani. Altfel spus, mieluta Dolly si-a facut intrarea festiva in lume “acumulând” deja de la nastere 6 ani. “Wilmut a elaborat o metoda prin care «memoria» materialului genetic trebuia stearsa”⁵. Se pare ca partial a reusit, din

moment ce toate celulele ovine “au uitat ca sunt celule adulte, diferite si nucleul lor, ajuns in ovocitul anucleat, s-a comportat ca nucleul oricarui zigot”⁶. In concluzie, embrionul s-a dezvoltat normal. Totusi, acest procedeu celular, echivalent spalarii creierului, n-a reusit in totalitate din moment ce “Dolly, mieluseaua nou-nouta, poarta mutatiile vechi ale donatoarei sale de material genetic”⁷.

Ei bine, problema stergerii de memorie a celulei si a reprogramarii nucleului de a lua viata de la inceput se mentin si in cazul clonarii umane. Se stie cu certitudine ca ovulul acumuleaza proteine pe care embrionul le foloseste pâna in momentul când devine el insusi capabil, prin genele sale, sa-si sintetizeze proteine. De exemplu, embrionul de oaie foloseste proteinele acumulate pâna la a patra diviziune de la fecundatie, adica pâna la nivelul de 16 celule. Prin clonare, noi introducem nucleul unei celule adulte in ovocitul anucleat. Din acest nucleu deriva altele care trebuie in mod obligatoriu ca intr-un *timp util* sa fie capabile a sintetiza proteinele necesare embrionului.

Or, realmente straniu imi pare a fi faptul ca aceste nuclee isi “uita” functia! Desi mature, ele nu sintetizeaza imediat proteine. Parca cineva (sau ceva) le-a blocat, obligându-le sa reia totul de la capat. La oaie exista in sa avantajul ca intervalul de diviziune pâna la nivelul celor 16 celule (când embrionul foloseste proteinele acumulate in ovul) este suficient de mare pentru a permite materialului genetic sa se adapteze si nucleelor sa sintetizeze proteinele necesare supravietuirii.

In cazul omului, rezervele de proteine din ovul necesare embrionului sunt epuizate deja la cea de-a treia diviziune. Timpul e prea scurt pentru ca nucleul sa mai poata fi reprogramat pentru sinteza. Intrebarea este: *se poate stimula nucleul pentru a fi reprogramat in timp utili?* Deocamdata, raspunsul oamenilor de stiinta nu este unul ferm.

Toate aceste procese genetice, cu toate dificultatile pe care le comporta, mie nu mi se par a fi deloc intâmplatoare. O posibila cheie a misterului amneziei poate fi cea prezentata de Mircea Eliade in nuvela sa *Les trois graces*. Istoricul religiilor observa un fapt elementar din lumea viului: bacteriile se inmultesc la *nesfârșit*, de peste trei miliarde de ani, fara sa-si fi schimbat in mod esential fondul genetic. Or, in cazul omului, fondul genetic este schimbat pentru ca, prin diviziunea celulelor, moleculele de ADN din nucleu sufera importante *erori de copiere*. Dupa 50-80 de diviziuni celulare, efectul acestor erori de copiere devine atât de puternic încât celula moare.

Intrebarea ar fi urmatoarea: *de ce, in cazul omului, exista o limita (50-80 de diviziuni celulare) sub care efectele erorilor de copiere sunt suportabile?* Absolut semnificativ, scrie Eliade, este faptul ca exista *in nuce*, in potentia, o anume capacitate a ADN-ului de a-si conserva structura! Aceasta tendinta ascunsa, mascata, este deosebit de importanta caci ea permite organismului uman sa-si asigure imunitatea si informatiei genetice sa-si conserve o anume "puritate". Tendinta mentinerii neschimbate a materialului genetic uman elimina si orice alt corp strain cu o alta structura de ADN.

Se pare, observa Mircea Eliade, ca un efect al pierderii controlului asupra materialului genetic dupa mai mult de 50-80 de diviziuni celulare ar fi *imbatrânirea*. Cu cât ADN-ul nu-si mai conserva structura, cu atât organismul imbatrâneste. Or, teza realmente spectaculoasa a lui Eliade este aceea ca *genele controlului sunt urme târzii, ramasite stravechi, a capacitatii fantastice a primelor celule umane de a se regenera si de a ramâne vesnic tinere*. In mod normal diviziunea celulelor ar trebui sa duca la regenerarea si chiar intinerirea organismului uman. Or, acum, acest firesc proces al regenerarii este anulat – dincolo de o anume limita – chiar de ritmul deminental, suspect de accelerat, anarhic, haotic, in care celulele corpului uman prolifereaza. E ca si cum am avea de-a face cu un subtil proces de creatie devenit brusc amnezic, amputat in intentionalitate, ateleologic.

Interpretarea pe care hermeneutul Eliade o ofera acestui mister – într-o scriere literara saturata de un "realism magic" – este ca, de fapt, *aceasta amnezie a celulelor umane ar fi tocmai pedeapsa data de Dumnezeu primilor oameni in urma pacatului originar*. Celulele au fost pedepsite sa "uite" ca se mai pot regenera permanent si ca ca omul a avut, de la Dumnezeu, viata vesnica. O expresie a pedepsei administrate protoparintilor ar fi imbatrânirea si moartea.

O axioma pe care si-o asuma dintotdeauna teologul este aceea ca Dumnezeu, in ipostaza sa de demiurg, nu-si distruge propria creatie. Altfel spus, omul contemporan ar avea aceeasi inzestrare biologica cu Adam si Eva, doar ca ea a trecut, prin anumite mecanisme ale ei, pe un plan secund. Eliade merge cu

interpretarea sa la limita: el sustine ca *taina vietii vesnice se afla in continuare inscrisa in codul nostru genetic*, numai ca acum, gratie pedepsei divine, ea se manifesta ca tendinta in cel mai izbitor contrariu al ei: in boala grava, chiar incurabila. Nu întâmplator, cancerul este provocat de “o proliferare excesiva si anarhica a celulelor unui tesut sau organ”⁸. Procesul de diviziune si de regenerare a corpului exista, numai ca este dat peste cap de ritmul accelerat in care diviziunea celulara are loc.

Solutia ar fi aceea de a gasi cheia reglarii normale, adica originare, a ritmului diviziunii celulare. Dereglajul este mult mai evident in cazul bolilor grave (cum ar fi cancerul) si tocmai de acolo ar trebui inceputa cercetarea. In joc este o provocatoare *teologie a bolii* pe care un personaj din nuvela lui Eliade o expune cu maxima dezinvoltura. Ea incepe cu o intrebare capitala: “de ce, foarte curând, toti bolnavii de cancer vor fi nu numai vindecati, ci regenerati si reintineriti, in timp ce vor trece foarte multi ani pâna când biologia medicala va reusi sa identifice procesul de regenerare periodica si intinerire aplicabil oamenilor sanatosi?”⁹ Pentru ca numai cel amenintat de marea primejdie are si formidabila sansa de a redobândi ceva din conditia paradisiaca a omului. (In cadrul nuvelei lui Eliade era vorba de tinerete fara batrânete – nu si de viata fara de moarte.) Dusa spre o limita a ei, aceasta teologie a bolii ar reactualiza gânduri eretice de genul celor formulate de Luther care ne indemna sa pacatuim “caci numai astfel vom fi mântuiti...”¹⁰.

Voi incerca sa realizez o paralela intre clonare si amnezia celulelor umane din procesul bolilor grave cu

scopul de a ma opri asupra unor date care mi se par realmente semnificative. In primul rând, ar fi vorba de inactualitatea acestei fascinante teologii a bolii, expusa sintetic de Eliade in nuvela amintita. Pâna acum, cel putin, suferinzii de cancer – cu notabile exceptii – stau cu totii sub semnul implacabil al mortii si nicidecum al regenerarii si reintineririi. Sansa revigorarii biologice o au mai curând cei ce au acces la noile tehnologii si banii necesari unui tratament foarte special. Cât priveste calea salvarii prin pacat, chiar daca ar fi propovaduita acum intr-un mediu românesc preponderent neprotestant, ea ar avea sanse foarte mici de a fi bine inteleasa...

In al doilea rand sunt convins ca exista o clara apropiere intre amnezia procesului de creatie al celulelor si amnezia nucleelor transplantate in cazul clonarii umane. Concluzia ar fi ca ambele pot fi citite in cheie religioasa: *tur Dumnezeu interzice omului, propriei sale creaturi, sa devina la rândul sau creator*. Niciodata faptura umana nu a creat ceva perfect, desavârsit, asemenea lui Dumnezeu. Atunci când a reusit totusi sa creeze ceva durabil, omul a facut-o prin “consum de energie si substanta”, cum ar spune Nae Ionescu. A facut-o prin sacrificiu, fapt exemplar argumentat de Eliade in *Comentarii la legenda Mesterului Manole*.

In al treilea rând, cele expuse pâna acum cu privire la fenomenul clonarii reactiveaza anumite fantasme mitologice stravechi. Cred ca ar fi vorba de *mitul eternei reintoarceri* la o stare de excelenta a trupului, o stare care ii declanseaza omului modern nostalgia dupa o conditie paradisiaca. Daca luam in calcul si motivul crearii unei mutatii spectaculoase a speciei umane prin tehnica

clonarii, combinata cu altele, atunci avem suficiente motive sa interpretam clonarea ca o incercare de invingere a timpului si istoriei si de recuperare a cât mai mult posibil din conditia originara a omului.

O alta fantasma mitico-religioasa pusa in joc de experimentele clonarii este cea de ordin soteriologic. Invingându-si servitutile trupului si conditia sa decazuta, omul ar putea atinge prin clonare eliberarea, chiar mântuirea. Când am in atentie mântuirea ma gândesc la provocatorul fenomen al clonarii lui Iisus si a realizarii *parousiei* cu ajutorul superperformantei tehnici omenesti. Asupra acestor provocatoare chestiuni voi reveni in sa altadata.

2. Avantajele clonarii

Dincolo de acesta interpretare mitico-religioasa, clonarea – indiferent de formele ei – a provocat discutii si controverse etice. Ele au fost deja anuntate intr-o serie de carti si filme¹¹ care abordau tema intr-un scenariu (pe atunci) stiintifico-fantastic. Astazi, când realitatea bate fictiunea, polemica in jurul clonarii este centrata, din punctul meu de vedere, pe avantaje si dezavantaje, dar si pe iminenta disolutie a unor valori morale si religioase clasice.

