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THE PHILOSOPHY OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Chief Editors:

**Mihaela GLIGOR
Silviu G. TOTELECAN**

**PRESA UNIVERSITARĂ CLUJEANĂ
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EDITORIAL

Places and/or Non-places of Everyday Life

Silviu G. Totelecan

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Sometimes attribute of fascination, sometimes part of rejection, the centuries old relationship between *philosopher* and *expert* is aggressively fading away. Locked within their own systems of practices, it seems that these mediators between society and a body of knowledge (“the first insofar as he introduces his specialty into the wider and more complex arena of socio-political decisions, the second insofar as he re-establishes the relevance of general questions to a particular technique”, de Certeau 1984: 6-7) are less and less able and available (or eager) to expand communicational bridges outside their own field of specialization, and to develop connections inside it. We are witnessing a double withdrawal from collaborative action, of the formerly specialist of the universal and of the future-to-be social authority of a technocratic society. Consequently, instead of a better comprehension we gain lack of understandings and misunderstandings.

The space of maneuver between these typical characters is claimed by the *analysts*, “borne on the backs” of everyday life practitioners (i.e. common people such as peasants, workers, etc.). They frequently incorporate both *δόξα* (*doxa*, in Bourdieu’s jargon, 1972, is the term which denotes what is taken for granted in any particular society) and *ἐπιστήμη* (*episteme*) in their work, remain relatively closer to Heidegger’s *als Unterwegssein* dictum (i.e. on-the-way-to [something]), and spend considerable amount of time on the dusty roads of everyday reality. The practice of their livelihood is neither embedded in the peculiarities of daily

life, nor obsessed by the glorification of the universals. Being rather close to customary things, from which it takes out (or at least tries to) the meanings of everyday practices, and the way of operating or of doing things, this “moderate” standpoint, a mind-set in-between philosopher and expert’s *lifeworld*, habitually focuses on culture in interaction (i.e. group styles and their everyday life symbols, stories, vocabularies, or codes, Eliasoph, Lichterman 2003: 782), and emphasizes the local-specific factor of everyday interaction (i.e. those attributes of a place where work, shopping, recreation, administration, etc. happen, Tykkäinen, in: Kortelainen 1997: 25, note 3).

Not being yet aware that by promoting this in-between/3rd eye vision/approach in our journal, and, together with it, by bringing more insights from social sciences (along with the already well-established arguments from philosophical and humanities’ camp), we will open a Pandora’s box/casket/jar, or, on the contrary, we will come up to an integrative framework able to move beyond the narrow boundaries of disciplines, we have decided that this is a proper time to initiate it. The same as every single new start, it has its faults and limits, but since the ball is rolling, the sky is the limit. In this introductory note, I will try to find some conceptual landmarks which grasp the everyday life from the above mentioned middle stance.

Therefore, this first number of the 5th IJHI volume – *The Philosophy of Everyday Life* – has to be “read” in this sense, as a combination between very much down to earth scholarly works and extra-mundane inquiries, generated/governed by the dictatorship of the topic. Here is a short preview of what you will find in our current issue. Silviu G. Totelecan and Stefan Mann advocate for transcultural forms of everyday life, for escapism and the freedom from one’s own culture, between the boundaries of which one was born and educated, as it can be grasped from the Swiss multilayered society. Michael Dusche goes deep in the heart of everyday practices – identity issue – when he brings to discussion the colliding worlds of Muslims and non-Muslims. Gèza Bánffy makes us aware of the category of the daily life as it can be depicted from the works of various philosophers, concepts that should be taken into account in further investigations. Adriana

Speteanu focuses on it from a very mundane stance: the Late Period of Romanian Communism as it was encapsulated within the gates of “23 August Works”, showing the features of a micro-society built around the factory life. Lucia Elisabeta Faiciuc reflects on humanist values and on the moral character of people’s decisions and attitudes, concluding that the misunderstanding of many humanist ideas may represent a dead end for the people trying to solve with them moral issues in their daily life. Felix O. Olatunji examines the relationship between morality and philanthropy in human situations, which insight from a non-European/African world, by walking on the thin line between altruistic and egoistic instances. Alexandru Vasiliu draws on Pasolini’s work, with special attention on the social praxis of the underclass which he projects in the imaginative world of movies.

There have been more than two decades since Anthony Giddens (1995) has been telling us about the routinisation of practices as the backbone of daily life; a recurrent theme for him, spanning ahead of his 5th edition of *Sociology*.

First, our daily routine, with almost constant interactions with the others, gives consistency and shape to our actions; and by studying them, we can learn a lot about ourselves as social beings, and social life as such. Our lives are organized around similar schemes resumption behavior shaped day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year. [...] Second, the study of everyday life shows the way in which people can act creatively in shaping reality. Although social behavior is guided to some extent by forces such as roles, norms and shared expectations, individuals perceive reality, depending on experience, interests and their motivations. Because individuals are capable of creative action, they constantly configure the reality by the decisions that they make and by the actions which they initiate. In other words, reality is not final or static - it is created through human interaction. [...] Third, the study of social interaction in everyday life sheds light on social systems and institutions. In fact, all large-scale social systems depend on social interaction schemes that involve us daily (Giddens 2010: 124-125; my translation from the 2010 Romanian version of his 2006 book, published by Polity Press, Cambridge).

Because life is not experienced as “structures”, but as the *durée* of day-to-day existence (Giddens 1995: 150), the social interaction in everyday life and our daily routine, shape us, our systems, institutions, and (re)configure the reality. The implication is that in a self-evident or given universe (Husserl’s, 1936, *Lebenswelt*), the contemplation of its wholeness is merely “defeated” by the process of creative action, which assures its continuity.

The process is sometimes seen as a battleground inhabited by subjects of will and power; a realm of *strategies* and *tactics*, of a calculus of force-relationship, where many “ways of operating” portray: “victory of the ‘weak’ over the ‘strong’, clever tricks, knowing how to get away with things, ‘hunter’s cunning’, maneuvers, polymorphic simulations, joyful discoveries, poetic as well as warlike” (de Certeau 1984: xix). Within it, we have moved on from a