Voi pune fata in fata avantajele si dezavantajele clonarii, apoi voi avea in atentie argumentele fiecarei parti. O sinteza asupra avantajelor clonarii ar putea arata astfel:

a) Prin clonare, *cuplurile sterile ar putea avea copii*. Imposibilul ar deveni posibil, gratie manipularii zestrei genetice a cel puțin unuia dintre parinti. In acest caz, “zigotul ar rezulta din fuziunea unei celule a sotului cu un ovocit preluat de la sotia sa sterila”¹².

b) *Femeile singure ar putea avea, la rândul lor, copii*. Mai mult, ar putea renunta la inseminarea cu sperma dintr-o banca si s-ar putea multiplica sub chipul unei clone. Femeia s-ar naste pe ea insasi, asemenea zeilor de altadata. (Iata cum se reactiveaza prin clonare un alt motiv mitologic: cel al nasterii omului din sine insusi!).

c) *Barbatul celibatar va putea deveni si el tata*.

d) *Eliminarea avortului genetic*, asa ar putea fi formulat un alt mare avantaj al clonarii umane. Sotul unei femei sterile va putea avea un copil nu doar in afara familiei, prin inseminare artificiala cu o femeie fertila. Prin tehnica clonarii, el va obtine copilul inclusiv cu aportul direct al sotiei sterile, care va oferi gene extranucleare transmise prin ovocit. Iata cum mitul veterotestamentar al nasterii prin colaborarea barbatului fertil (Iacov) cu sotia sterila (Rahela) si slujnica fertila (Bilha) este reactualizat, gratie clonarii, intr-o versiune postmoderna si desacralizata.

e) *Lezbienele si homosexualii vor cunoaste si ei, minoritarii, multumirea de a fi parinti*. Cuplul de lesbiene s-ar putea clona in familie, in schimb homosexualii ar fi pasibili de “infidelitate genetica”: copilul lor ar primi gene extranucleare de la femeia donatoare a ovocitului.

f) Un alt avantaj al clonarii ar avea in atentie noile sperante pe care ni le-am pune in faptul ca majoritatea

clonelor s-ar putea intelege mai bine cu “parintii” lor. Astfel, *conflictul dintre generatii s-ar diminua si chiar stinge.*

g) *Evitarea nasterii copiilor cu boli ereditare, asa suna un alt avantaj al clonarii. Astazi se stie bine ca genele responsabile de aparitia unor boli ereditare se manifesta preferential la unul dintre sexe In cartea sa *Ce este clonarea?*, Oana Grancea aminteste doua asemenea situatii. Prima este cea referitoare la hemofilie si are efecte devastatoare la baieti, iar cea de-a doua (distrofia musculara Duchenne) se produce la 1 din 2.600-3.000 de nou-nascuti tot de sex masculin. Or, clonându-se partenerul sanatos s-ar putea elimina ghinionul nasterii de copii bolnavi! Mai mult decât atât, daca cuplul purtator al unei boli ereditare ar avea, totusi, un copil sanatos, l-ar putea clona pe acesta pentru a putea evita nasterea altuia bolnav. (O alta cale ar fi avortul in serie, atunci când se depisteaza la timp sarcina cu un copil bolnav.)*

b) *Clonarea pentru tesuturi si organe. Iata un posibil scenariu pâna mai ieri atribuit, pe buna dreptate, unui macabru film SF: “se creeaza o clona a celui care are nevoie de un organ pentru transplant. La vârsta de sase saptamâni, embrionului i se extirpa telencefalul, adica partea din care se dezvoltă creierul. Deci clona nu va fi umana, din cauza lipsei creierului. Embrionul isi va continua dezvoltarea in uterul unei mame-surogat, de unde va fi extras prin cezariana. Dupa nastere, clona mentinuta în viata prin hranire intravenoasa si sustinerea artificiala a functiilor vitale, va fi crescuta cu ajutorul unor injectii cu hormoni. Organele sale ar fi perfect compatibile pentru transplantarea la «original»”13.*

i) In timp, prin *clonare somatica* ar putea fi abandonata reproducerea sexuata. In acest fel, parintele ar fi in masura sa-si transmita genele in proportie de 100%.

j) Clonarea ar face cu putinta mutatia genetica multasteptata, cea care ar duce la crearea unui *om nou*, cu date psihofiziologice si spirituale iesite din comun. In joc este o noua varianta a *mitului eroului salvator* care, gratie stiintei de ultima ora, va putea provoca mutatia superioara a intregii rase umane.

k) Prin clonare s-ar putea rezolva nefericitele cazuri in care un copil suferind (de infectie renala, de exemplu) nu si-ar putea salva viata prin transplant. Atunci, cu ajutorul *clonelor donatoare de nuclei*, i se va produce un “frate” de la care i se va extirpa apoi rinichiul.

l) *Operatiunea de clonare ar putea “invinge” moartea.* Iata un posibil exemplu: in urma unui accident, sotul moare, copilul intra in coma, iar sotia in imposibilitatea de a mai deveni mama. Or, sansa este ca acel copil sa mai poata trai doar prin clona sa.

m) Tot pe lista avantajelor clonarii sunt mentionate si acele situatii in care *parintii bolnavi mai pot “supravietui” mortii doar prin clonele lor.*

Toate acestea sunt doar o parte dintre avantajele in care cred partizanii clonarii. Pentru a si le sustine, ei recurg la o serie de argumente. Unul dintre ele are in atentie disolutia unor tabu-uri sociale: daca se permite avortul, atunci de ce nu s-ar putea permite si clonarea? Un altul se refera la faptul ca Dumnezeu insusi ar permite clonarea, din moment ce nu se opune “unui zigot sa se imparta in doua jumatați pentru a lua nastere doi gemeni identici”14. Urmatorul argument proclonare

ofera o alta versiune vorbei populare “pofta vine mâncând”. Pe masura ce rezultatele pozitive ale clonarii vor fi mai bine cunoscute, atunci si receptivitatea sociala fata de aceasta controversata tehnica va creste. Asa s-a intâmpat si cu fecundarea “in vitro”, care acum 20 de ani era interzisa in SUA, dar si cu transplantul de cord, considerat “inadmisibil” in mentalul social occidental al anilor ’60 din secolul trecut.

3. Dezavantajele clonarii

Imediat dupa 1997, când au fost intens mediatizate avantajele tehnicilor de clonare si argumentele adiacente, au aparut si reactiile adverse. Adversarii clonarii si-au formulat si mediatizat convingerile, încercând astfel sa argumenteze urmatoarele dezavantaje:

a) Din punct de vedere mental, *locuitorii planetei nu sunt suficient de bine pregatiti* pentru a accepta provocarile si noutatile pe care le-ar aduce noile tehnici de clonare.

b) *Exista o substantiala adversitate si chiar repulsie fata de orice noutate* cae provoaca vietuirea stereotipa si canoanele simtului comun. Or, clonarea este o asemenea noutate.

c) *Fabricarea omului anencefal pentru “piese de schimb” ar putea soca opinia publica.* Faptul ar putea fi interpretat si ca o limita a desacralizarii trupului uman, creatie unica a lui Dumnezeu. S-ar putea ajunge la strategii tehnice de eliminare din viata unui embrion a partilor “inutile”, pastrându-se doar acea secventa care ar produce organul

dorit. La limita, s-ar obtine “inimi fara corp, ficati fara corp, rinichi fara corp etc.”¹⁵.

d) *Exista un imens procent al ratarilor.* Aproape 98% dintre embrioni nu ajung sa fie implantati mamei surrogat. Ei mor in timpul evolutiei sarcinii, sau imediat dupa nastere.

e) *Clonele supravietuitoare mostenesc sau dobândesc anomalii de functionare.* Jan Wilmut, “tatal” lui Dolly, era aproape sigur de faptul ca multi copii clonati se pot naste cu maladii congenitale, asa cum s-a intâmpat si in cazul experimentelor de clonare animala.

f) Pe moment, clonarea umana ar fi o *operatie costisitoare*, aproape imposibil de concretizat¹⁶.

g) *Cultiva o fixatie genotipica, o vinovata identitate a oamenilor, fapt ce ar anula individualitatea si specificul persoanei umane.*

h) *Omul, expert al clonarii, se substituie lui Dumnezeu, anulând misterul si sacralitatea iubirii.*

i) *Clonelor li se poate determina destinele.* Impotriva vointei lor, ele pot deveni ceea ce creatorul lor doreste. Clona ar fi, asadar, o ipostaza (post)moderna a servului desavârsit.

j) Conform interpretarii lui Hans Jonas, *clonele ar fi o expresie frusta si reprobabila a stereotipiei, situându-se in antiteza cu minunata diversitate a naturii*¹⁷.

k) *Trupul uman ajunge o marfa vânduta pe bucati.* Se incalca astfel un celebru principiu kantian: “Persoana umana devine mijloc, iar nu scop”¹⁸.

l) Clonând pe cineva drag, dar demult trecut in lumea de dincolo, dai curs unei *vinovate iresponsabilitati* si unor psihanalizabile capricii omenesti.

m) Pot apărea și se pot induce neașteptat *periculoase anomalii ale clonării*. Se pot induce și boli genetice din partea celui ce donează nucleul, dar și prin intermediul ADN-ului mitocondrial provenind din partea mamei.

n) O acuza importantă s-a adus cu privire la “*fertilitatea și longevitatea organismelor clonate*”¹⁹. Se știe că, odată cu trecerea timpului, survine și o scurtare progresivă a secvențelor de ADN situate la extremitatea cromozomilor și numite *telomeri*. Rezultă “banalul” proces de îmbătrânire. Departă de a-l învinge, clonarea îl accelerează, ratând, deocamdată, șansa de a împlini stravechiul mit al “tineretii fără bătrânețe”.

o) Exemplele animale clonate pot produce *importante dezechilibre ale ecosistemelor*.

Asadar putem observa existența unei diversități a dezavantajelor clonării, fapt ce menține caracterul problematic al temei. În momentul de față, polemica continuă. Ea are ca obiect și unele consecințe juridice și sociale pe care le-ar putea provoca generalizarea într-un viitor apropiat a tuturor practicilor de clonare umană.

4. Posibile urmări juridice și sociale ale clonării umane

O consecință semnificativă din punct de vedere social ar putea fi anticipată pornindu-se de la experimentul newyorkez al anului 1998. Trei medici universitari – Jamie Girfo, John Zhang și Hui Liu – au pus la cale un

experiment științific²⁰ care a dus la inedita formulă socială a unui copil cu trei părinți biologici: două mame și un tata. (Alteori, situația se poate inversa, însă problema rămâne.) Întrebarea este următoarea; cum se va raporta copilul la cele două mame? Una dintre ele – cea care i-a dat mai puțin (genele extranucleare) – l-a purtat în burta și are toate șansele de a-i crea iluzia unei mame depline. Oricum, componenta clasică a familiei este, în această situație, anulată.

O altă posibilă urmărire juridică a clonării umane ar avea în atenție strania relație dintre părinți și clone. Sunt părinții clonelor adevărați părinți? Sunt clonele veritabili copii? Din alt punct de vedere, părintele nu are în “persoană” clonei un fiu sau o fiică, ci un alter-ego! Întrebarea este: Ce drepturi sociale și juridice va avea clona în acest caz? O complicată situație familială poate fi și aceea în care părintele are un copil natural și o clona. Dilema apare atunci când se pune problema mostenirii.

Adepții clonării umane și-au motivat opțiunea invocând și imensă binefacere pe care o va avea umanitatea în condițiile în care va fi populată de copii ale lui Einstein, Beethoven, Newton, sau de o multime de genii precum Leonardo da Vinci. Numai că o asemenea argumentație este (cel puțin acum) absurdă. Se știe bine că o clona copiază zestrea genetică a celui alt, dar absolut nimic din personalitatea sa. Poți lesne obține un Einstein banal, sau chiar idiot, ceea ce ar fi o curată “blasfemie”. Din punct de vedere moral, se pune însă întrebarea: cine justifică nefericită condiție de cobai a unui “geniu” clonat?

Provocatoare prin ineditul ei este si situatia in care o femeie va da nastere propriei clone. In mod firesc, ne putem intreba – fara a avea, deocamdata, certitudinea corectitudinii unui raspuns: ce va fi clona: fiica, sora sau un alter-ego al femeii? Ce statut social si juridic va avea? In ce relatie va fi cu “fratii” ei naturali? Absolut spectaculoasa poate fi insa ipostaza in care clona poate semana perfect cu tânara mama si, prin urmare, tatal se poate (din nou) indragosti de ea!

Indiferent de ipostazele pe care suntem dispusi sa le concedem clonei- de fiu/fiica, “frate” al tatalui sau “sora” a mamei – relatiile clasice de tip familial sunt bulversate. In joc este modelul unei (posibile) noi familii pe care o vom întâlni (frecvent?) in mileniul trei. Pentru a ajunge aici va trebui sa ne asumam avantajele si dezavantajele clonarii, efectele ei juridice si sociale, respectiv subtila reactivare printr-un experiment stiintific a unor stravechi fantasme mitico-religioase. Acesta este, in fond, mesajul principal al conferintei de fata.

Note:

1 Oana Grancea, *Ce este clonarea*, Editura Teora, Bucuresti, 1999, p. 15.

2 *Ibidem*, p. 7.

3 *Ibidem*, p. 20.

4 *Ibidem*, p. 40.

5 *Ibidem*, p. 41.

6 *Ibidem*.

7 *Ibidem*.

8 Mircea Eliade, *Les trois graces*, editie ingrijita de Eugen Simion, Editura Fundatiei Culturale Române, Bucuresti, 1992, p. 130.

9 *Ibidem*, p. 148.

10 *Ibidem*, p. 149.

11 Am putea exemplifica cu David Ropic/Rorvic, *The Cloning of a Man*, 1978, film ce avea ca tema clonarea unui milionar; *The Boys from Brasil*, un film despre un grup de clone ale lui Hitler; *Blade Runner*, productie cinematografica americana din anii '80, despre o clona care-i ataca pe oameni, iar lista acestui gen de filme ar putea continua.

12 Oana Grancea, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

13 *Ibidem*, p. 54.

14 *Ibidem*, p. 69.

15 *Ibidem*, p. 55.

16 “Daca s-ar proceda acum la clonarea umana, ar trebui recoltate 400 de ovocite de la femei tratate hormonal pentru polioovulatie, astfel încât de la fiecare femeie sa se recolteze, in medie, câte 10 ovocite. Se presupune ca dupa transferul nucleilor in ovocitele enucleate, ar ramâne la sfârșitul perioadei de dezvoltare *in vitro* 50 de bastoclisti viabili. Acestia vor fi transplantati in uterele a 50 de mame surrogat, dar numai 10 dintre ele vor incheia sarcina la termen. Un singur produs va fi, insa, viabil” (Marius V. Cârlan, *Clonarea animalelor si consecintele clonarii*, Editura Junimea, Iasi, 2001, pp. 70-71).

17 Pentru detalii vezi parintele Juvenalie, *Teroristii uterului. Terorism, stiinta si etica inceputurilor vietii. Eseu de bioetica a gestatiei*, Editura Anastasia, Bucuresti, 2002, p. 226.

18 *Ibidem*, p. 229.

19 *Ibidem*, p. 231.

20 Pentru detalii vezi Oana Grancea, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

Michael Francis Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The umma below the winds*

London: Routledge, 2003. xvi, 294 pp.

Michael Laffan's *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia*, based on his doctoral thesis, analyzes the place of Islam in the growth of early Indonesian nationalism. Laffan argues that the evolution of Islamic identities played a seminal but previously unacknowledged role in the rise of nationalism and nationalist identities. In other words, Laffan demonstrates the role of religion in the growth of nationalism, which has been consistently underestimated.

This work is framed and best understood in terms of Benedict Anderson's concept of imagined communities. Anderson, an Indonesia specialist whose knowledge of the archipelago was instrumental in his thinking, sought to explain the advent of nationalism in the non-western world. Anderson defined the nation as an imagined political community, a sodality in which

people feel a deep sense of fraternity and comradeship despite the fact that members will never know most of their fellow-members. Vernacular print-capitalism made it possible to "think" the nation, and the communications and transportation infrastructure within colonies facilitated the creation of emotionally plausible and politically viable unities such as Indonesia. Educational institutions and colonial technologies such as the census, map, and museum made these unities realities. Anderson's thinking has been of great influence, but he has been criticized for making it seem as if the idea of a nation was a European concept cut from whole cloth which others simply borrowed. Laffan's important book joins the chorus of voices revising and extending our understanding of imagined communities.

Laffan demonstrates that an important site for the growth of nationalism and the development of the concept of Indonesia was in the Islamic heartlands. Students from the Dutch East Indies, those studying in Cairo in particular, and pilgrims from the archipelago making the Hajj to Mekka experienced a transformative change in their identity. They simultaneously gained a heightened sense of their identity as Muslims in a world-wide Islamic community and confirmation that they shared a local identity with others from the Indonesian-Malay world that distinguished them from other Muslims. Laffan summarizes his work as follows:

"...the foundation of the Jawi [Indonesian] ecumene rested in part on the experience of alterity grounded against both foreign Muslims and European colonizers. This alterity was cre-

ated by the scholarly networks of the ulama and reinforced on the Hajj, where pilgrims would experience the multivalent claims of local, Jawi, and wider Islamic identity. It was these claims that were later to occupy Muslim reformists as they campaigned for a homeland that was both indigenous and genuinely Islamic.”

Laffan spends considerable time and effort tracing the history of this evolution in identity. He focuses quite naturally on those individuals whose writings, government service, and role in Islamic organizations has resulted in an important body of source material. Where possible he traces connections between individuals, organizations, and publications in an effort to map the growth of a national identity influenced by their religious experiences.

Laffan’s argument relies on the progressive accumulation of information over over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries rather than on

a close reading of a short period or single individual. The result is a substantial revision to the dominant existing account of Indonesian nationalism, in which secular, western educated leaders arising out of the native middle class in the Dutch East Indies are given almost exclusive attention. With the publication of this book such a narrative is no longer tenable.

Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia also marks an important contribution to the growing literature on Islamic networks linking the Malay-Indonesian world to the Middle East. Understanding the nature of these networks is an important antidote to the all-too-common perception that Indonesian Muslims were somehow peripheral to the Islamic heartland or, even more erroneously, not really Muslims at all. We should thank Laffan for his initial efforts and look forward to his further contributions to the fields of Islamic and Southeast Asian studies.

Mihaela Miroiu, *The road towards autonomy. Feminist Political Theories* Polirom, Iasi, 2004

The most recent book by Mihaela Miroiu achieves a stabilization and concentration of her previous volumes, the ideas of which are recollected and exposed in this structured, condensed version. The topics that have occupied Miroiu in the scholarly press are collected in this volume, revealing their inner logic and articulations.

Thus, in part I the author proposes an introduction - with historical accents - to feminist theories, developing both the idea of “women’s experiences” (initially proposed in *Gindul umbrei. Abordari feministe in filosofia contemporana* (1995) and the phases of the feminist movement, briefly sketched in *Lexiconul feminist* (2002). The second part explores the major feminist ideological families – liberal, Marxist, social, and radical, with special mention of ecofeminism (analyzed in details in *Convenio. Despre natura, femei si morala* – 2nd edition, 2002) and communitarian feminism. The latter part (and at the same time the most original one) proposes an ap-

plied analysis of the period before and after 1989, with special reference to the Romanian situation. The socio-political analysis of these latter chapters compliments the historical and conceptual investigation of the previous ones. One is impressed by the examination of the different patriarchies of Romanian society (the rural patriarchy, the “state” patriarchy, and finally the capitalist patriarchy) that is, to an extent, convergent with the examination proposed by Vladimir Pasti in *Ultima inegalitate. Relatiile de gen in România* (2003).

Throughout the book, the author extensively uses comparative analysis between the Romanian situation and the western and/or eastern one. This characteristic receives more emphasis than in previous volumes. This may be due to the consolidation of the (already) existing tradition of Romanian feminist scholarship. This tradition includes research produced by the MA program in Gender and Public Policies at NSPSA, Bucharest, which has come to fruition in the books from Paideia and Polirom, and also includes the volumes of the Interdisciplinary Group of Gender Studies from Cluj, published by EFES and Desiree.

Miroiu’s courageously calls attention to of two phenomena in post-1989 Romania:

1. the relative inability of Romanian feminism to articulate itself as a *socio-political movement*, in comparison with the more advantageous situation of the Romanian inter-war feminist movement;
2. the so-called *room-service feminism* – a kind of “form without content” that has been so welcomed by our so-

ciety – intended to answer Western requests for integration, and monopolizing the dominant political discourse

Several features of the author's book deserve special notice, to my view. First of all, it is remarkable that this book reconsiders the *ideological* dimension of feminism, especially of the positive side of the movement, that is mentioned elsewhere by Susan Moller Okin:

“As an ideology, a way of seeing and making sense of things, we expect feminism that it spreads across the globe, to take forms not easily predictable from Western experience... The interaction of women's experiences, feminist politics and a feminist philosophy that sees the personal as political will produce, in continual evolution, feminism as an ideology.”

This fact is important especially in the framework of the undeserved “fall into disgrace” of the concept of ideology, both in the West and in the ex-soviet space (due to distinct reasons in the respective regions). In the West, the postmodern mistrust of the “great narratives” has contaminated the concept of ideology itself, which has been regarded precisely as a kind of foundational meta-narrative. In the ex-soviet space, the excess politicization of the term has led to its rejection after 1989, or to the extremely cautious use of it, generally as a negative concept (with notable exceptions, see for instance Slavoj Žižek's books).

Without a mature and conscious consideration of its inclusive (*not* exclusive) ideological dimension, the feminist theory is in danger of losing its own specificity and of dissolving into the corporatist, “soft” post-feminism sustained by the multinational companies and actively promoted by the media. To the author's view, this fact is not at all desirable – she is convinced that feminism and feminisms are necessary for women.

Along the same line of thought, the recovery of the significance of *liberal feminism*, together with the other types of feminisms, seems particularly important. In the Romanian context, this thing is most urgently needed because, of all the types of feminisms, liberal feminism is the least represented, a fact that is highly regrettable in view of liberal feminism's emancipating potential. However, the author's remarks are still accurate even if we expand the level of generality. Thus, if the history of feminism has more frequently registered the conflicts and disputes among the different types of feminisms, perhaps now the time of their combination and hybridization has arrived, at least at the personal level. This is one of the significant conclusions of the book: “Without any doubts, whether they admit it or not, women need feminism. Their road towards safety passes through socialist feminism; their road towards difference and female development passes through radical feminism; their road towards autonomy needs both, but it also necessarily needs liberal feminism”.



Andrei Marga, Religia in era globalizării

Editura Fundatiei pentru Studii Europene, Cluj-Napoca, 2003.

Pentru o mare parte a cercurilor academice, aparitia cartii *Religia in era globalizării* sub semnatura lui Andrei Marga a fost o reala si aproape inexplicabila surpriza. Insa, daca observam caracterul aplicat al scrierilor lui Andrei Marga si preocuparea sa pentru abordarea temelor celor mai fierbinti, care cer fundamentari si raspunsuri urgente, atunci volumul de fata vine ca o consecinta fireasca a cercetarilor teoretice si a prezentei publice a ganditorului clujean. Perioada post-revolutionara a fost pentru filosoful clujean una de o productivitate deosebita in planul creatiei filosofice si sociologice si o perioada de afirmare in viata publica româneasca si in rindul personalitatilor reformatoare din sistemul educational european.

Lista volumelor semnate de Andrei Marga cuprinde: *Herbert Marcuse. Studiu critic*, Cluj, 1980; *Cunoastere si sens. Perspective critice asupra pozitivismului*, Bucuresti, 1984; *Actiune si ratiune in conceptia lui Jurgen Habermas*, Cluj, 1985; *Introducere in filosofia contemporana*, Bucuresti, 1988; *Rationalitate, comunicare, argumentare*, Cluj, 1991; *Introducere in metodologia si argumentarea filosofica*, Cluj, 1992; *Philosophy in the Eastern Transition*, Cluj, 1993; *Explorari in actualitate*,

Cluj, 1995; *Philosophy in the Eastern Transition*, extended version, Cluj, 1995; *Filosofia unificarii europene*, Cluj, 1995; *Universitatea in tranzitie*, Cluj, 1996; *Filosofia unificarii europene*, editia a doua, extinsa, Cluj, 1997; *Academic Reform. A Case Study*, Cluj, 1997; *Reconstructia pragmatica a filosofiei*, volumul 1, Iasi, 1998; *Educatia in tranzitie*, Cluj, 1999; *Relativismul si consecintele sale*, Cluj, 1999; *Education in Transition*, Bucuresti, 2000; *Anii Reformei 1997-2000*, Cluj, 2000; *University Reform Today*, Cluj, 2001; *Anii Reformei 1997-2000*, editie definitiva, Cluj, 2001; *Filosofia unificarii europene*, editia a treia Cluj, 2001; *Bildung und Modernisierung*, Cluj, 2002; *Introducere in filosofia contemporana*, editia a doua, extinsa, Iasi, 2002; *Iesirea din trecut*, Cluj, 2002; *Filosofia unificarii europene*, editia a patra, adaugita si definitiva, Cluj, 2003.

Filosofia lui Andrei Marga este receptata ca fiind una a temelor majore si a eforturilor de a raspunde problemelor majore ale societatii românesti si ale „satului global” in care traim. „*Religia in era globalizării*” propune un raspuns la noua situatie in care se afla religia, un raspuns care revede si reconstruieste raspunsurile anterioare si le depaseste pentru a le reda relevanta pentru omul contemporan si pentru a putea produce noi solutii in contextul global.

Andrei Marga constata ca „Religia s-a globalizat cea dintâi. Reprezentari si viziuni religioase se afla de multa vreme in competitie globala. Pe de alta parte, spre religie se indreapta increderea si asteptarile majoritatii oamenilor. Religia este reazem in epocile de schimbare profunda a conditiilor vietii oamenilor. Religia a ramas resursa de motivare pentru comportamente in situatii

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dificile. In civilizatia europeana, in care traim, de la traditia iudeo-crestina se asteapta din nou solutiile.” De aceea, autorul nu-si propune o carte „despre religie”, ci incearca sa puna in valoare raspunsurile noi pe care traditiile religioase le pot oferi in cadrul general al provocarilor pe care le aduce era globalizarii. Autorul isi propune sa raspunda la intrebari cum ar fi: „ce inseamna de fapt si ce ne pretinde globalizarea? Care este ponderea religiei in modernitatea târzie? Care este situatia religiei si situatia religioasa a timpului nostru? Care este impactul religiilor in situatia politica a lumii de astazi si in evolutia spre unificare din Europa? Care sunt posibilitatile de evolutie din trialogul religiilor monoteiste? Ce schimbari se produc in etica in era globalizarii si care sunt mijloacele intelectuale de realizare a acestora?”.

Pornind de la premisa necesitatii eliminarii cliseelor din dezbaterile academice asupra religiilor, Andrei Marga aduce in discutie dezbaterile teologice de referinta pentru a pune in valoare resursele pe care le poate genera o pertinenta intelegere a traditiei iudeo-crestine in momentul crucial in care „umanitatea a intrat intr-o *societate globala* sau pe cale de a se globaliza”. Pe urmele lui Hans Kung, Andrei Marga considera ca punctul de plecare al reconstructiei fundamentelor umanitatii globale trebuie sa fie cel al unei etici

profunde, iar pentru aceasta este necesara o reconsiderare a „atitudinii morale fundamentale a omului”, sint necesare noi constructii si noi aprofundari filosofice sau teologice, care sa dea seama asupra valorilor si normelor pe care sa se ridice deciziile si actiunile omului contemporan. Pentru aceasta este necesara identificarea resurselor pentru valorile morale adecvate in insesi mecanismele procesului de globalizare. In acest sens, Andrei Marga considera ca „un *ethos* cu impact destul de larg, in fapt mondial, nu poate proveni astazi din alta parte decât din religie. Evolutia lumii civilizate si, inainte de aceasta, a lumii in sens cuprinzator a fost si a ramas, in aceasta era a globalizarii, in directia sporirii ponderii religiei in viata oamenilor si in evolutia societatilor.”

Religia in era globalizarii este o carte a regindirii, resistemizarii, a reconstructiei in cimpul cunostiintelor ce stau „la temelia credintei religioase” si care „formeaza de multa vreme o cultura”. Importanta solutiilor pe care religia le aduce in noul context al societatii globale este orientata de Andrei Marga spre o incercare de a recupera „filosofia ca expresie a experientei omenesti integrale” intr-o lume in care religia ocupa o pondere esentiala in constructia noilor indentitati marcate de procesele de globalizare.

Mihaela Frunza, *Ideology and Feminism*

Ed. Limes, Cluj Napoca, 2004

Through this book, Mihaela Frunza invites us to participate in a resourceful discussion between ideology and liberal feminism.

The author has chosen first to look into the *Political Philosophy of Liberal Feminism* and to explain the terminology she has made use of. In order to employ feminist political philosophy the author finds it useful to investigate this philosophy at the three levels of generality. Within this framework, one of the terms making up the phrase “feminist political philosophy” is considered to prevail over and determine the understanding of the other two. First a meaning will be assigned to the term “philosophy,” second, one will be provided for the term “political,” and third, one will be assigned to the term “feminism”. In attempting to synthesize these three levels, one will soon realize that “feminist political philosophy” generically stands for the entire literature of feminist theory and studies.

Further on, in order to offer to the readers a broader and enriched perspective on the subject, the author examines the main theory of contemporary feminist liberalism and the writings of its renowned repre-

sentatives of the second wave: Betty Friedan, Janet Radcliffe Richards and Susan Moller Okin.

Frunza makes use of a comparative and interdisciplinary approach that will help her, in the second chapter (*Ideology – an obsolete concept?*), to explore the central topic of the book: ideology and the liberal feminist perspective. From the very beginning, the author warns the readers that there are “as many definitions of ideology as the number of authors who have written about it” [p. 55]. Moreover, “This proliferation of definitions paradoxically coexists with the lack of concern over searching for a definition as a consequence of the desuetude of the concept” [p. 55]. However, throughout its history *ideology* has been regarded as a descriptive, positive or negative concept. In order to put the concept to work in the field of feminist theories, the author develops a relational analysis, namely *ideology and praxis*, and *science*, and *ethics*, and *language*. An additional discussion involves the relation between ideology and two trans-disciplinary topics – dominance and the thinking of the *Other*. Also, coming from the realm of philosophy, the author draws the readers’ attention to the endless debate regarding the *end of ideology*, and its counterpart: the *inevitability of ideology*.

Under the title of *Feminism as/and Ideology*, the third chapter brings into discussion the relationship(s) between ideology and feminism within feminist political theory. The author underscores the fact that the term *ideology* is not a central concept of feminist political theory and is only defined **in relation to** other central concepts of this theory. Michael Freeden is mentioned

here, as he has tried to provide a thorough analysis on the relation between ideology and feminism.

Furthermore, Frunza underlines some of the critiques raised against contemporary liberal feminism. A recurrent accusation is that feminism does not theorize or deal with universal concepts of political theory such as justice, freedom of the individual, equality, public vs. private sphere, and the state.

However, the author succeeds in undermining these accusations by providing important counter arguments of feminists who have integrated in their perspective these classical universal concepts and who have also pointed out the discriminations still present in various spheres of life. “What one ignores in such an approach are the internal complexities of theories of liberal feminism, which cannot be judged by a simplistic logic (...)” [p. 126]. Special concepts such as the distinction between sex and gender, patriarchy, affirmative action, and androgyny, have enriched current political theory.

Another aspect that Frunza has dealt with is the relationships established between feminist discourses and

different types of ideologies. There are ideological nuclei that may be accepted, rejected, or both criticized and rejected at the same time. “Certainly, besides the ideological aspect, (liberal) feminism bears multiple dimensions, from philosophical ones to cultural ones. (..) the ideology of liberal feminism will continue its existence under one form or another due to the inevitability of ideology itself” [p. 159].

Frunza’s book is well organized, with each chapter summarizing an area of debate: theory of liberal feminism, the concept ideology, and feminism in relation to ideology. Frunza is arguing that the relationship between ideology and feminism is a complex and diverse one, but not a conflictual one. Both ideology and liberal feminism are important if we are to understand the connections between those two core concepts. They are both essential parts of vital current debates. In the Romanian context, the major contribution of *Ideology and Feminism* is Frunza’s fresh perspective on the relationship between ideology and second wave liberal feminism.

Aurel Codoban, *Amurgul iubirii* Editura Idea, Cluj, 2004

IUBIREA IN AMURG

Iubirea in amurg, la ceasul când bufnita isi ia zborul.

Incep direct cu o marturisire, pe care nu as fi dorit sa o fac, sperând ca ea sa se desprinda de acest text, pe masura ce il voi citi, dar textul mi-a luat-o inainte, mi-a inchis usa in nas, a devenit paznicul marturisirii mele, hermeneutul ei abia licentiat, interzicându-mi sa o mai vad cu gesturi de efect furate din cursul meu despre text, textualizare si seductia sensului. Textul refuza sa-mi restituie intentia, mi-a furat intentia, intentia mea cea nedusa in lume, era o intentie frumoasa si supla, si s-a dus cu textul sa stea de vorba, textul a inceput sa-i spuna vorbe dulci, s-a lipit ca un sarpe de candoarea ei, si va inchipuiti ce s-a întâmplat in spatele usii inchise, i-a patruns ultimul secret, si dupa ce au stat câteva ore bune inchisi pe dinafara mea, s-au hotărât sa ma anunte, „avem o legatura si vrem ca tu sa o oficializezi”.

La ceasul când bufnita si-a luat zborul, iubirea era in amurg, si asa mi se pare si acum, era intr-un amurg când

s-au întâmplat toate acestea. Ce altceva imi ramânea de facut, decât sa inteleg ?

Ceea ce ma mira nu este ca nu inteleg de ce s-a întâmplat ceea ce s-a întâmplat intre intentia mea nubila si textul meu agresiv, ci faptul ca, cu gândul la întâmplarea mea incredibila, am gresit chiar titlul superb al cartii d-lui prof. Codoban, si in loc de *Amurgul iubirii*, am scris uimit de cinismul textului meu violent, *Iubirea in amurg*. Ceea ce continua sa ma uluiasca, e ca aceasta neintelegere a inceput sa aiba aparenta unui inteles, adica a ceea ce apare ca inteles, dar nu este, facut din ipoteze ratacite si dintr-o frustrare neinchipuita, un inteles minor si cam trivial, dar foarte uman, ce incepe sa se desfolieze chiar acum sub ochii mei, in timp ce pe furis vad cum dupa tot ce s-a petrecut, intentia mea ii face ochi dulci textului, i-ar acesta o amâna plictisit.

E iar in amurg si bufnita si-a luat deja zborul.

Am cautat febril in catalogul iubirii alcatuit din poeme cavaleresti, Guido Cavalcanti la inceput, apoi din rimele lui Petrarca, viziunile lui Dante, poemele licentioase ale lui Aretino, avertismentele amare ale lui Villon, lacurile, padurile si noptile romanticilor, am recitat prefetele lui Wordsworth, sonetele lui Baudelaire, versurile vitale ale lui Whitman, si nimic. Intelegerea plenara lipsea. Am trecut la roman, aici puteam gasi ceva mai pe gustul meu, Goethe, despre afinitatile electice, adulter, divort si moarte la Tolstoi, Hardy, Flaubert, timpul feminitatii la Virginia Woolf, subtilitatea timpului iubirii la Proust, sexualitate la Schnitzler si D.H.Lawrence, sarcasm la Huxley, in fine filosofia iubirii la Dostoievski si Camus, imposibilitatea

iubirii la Kafka Pavese si Sartre, negarea ei la Sade. Dar nu era ceea ce cautam, aveam nevoie de si mai multa intelegere, de compasiune, cordialitate, de complicitate poate, si inca uimit de obstinatia neintelegerii, al acestui *malentendu* al iubirii m-am intrebat daca nu cautam consolare, si mai departe o uitare prietenoasa fata de tot ceea ce se intâmplase, daca nu ma pregateam sa inteleg indulcind violenta scenei la care asistasem, o scena totusi ca atâtea altele, dupa ce Zeus s-a strecurat sub forma ploii de aur in Danae, sabinele au fost rapite, iar Comandorul de piatra a inceput sa faca primii pasi spre Don Juan. De ce ceea ce era atât de frumos a devenit brusc violent, era cumva dinainte violent, amenintator in atractia aceea indelibila, intre intentie si text si eu nu stiussem ? Pe raftul cel mai de sus al camerei din care am iesit acum o ora, câteva volume din colectia filozofia pentru toti, asteptau sa fie rasfoite. Destul cu literatura, aveam nevoie de mitul androgenului, de condamnarea lumescului la Augustin si Pascal, de cartografierea pasiunii la Descartes, de dialectica spinozista de antropologia si morala kantiana, dar volumele erau puse alandala si am dat de confesiunile lui Rousseau, de estetica seductiei la Kirkegaard, de proza subtila a vointei de putere, si mi-am dat seama ce târziu se facuse, trebuia sa ajung aici la timp si nu stiam pe unde o luase bufnita.

Nu era doar târziu, ci si ridicol ca dragostea intre text si intentie sa se intâmple fara voia mea.. Rezultatul era totusi banal, grotesc, doream sa-mi edific intentia si sa disciplinez, sa cultiv textul barbar, si mi-am pregatit citatele, cârjele mele fidele, dar degeaba. Totul seamana

cu o tradare, e vorba desigur de cea a textului fata de intentie, ori a intentiei fata de mine, ori cum veti vedea imediat, de o subtila razbunarea a intentiei, care desi nu a murit de pe urma brutalitatii asaltului, nu putea tolera tratamentul textului si nici lipsa mea de interventie. Razbunare e un termen nepotrivit cu ceea ce a zamislit intentia mea, e mai degraba o reparatie adusa cartii dlui prof. Codoban si distinsului auditoriu, fiindca cât timp vorbeam, intentia a preluat frâiele casniciei cu textul, si ma priveste rece si autoritara. De-abia acum stiu care e adevaratul titlu al acestui text, care a devenit de-acum intentia textului. Nu va mirati, e privilegiul oricarui invins de prima lovitura a iubirii sa-l cucereasca definitiv pe invingator sau prea obosit.

Asadar...

AMURGUL IUBIRII SAU DESPRE IMAGINALUL IUBIRII

Medianitatea iubirii, fatalitatea ei si in cele din urma, incomensurabilitatea iubirii sunt cele trei atribute prin care cred ca imaginalul iubirii raspunde intrebării centrale a cartii dlui prof. Codoban, adica indragostirea, altfel spus de ce ne indragostim, sau cum este posibila in-dragostirea, revelatia recurenta si paradoxala a Aceluia, perceput ca acelasi, care prin iubire devine de fiecare data Altul. In aceasta mecanica de raporturi imaginale ale subiectului autonomizat, intereseaza mai putin, ori deloc, Celalalt, ci doar acel Altul care emerge din neantul Fiintei. Intrebarea este asupra plenaritatii fiintei realizate in Altul, daca Fiinta completa admite ori

nu schema triunghiulara dintre cei doi actanti si procesul transcenderii, pasajului. Daca acestui pasaj ii spunem iubire-pasiune ori comunicare corporala nu e de prima importanta. Important e daca recunoastem pasajul. In-dragostirea asigura instantaneu pasajul catre Altul, dar ascunde totul despre creatorul acestui pasaj. Discretia operatiei e totala, asa cum imaginile trimise de Alt-Cineva ne populeaza brusc reveriile, fantezmele, cosmarele petrecute cu ochii deschisi. Uimirea recipientului nu cauta localizarea neaparata a sursei, nici tehnica pasajului. desi se poate alimenta din aceasta, ci consuma vrajit eternitatea clipei in-dragostite.

Vorbind despre medianitatea iubirii pornesc de la o fraza a lui Gasset, orice iubire, oricât de banala, e logoida, nu are un logos propriu al ei, ci fragmente de logos, oglindire intre-rupta, intre sacralizare si profanizare, reverie fermecata si orgasm, distalitate ce refuza sa se pogoare, proximitate ce nu vrea sa se inalte.

Fatalitatea iubirii e fatalitatea dorintei pe care nici o vointa nu o poate corecta, opri, reprima. Fatalitatea dorintei vine din aruncarea noastra in viata si este reflexivitatea ori recursivitatea la finitudinea umana, la absolutul din sansa, la absurdului detaliului interesant decapitat de intreg, la pliul cunoasterii dublu rasfrânt peste inocenta si intentia dezabuzata. Fatalitatea iubirii ca fatalitate a dorintei e frenezia curiozitatii de a experimenta moartea in apogeul ei senzual.

Incomensurabilitatea iubirii apare in imaginal ca oglinda a oglindirii. In-dragostirea e heraldul ce confera indragostitilor simultan o temporalitate dubla, momentul instantaneic, si momentaritatea secventelor

trairilor in iubire. Pe de o parte instantaneizarea aceluia *coup de foudre*, pe de alta, secventele musicale ale emanciparii eului, epica sentimentelor, festinul hermeutic. Dar cum e posibil sa afli ceva despre in-dragostire si sa faci in acelasi timp un program de cercetare, atât de ambitios, citez „de la iubirea pasiune la comunicarea corporala”, asa cum face dl. prof. Codoban ?

Asezând central chestiunea in-dragostirii, autorul nostru, dl. prof. Codoban, risca mai mult decât crede. Nu in program, ci in necuprinsul iubirii, adica in incomensurabilitatea ei. De ce oare ?

Ajung astfel al cea de a treia parte a povestirii despre relatiile care se redefinesc chiar acum, in timp ce citesc aceste rânduri, intre mine, intentia si textul meu, sub acest nou titlu :

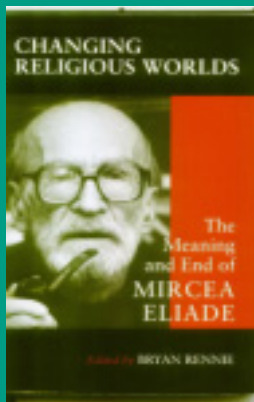
AMURG DE IUBIRE SAU CITEVA PROPOZITII DESPRE ROSTUL MELANCOLIEI

Spuneam ca dl. prof. Codoban risca enorm când vorbește despre in-dragostire, dar in acelasi timp el nu risca nimic, adica nimic mai mult decât nimicul, vidul, golul, neantul din care brusc se arata in-dragostirea. Nu pentru ca lovitura fulgeratoare a amorului a consumat deja intreaga naratiune a sentimentelor, nu pentru ca Nimeni nu e atât de estet precum Kirkegaard sa intoarca prima lovitura celui / celei care i-a trimis-o, nu pentru ca in-dragostirea nu poate fi mensurata in comunitatea dintre doi ori trei, si nu poate sta in Unul, ci pentru ca in-dragostirea venind din neant isi are dublul ei in mel-

ancholia privirii. Noi stim despre indragostire abia dupa ce o privim, si in acest târziu al privirii se coaguleaza inceputul indragostirii. Odata ce iubirea s-a intrupat, ea paseste, si nimeni nu vede, pe un covor de oglinzi sfarâmate. Valul din care s-a nascut Venus s-a spulberat, placenta ei marina e din nou oglinda framântata a marii. Rostul fiecarui fragment de oglinda lucid, adica luminos, din lumina captata de altundeva, nu din iubire, ci poate din amurgul ei, e sa reflecte ceea ce ar fi ramas intreg daca nu ar fi fost inceput.

Post-scriptum : Amabilul cititor / amabila cititoare, care se va osteni sa citeasca aceste rânduri, trebuie sa stie ca ele au fost scrise la ceas de amurg si citite tot atunci, ceea ce a creat o legatura aproape pasionala intre scrierea micului text, comentariu al cartii si al propriilor ganduri ce s-au ivit in timpul lecturii, si citirea lor, intr-o sedinta SACRI dedicata deosebit de incitantei carti a d-lui profesor Aurel Codoban, *Amurgul iubirii*, Editura Idea & Print, 2004 . Am spus la inceputul lecturii acestui text, sub forma unui avertisment probabil inutil, ca este vorba de un „text-intâmplare”, adica de o incercarea de a face ceea ce se cheama „criti-fictiune”, fictiune pe marginea unei oglandiri critice despre alt text, o incercare ce prezinta destul de multe riscuri. Introducerea unei naratiuni intr-un text care are pretentia unei evaluari critice, poate crea confuzie, deturnare, in fond o pacaleala ce consta in efectul ludic, chiar un anumit aer frivol fata de intentia marturisita de a „comenta” o carte, cea de a ne ocupa numai de acea carte, ca tinta precisa. „Criti-fictiunea”

urmaresti sa devoaleze actul critic in sensul de a arata ca are, sau poate avea si un demers narativ, infatisând insa aceasta componenta printr-o ingrosare a caracteristicii narrative a oricarui discurs. Mai mult decât o naratiune propriu-zisa, „fictiunea” din oglindirea critica este un semn despre alegoria (deci si fictiunea) oricarui text in raport cu Textul Logosului. Incercarea „criti-fictiunii” mai spune ca impletirea elementului ludic cu cel serios, reface organicitatea complexa a textului-tinta, pe care adesea din motive ce tin de ambitia decantarii finale a unui sens „stiintific”, cred, imposibil al criticii, o pierdem de dragul unei lectii de anatomie exemplare. Dincolo de binomul diltheyean explicatie-intelegere care a pus hermeneutica in alerta, ar trebuie sa convenim ca tensiunea dintre discurs si text poate fi un element de reprezentare ales autor, care insoteste textul ca un ghidaj para-textual, ceea ce in cazul cartii de fata mi se pare a fi strategie de succes. Dl. prof Aurel Codoban sugereaza posibilitatea mai multor tipuri de discurs care se combina in convivialitatea tonului in care este scrisa cartea. Sunt mai multe masti ale autorului care trece de la o ipostaza la alta, de la formulari teoretice, la anecdote, sfaturi practice, intuitii patrunzatoare, parti conclusive dar si la reiterarea unor stereotipuri despre iubire, seductie, s.a.m.d. Incercarea criti-fictiunii nu isi propune sa epuizeze nimic inainte de a atrage atentia cititorului asupra modului in care cartea, textul, lucrarea incepe sa placa, trezind parca „gelozia” cititorului de a produce o actiune, o replica, in acest caz un text in oglinda, nu o imitatie desigur, ci un semn al intelegerii si fructificarii acesteia. Cum asumarea unei intelegeri



„complete” a unui text teoretic / literar / confesiv cum este cel de fata, mi se pare greu de acceptat, intelegerea poate continua sa lucreze si mai târziu, si textul este o provocare in acest sens, pentru un parcurs de timp indelungat. De unde poate si ideea fictiunii unei critici punctuale, precise, riguros determinate. Pentru a nu cadea insa in cealalta extrema, cea impresionismului critic trivial, inchei spunând ca lectura unei asemenea carti provoaca interpretari concurentiale, iar turnirul vorbelor despre sensurile deslusite poate intâlni pe cel al vorbelor autorului despre turnirul iubirii. Aceasta intâmplare, coincidenta este si nu este o intelegere, desi are ambele seturi de aparente si „pentru” si „impotriva”

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Bryan Rennie (ed.), *Changing Religious Worlds. The Meaning and End of Mircea Eliade*

State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001.

Lumile religioase se schimba dupa regulile proprii, iar despre Eliade s-au spus si se vor mai spune multe atât ca persoana, despre legaturile sale politice, cât si ca savant, unde astazi se poate observa un demers mai mult de negare a operei sale in intregime, decât o incercare de analiza coerenta a ei.

Aparitia acestui volum scoate in evidenta faptul ca opera si personalitatea lui Mircea Eliade se afla inca in atentia lumii stiintifice mondiale, aducându-si o contributie obiectiva atât la analiza operei eliadiene, cât si a Profesorului Eliade. La alcatuirea volumului au luat parte unii dintre cei mai importanti cercetatori din sfera istoriei si filosofiei religiei de astazi din spatiul universitar american. Volumul este editat de profesorul Bryan Rennie si propune o tematica diversa, de la critica operei eliadiene, la filosofie, analiza literara, reflectii personale si aplicatii ale operei marelui istoric al religiilor care a fost Mircea Eliade.

Dintre criticii lui Eliade sint prezenti in acest volum trei savanti: Roger Corless, Russell T. McCutcheon si Robert A. Segal. Roger Corless ne propune sa

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construim depasind “esecul” lui Eliade. In demersul sau arunca o privire de arhitect asupra a doua lucrari eliadiene: *The Eliade Guide to World Religions* si *Essential Writings from Around the World* [lucrare denumita initial *From Primitives to Zen*]. Fara sa aduca prea multe argumente convingatoare ne asigura ca munca lui Eliade este un “rezultat nul”. Astfel, desi considera ca un potential cititor nu s-ar prea putea folosi eficient, de aceste doua lucrari mentionate, in cazul in care ar fi pus sa predea un curs de introducere in religie; autorul ramâne la opinia generala conform careia aceste doua lucrari sunt compendiile autoritare ale disciplinei numita istoria religiilor, desi apreciaza ca ele sunt confuze si trimit la confuzii?

Opinia lui Corless este ca doar o abordare polimetodica a *what-would-die-for-systems* adica o combinatie de instrumente investigative, din afara istoriei religiilor, impreuna cu metodele specifice istoriei religiilor – specifica conceptiei eliadiene, ne va putea permite in sfârsit sa inchidem era eliadiana cu “demnitate”. Iar acest lucru doar pentru a putea ingropa rezultatul nul al muncii sale in vederea unui nou demers care poate permite trecerea spre alte intrebari.

McCutcheon intra in scena direct cu – afacerea Eliade. Asta doar pentru ca este deranjat de faptul ca acest “caz” a ramas in mare masura marginal pentru munca majoritatii cercetatorilor istoriei religiilor. Iar uimirea sa creste in special referitor la faptul ca inca se mai folosesc categoriile eliadiene. Pentru acest autor apar ca semnificante legaturile dintre aparatorii contemporani ai lui Eliade si opera acestuia, precum si

caile prin care cercetatorii religiilor au marginalizat unele probleme de context, cum ar fi: puterea, conflictul din studiile religiilor, mitul, ritualul, si inca multe altele. Teza lui Russell T. McCutcheon este ca modalitatea prin care cercetatorii religiei au raspuns la dezbaterea privitoare la Eliade si politica este, ea insasi, reprezentativa pentru tentativele de “de-istoricizare”, care, datorita rutinei, considera religia ca o experienta personala autonoma si ireductibila care nu poate fi explicata ci doar descrisa, interpretata, iar, in cele din urma, apreciata in “planul ei de referinta”. Astfel, nu este de acord cu lucrarile unor David Cave sau Bryan Rennie sau Carl Olson.

Potrivit lui McCutcheon, jargonul lui Eliade nu face decât sa “adoarma”, sa “linisteasca” cititorii intr-o stare de stupoare ne-critica. Prin inchiderea sau sfârsitul “erei Eliade”, el intelege in studiul religiilor o re-descriere a problemelor teoretice, a definitiilor, metodelor si datelor. Intr-un cuvânt intelege “re-descrierea” religiei in sesi.

La rindul sau, Robert Segal afirma ca pretentia lui Eliade fata de “miturile moderne” nu are o baza solida, deoarece acestea ar trebui sa indeplineasca aceleasi functii ca si acelea ale miturilor traditionale; inasa, aceasta pretentie ar fi putin convingatoare, prin urmare si potrivit lui Segal demersul lui Eliade este un esec.

Bryan Rennie, autorul introducerii si al concluziilor acestui volum, apreciaza ca profunda critica lui Corless, inasa, doar in problema studiului religiilor la clasa. Noi suntem cauza esecului, dupa Rennie, deoarece am esuat in folosirea intelegerii pozitiei lui Eliade, sau a altora, in tendinta de a ne construi propria taxonomie. Rennie

conchide ca ar mai exista si posibilitatea ca Roger Corless sa fi “esuat” in inregistrarea importantei gândirii lui Eliade. Coordonatorul acestui volum are o atitudine nuanțata fata de McCutcheon, care preia refrenul lui Corless, si contribuie in volum cu cel mai critic articol, dar nu impartaseste cu acesta “parerea” ca demersul eliadian ar fi fost o piedica in dezvoltarea domeniului studiilor religioase.

Robert Segal, pentru Rennie, pleaca de la o eroare de intelegere a demersului eliadian, iar acest lucru il conduce la concluzii gresite. Aceasta neintelegere face posibila interpretarea lui Segal, conform careia miturile moderne nu exista. Rennie scoate in evidenta in mod convingator ca de fapt avem de-a face cu doua definitii ale mitului, cea a lui Segal, dupa care nu pot exista, si este corecta; dar avem si definitia lui Eliade, dupa care prezenta miturilor in lumea moderna este greu de negat.

Critica acestor savanti este una care se inscrie in curentul deja destul de puternic care l-a cuprins pe Eliade si care angreneaza nume foarte importante ale studiilor religioase.

Un alt tip de lectura, cel care accentueaza profunzimea contributiei aduse de cercetarile lui Mircea Eliade, poate fi regasit in analizele lui Tim Murphy care evidentiaza faptul ca accentuarea de catre Eliade a relatiei dintre subiectivitate si hermeneutica se dovedeste a fi fecunda daca este integrata in contextul “turnurii subiective” a stiintelor umane moderne si ale culturii. Aceasta re-contextualizare explica cum “subiectivitatea transistorica”, umanismul eliadian, este o forma care intareste conditia de posibilitate a tipului

de hermeneutica a religiei pe care a descris-o si practicat-o Eliade. Din punctul de vedere a lui Murphy aceasta este mostenirea lasata de Eliade in istoria studiului religiilor. Cu o singura precizare, Tim Murphy vede studiile religioase ca imbratisind paradigma genealogiei postmoderne ceea ce face sa ne indreptam spre o era post-subiectiva, deci post-Eliade.

Allan W. Larsen este favorabil metodei fenomenologice folosite de Eliade. Pentru acest autor, Eliade reveleaza rezultatul unei dialectici intre ceea ce este “dat” si actul creativ care aduce acel “material” spre beneficiul intelegerii noastre. Maniera aceasta a ascultarii atente si a simpatiei imaginative este poate singura care ne ajuta sa incepem sa intelegem religiile lumii.

Analizind critica lui J. Z. Smith la adresa gândirii lui Mircea Eliade, Carl Olson ii da primului dreptate referitor la neglijarea diferentelor de catre Eliade si pentru accentuarea asemanarilor, insa aceasta nu inseamna ca metoda comparativa nu are un rol viabil si folositor. Printr-o trecere in revista a predecesorilor lui Eliade, Olson precizeaza diferentele si similitudinile care apar dintr-o asemenea analiza. Fata de Corless, Olson apreciaza ca o punere de acord cu faptul ca folosirea de catre Eliade a metodei comparative reprezinta o imbunatatire, mai mare sau mai mica, fata de folosirea aceleiasi metode de catre predecesorii sai nu ne poate conduce la exagerata asertiune conform careia cariera savanta eliadiana a fost un grandios esec.

Mac Linscott Ricketts si Rachela Permenter abordeaza opera literara a lui Eliade. Marele biograf ne ofera date despre raspunsul americanilor la proza

eliadiana, precum si la prezenta lui Eliade ca scriitor de fictiune in America, iar Permenter gaseste conexiuni intre romantism si postmodernism, precum si “postmodernismul romantic” la Eliade, caruia ii vede opera literara ca pe un “pod” intre romantism si postmodernism.

N. J. Girardot relateaza despre influenta eliadiana asupra carierei sale academice; trece prin abordarea eliadiana a istoriei comparative a religiilor subliniind si aerul epocii de la sfârșitul anilor '60. Girardot considera ca incapacitatea noastra in a recunoaste importanta operei eliadiene in termenii sai, vine dinspre caderea sau capitularea cererilor mundane ale istoriei, in special cea a defensivei si retardatei istorii a studiului academic al religiei. Opera lui Eliade trebuie apreciata, ne spune cu convingere Girardot, deoarece ea continua sa aiba sens pentru studiul religiilor.

In observatiile sale personale, Wendell Charles Beane reuseste sa scoata in evidenta faptul ca teoriile trebuie sa fie practice in sala de clasa. Dupa analiza lui Rennie, Beane cere aici o reintoarcere a elementului filosofic in istoria religiilor. Este nevoie de o antropologie filosofica si de o filosofie religioasa axata pe fiinta, sens si adevar, asa cum apar acestea in datele istoriei religiilor.

Douglas Allen este de acord ca reinnoirea culturala este posibila prin intermediul hermeneuticii creatoare, ca aceasta schimba fiintele umane moderne si duce la crearea unor noi valori culturale. Fenomenologia si istoria religiilor sunt esentiale pentru iminenta întâlnire sau a dialogului dintre cultura moderna occidentala si

cea traditionala non-occidentala. Pe lângă acestea, Allen ne spune ca desi putem invata multe de la Mircea Eliade, putem in acelasi timp sa respingem sau sa reformulam unele din supozitiile sale, principiile metodologice, interpretarile sau judecatile sale, cu alte cuvinte putem fi selectivi in abordarea operei lui.

In *Spatiul sacru si influenta sa in formarea virtutii*, David Cave subliniaza importanta limbajului datorat lui Eliade pentru intelegerea dorului fundamental pentru o viata cu sens. Spatiul sacru, sustine Cave, nu este altceva decât o parte a acestui limbaj, iar intelegerea eliadiana a acestuia ne ajuta in sporirea calitatii umane.

William E. Paden analizeaza in acest volum conceptul de locuire a lumii religioase, precum si caile prin care aceasta poate avea loc. El descopera ca in discursul operei eliadiene sunt mai multe voci, care permit integrarea categoriilor sale intr-un model de studiu comparativ mai larg. Dupa cum subliniaza si Rennie, se poate observa ca Paden impartaseste cu David Cave ideea ca Eliade inca este aplicabil si de folos. Astfel, lumile religioase ar trebui intelese de istoricul religiilor in termenii modului lor de comportament si ai vederilor lor asupra lumii, moduri care sunt parti ireductibile ale locuirii lumilor religioase.

In finalul volumului, Rennie afirma ca cei care cred in gândirea eliadiana si o valorizeaza in mod pozitiv sunt cei care o pot folosi. Exemple se gasesc in volumul de fata: Allen propune reinnoirea personala, Cave cultivarea virtutii, iar Paden compararea locuirii lumilor religioase.

Bryan Rennie incheie cu precizarea referitoare la intelegerea paradigmatica a studiilor religioase, nu foarte bine articulata, insa stabilita, si, cu siguranta, foarte influentata de lucrarile lui Mircea Eliade; iar, dezbaterile din jurul gindirii lui arata ca domeniul este surprinzator de sanatos si coerent.

Lectura acestui volum ne introduce in sfera interpretarilor operei eliadiene, si dupa cum reiese din fiecare articol in dezbateri, domeniul studiilor religioase se muleaza pe cercetarea savanta efectuata de Eliade de-a lungul carierei sale. Iar, daca se poate cere atit de categoric aruncarea ei in trecut, ca fiind depasita, aceasta opera, singura, ramane vie si fecunda.

Luiza Palanciuc

Jean-Claude MILNER, *Les penchants criminels de l'Europe démocratique*

Paris, Éditions Verdier, Collection « Le séminaire de Jérusalem », 2003, 157 p.

Cartea lui Jean-Claude Milner, *Inclinatiile criminale ale Europei democratice* [*Les penchants criminels de l'Europe démocratique*], aparuta in 2003 la Editura Verdier si primita cu mare rezerva, este centrata pe problema evreiasca; „la question juive” – expresie celebra, *axa a lumii*, lasa de inteles Milner, a carei realitate ori metafora a persistat de-a lungul secolelor, este aici si cea in jurul careia se invirte in continuare Europa democratica, Europa recenta, unificata (sau, in orice caz, aflata pe drumul unificarii), cea care ar vrea sa faca abstractie de insusi substantivul „evreu”, caci acesta o incomodeaza, o arunca intr-o multitudine de stupefactii ontologice sau o pune in situatia (dezagreabila) de a valida formele cele mai perverse ale unei ideologii invizibile. Eseul lui Milner este de o mare gravitate si profunzime, nu numai

din motivele tematice amintite, cit datorita nivelului la care autorul intelege sa plaseze intreaga problematica: cel al inconstientului colectiv. „Antecedentele” psihanalitice (lacaniene, mai precis) ale lui Milner sint bine cunoscute. Nu insistam. Ceea ce trebuie subliniat aici este modul in care un autor cu autoritatea (in spatiul francez, cel putin) lui Milner, cu parcursul lui universitar (de normalian, lingvist, psihanalist, excelent cunoscator al lui Proust sau Mallarmé, director de programe la Colegiul International de Filosofie etc.), intelege sa raspunda, in chip erudit si autoritar, pe un ton adesea sententios, la intrebarea simpla privind cauzele violentelor antisemite recente, in cartiere linistite pina nu demult, unde vecinatatea mai multor comunitati era senina si pacifica.

Ceea ce surprinde, dintru inceput, este titlul cartii: in mod ciudat, el apare, pe masura lecturii, extrem de prudent fata de teza sustinuta, caci, foarte rapid, intelegem ca nu este vorba doar de simple „inclinatii” criminale pe care Europa democratica le-ar avea fata de chestiunea evreiasca, ci de un fenomen structural, care, dupa Milner, a dominat gandirea nascuta in secolul Luminilor pina in 1945. Ceea ce se intimpla dupa aceasta data este o schimbare de nuanta: sensul acestui fenomen devine **ineluctabil**.

Ce inseamna enuntarea unui astfel de argument in discursul milnerian? Inseamna, intii de toate, ca Europa raspunde violentei instinctive si distrugatoare printr-o violenta referentiala si structurala; ca furoarea fuzionala de care da dovada in chestiunea evreiasca, de la Revolutia Franceza incoace, si care atinge apogeul in

disolutia comunitatii evreiesti odata cu nazismul, este substantial conformista. Intocmai mecanismului lapidarii, bine descris de René Girard, ea trimite la realitati antropologice arhaice, ale caror sechele ori amintiri apar in traditiile tuturor culturilor, si permite fiecarui agresor individual, prin faptul insusi ca este un fenomen de masa, a se simti inocent. „Crima inocenta” (Pierre Legendre) este paradigma – de la agresiunea adevarata, la lenta infuzie de tacere in fata ei. La Milner, aceasta mai inseamna si ca nazismul nu ar fi decit continuitatea „naturala”, daca se poate spune astfel, la cautarea unei „solutii”, nicidecum o ruptura. Ruptura ar fi doar de tip formal, si ar consta in gasirea procedului propriu-zis de exterminare fizica a corpurilor, pe care regimurile precedente nu indraznisera sau nu avusesera mijloacele materiale de a-l pune in practica: „Notiunea de solutie definitiva trebuie gindita in interiorul configuratiei *problema / solutie*. Mai ampla si mai precisa, in acelasi timp, decit cea de solutie finala, aceasta atinge un punct decisiv: din vremea Luminilor inca, Europa, ghidata de stiinta moderna si de politica rationala, cauta o solutie definitiva la problema evreiasca, dupa cum a cautat, sa spunem, o solutie definitiva la problema mareelor sau la problema lui Molyneux, ori la cea a pauperismului etc. Fiecare natiune mare a culturii europene a crezut ca va gasi una, a ei; Franta si Germania ocupa locul intii. Nazismul se inscrie in continuitatea acestei paradigme. El nu a inventat nici notiunea de problema evreiasca, nici pe cea de solutie definitiva, nici programul unei cautari perseverente a acestei solutii. A inventat doar mijloace noi.” (p. 13)

Teza cea mai puternică a cărții este însă alta: anume că Europa de azi s-ar fi construit tocmai pe ruinele fumeginde ale genocidului evreilor, care, „în sfîrșit”, printr-un determinism inconstent, nu o mai frinează în continuu sau în formă. Europa mediocratică poate să-și vada liniștită de treburile ei, să se delecteze cu litote vertiginoase ori contorsiuni lingvistice cînd este vorba de evocarea expresiilor antisemite, să pregătească, începînd cu însăși fatalitatea societății a banalei agresiuni în metrou, exclușiuni mai radicale și definitive decît oricare altele. Iar aceasta **tocmai** pentru că problema a fost definitiv rezolvată. Milner o spune limpede: „Nemaiavînd, pentru întîia oară în istoria ei modernă, de rezolvat problema evreiască, Europa putea, în sfîrșit, să-și pună, în termeni realști, problema unității. Și nu în numele Romei sau al lui Carol cel Mare, ci în numele unei mize venînd din spre viitor: adecvarea, ca spațiu geopolitic, la societatea modernă nelimitată, al cărei loc de naștere fusese. S-a început cuminte, cu peninsula (în dreapta și în stînga Rinului) și cu cizma italiană. Dar savanții stiau deja că, în cele din urmă, va trebui mers către Est. Înaintea lui Hitler, s-ar fi temut de slabiciunea unor trupuri ori spirite frumoase. După Hitler, nu mai aveau nimic de temut; hoarda urită și bolnavicioasă fusese gazată. Ca și cei care erau frumoși și sanatoși, de altfel.” (p. 63)

Nu a mai rămas deci decît *sufletul* de anihilat, după exterminarea *corpului*. Ori, spune Milner, este tocmai lucrul spre care se află aplecata azi Europa, cu harnicie. Parafraza unui citat bine cunoscut din Malraux, „Secolul XXI va fi rasist sau nu va fi”, precum și o frază din

Lacan, „Antijudaismul va fi religia naturală a umanității ce va veni”, deschid, spre final, perspectiva sumbră și devastatoare a lumii de miine. Indiscutabil, și cum a fost, de altminteri, deja remarcat (Michel Deguy, Jean Daniel), cartea lui Milner este încă o probă merită arată că adevărata fragilitate a societăților noastre nu este de ordin tehnic, ci ontologic, prinse cum sînt în cercul vicios al violenței mimetice. Desigur, în acest sens, ea răspunde unei nevoi de a verbaliza o disperare, este o formă de pesimism rațional. De aici și indemnul adresat evreilor de a întoarce spatele Europei de azi, de a se vindeca de toate iluziile Iluminismului și ale democrației, de a-și căuta salvarea într-un spațiu exterior: „Cea dintîi datorie a evreilor nu este, așa cum credea Herzl, să elibereze Europa de evrei. Cea dintîi datorie a evreilor este de a se elibera de Europa. Nu ignorînd-o (numai Statele Unite pot să-și permită așa ceva), ci cunoscînd-o în întregime, așa cum a fost ea – criminală prin intermediar – și așa cum a devenit: criminală prin omisiunea fără limite.” (p. 130)

Reacțiile imediate, în presa și la radio, nu sînt legate atît de unele verdicte tăioase, precum procesul intentat Iluminismului de a fi fost la originea (directă sau nu, lucrul nu are mare importanță) abstracției universaliste și a totalitarismului, cit de filiațiile pe care le stabilește, fără să clipească, am spune, Milner. Hitler ar fi legatarul testamentar al lui Maurras, iar de Gaulle, Adenauer și Churchill ar reprezenta, de fapt, cei care termină gestul operatoriu făcut de Hitler. Într-un anume sens, se poate spune că cititorul este invitat (uneori somat) să vada în spatele fiecărui act antisemit o tendință naturală a

Europei de a duce la bun sfirsit procesul unificarii. Europa de astazi se infatiseaza lumii cu seninatatea, idealizata si nivelanta, a reconcilierii popoarelor ei drept program. Nu a putut, pina la ora actuala, decit sa-si fabrice un pseudo-ideal in care categoria referentiala (si logica, spune gramaticianul Milner) a „totalitatii”, cea care, desigur, ii include pe toti (popoare, indivizi), este **excluziva**, atenta la evacuarea (sau negatia) a tot ceea ce ar dori sa ramina in afara ei – ca este vorba de o valoare, de un grup, de un semnificant etc.: „Gratie unui semnificant care il desemneaza disimulindu-l, ori il disimuleaza desemnindu-l, numele de evreu isi va fi jucat inca o data rolul istoric; prin proferarea lui, un ansamblu larg de fiinte vorbitoare a rezolvat problema care le impiedica sa se uneasca. In prezent, dupa ce unitatea a fost garantata de numele Unuia, in regimul uciderii Unuia, poate incepe solutionarea singurelor probleme cu adevarat demne de umanitatea unita: prelungirea duratei de viata, sanatatea, mediul inconjurator si co-prosperitatea. La ciocnirea intre nelimitatul umanitatii si limitatul resurselor.” (pp. 100-101)

Discriminanta si criminala, prin supresiunea radicala a exceptiilor, categoria totalitatii este deci intim legata de idealul rationalist de absorbtie a oricarui particularism ori diferenta. Astfel incit, numele *evreu* nu poate fi inteles decit ca un contrapunct ireductibil si, in acest sens, cel care permite fabricarea mitului colectiv al unei Europe civilizate, largite, unificate si unitare prin uitare ori prin negarea, pur si simplu, a unui spectru care nu-si are locul in hora vesela a iluziei colective: „Bunul european

condamna Israelul si crede ca aceasta inseamna a condamna politica unui statulet, recent si poate efemer; insa la Durban ori la Paris, semnificantii merg mai departe decit fonograful interior. «A condamna» trebuie inteles ca «a condamna la moarte», «Israel», ca «toti evreii, unul cite unul». Ca este constient sau nu, bunul european cere moartea tuturor si a fiecaruia in parte. Imaginarul limbii ii permite sa se exprime ca si cind n-aresti si ca si cind ar cere altceva. Insa realul limbii elimina orice pertinenta a diferentei intre ceea ce stie si ceea ce nu stie; bunul european spune ceea ce spune si cere ceea ce cere. Daca nu-i ajung propriile-i urechi pentru a se auzi vorbind, sa-si foloseasca ochii. Sa se uite in jur, sa desluseasca inscriptiile de pe zidurile orasului lui. Iar daca sloganele si svastica il lasa rece, sa inteleaga atunci ca, in strafundurile inimii lui, a devenit un criminal; daca ii fac oroare, sa-si aduca aminte ca le-a permis.” (p. 100)

Descoperim, asadar, in fundal, Israelul si fantoma unei tragedii care inca mai urmareste lumea aceasta scaldata de conformismul lenes si de mediaticul corect, fantoma de care tine cu tot dinadinsul sa scape: „Intocmai precum problema evreiasca inainte, problema israeliana isi reclama solutia definitiva. Inteleptii vor striga sus si tare ca cele doua probleme n-au nici o legatura una cu alta, intrucit substantivul evreu si substantivul israelian nu sint acelasi lucru. Analiza la rece a modurilor de functionare discursiva arata exact contrariul. Aceeasi structura este convocata, iar structura este realul; singurul lucru care s-a schimbat este spatiul geopolitic in care aceasta ia nastere. Din identitatea de structura a numelor, trebuie dedusa

identitatea de structura a problemelor. Trebuie, oare, dedusa si identitatea solutiilor? Le acordam inteleptilor ca tehnicile, cel putin, se vor schimba; tine de natura insasi a tehnicii.” (p. 98)

Israelul este, la Milner, noul spatiu in care numele *evreu* trebuie iarasi, cu forta, contestat ori ignorat, caci intolerabil. Ciocnirile intre lumea islamica si cea europeana, ambiguitatile bisericii catolice, opacizarea (ori stergerea) memoriei dupa cel de-al doilea razboi mondial, vin, toate, din incongruenta unui semn cu modalitatile unei socialitati a „utilitarului”: „Singele care curge in Orient de aproape sase decenii este pretul care trebuie platit pentru ca Europa, prizoniera propriei imagini, sa reinceapa sau sa continue a se privi pe ea insasi cu dragoste, pe fundalul unui imemorial factice si al unei scinciri ludice. Badaranul american a deranjat-o de curind in fantezia ei, ajutat fiind de un britanic, suficient de realist pentru a trage concluzia ca vremea oglinzilor magice a luat sfirsit. Viitorul va spune daca badaranul va face si mai rau sau mai bine, ori mai putin rau decit ludicul.” (p. 80)

La capatul unei astfel de argumentatii, a unei asemenea dramaturgii intr-atit de bine orchestrate prin trimiteri savante, de la Tucidide (capitolul II, *Europa, politica si democratia*), la Freud, Lacan Foucault (*passim* si capitolul VI, *Numele evreu*), construite, precum demonstratiile spinoziste, *more geometrico*, aflam, de fapt, deceptia lui Milner in fata Europei. Desigur, el este intr-atit de impregnat de cultura europeana, incit putem citi in deceptia aceasta si celebra „ura de sine”. Ca si incapacitatea tragica, similara aceleia a lui Celan, de a

intelege genocidul, convingerea ferma ca antisemitismul este o categorie a spiritului, ca ar exista o anumita incompatibilitate originara intre evrei si Europa, care Europa, universalista de la Lumini incoace, s-ar fi dat peste cap sa inventeze o masinarie distrugatoare a oricarui particularism, a oricarei diferente, si, mai ales, a miezului, a chintesentei spiritului evreiesc. Caci care este misiunea poporului evreu, daca nu cea de a raspunde cu masura tuturor deraierilor universalului? Milner invoca doua trasaturi care disting evreul de restul lumii: „studiul” si termenul (de sorginte heideggeriana) de „cuadriplicitate” (in franceza, „quadriplicité”). Cu alte cuvinte, perechile masculin / feminin si parinti / copil, pe care se bazeaza insasi esenta umana: „Toate grupurile de fiinte vorbitoare cunosc cuadriplicitatea, se va spune. Toate numele pe care si le dau sau pe care le refuza se sprijina pe ea. Da, desigur, insa voi formula aici drept teza urmatorul lucru: ca numele de evreu este singurul nume care a reusit a se sprijini *doar* pe cuadriplicitate. Iar pentru ca a reusit s-o faca un timp atit de indelungat, ar mai putea si in continuare, daca ar fi nevoie. Nu exista, in ultima instanta, o alta baza materiala a persistentei a ceea ce ingaduie persistenta. Studiul presupune, intr-adevar, aceasta baza; riturile o presupun; o presupune, in fine, simpla tresarire pe care o provoaca uneori numele de evreu la cei mai europeni dintre evrei. In schimb, cind toate etapele au fost parcurse in toate sensurile, persistenta nu spune nimic altceva decit cuadriplicitatea insasi. Nimic nu ar putea elimina-o, spune evreul, fie ca ar fi un lucru afirmativ, interogativ sau negativ. Iar daca nimic n-o poate elimina, atunci

nimic nu poate elimina numele de evreu, spune evreul, fie ca ar fi un lucru afirmativ, interogativ sau negativ.

Ori, pariul societatii moderne tine tocmai de aceasta: de faptul ca ceva poate si trebuie sa elimine cuadriplicitatea.” (pp. 119-120)

Am putea raspunde argumentului lui Milner spunind ca notiunea de cuadriplicitate, matrice a transmisiei, nu este suficienta pentru a face din numele de evreu o exceptie, si ca s-ar putea cauta asa ceva mai curind in onto-teologia ori filosofia evreiasca, in functia Legii, articulata pe functia finitudinii, in etic (model Lévinas) etc. Este insa la fel de adevarat ca eseul atinge, in doar cele 157 de pagini, o densitate si inaltime care nu mai au nevoie de alte dezvoltari istorice, paranteze ori analize exhaustive. Dincolo de hermeneutica propriu-zisa, care poate fi respinsa, acceptata ori reduplicata, trebuie recunoscut cadrul continuitatii radicale a antisemitismului european, deci corectura adusa interpretarilor discontinuiste (de tip Finkielkraut sau

Taguieff), care deslusesc in antisemitismul recent o forma radical noua, fara nimic comun cu precedentele. Teza lui Milner este totusi ceva mai mult decit continuista, caci Milner vede in exterminarea evreilor **conditia** insasi a unificarii europene, iar in gestul lui Hitler, un „cadou” facut Europei, cel mai frumos, anume – un continent lipsit de *Judenrein*. Hitler este, asadar, cel care, cu „solutia” lui, i-a permis Europei sa existe, cu tendintele ei catre „nelimitare” cu tot, fara ca numele de evreu sa-i mai puna probleme. Altfel spus, noua Europa este, de fapt, opera lui Hitler.

Nu vom insista aici asupra violentei provocate de concluzia aceasta in presa franceza. Vom spune doar ca, dincolo de a acorda continuismului o valoare teleologica, de fatalitate logica, de necesitate etc., o astfel de concluzie este, fara indoiala, o exagerare, insa de natura pur simbolica. Riscul acestei *reductio ad hitlerum* este, totusi, de a deforma definitiv si irevocabil perspectiva.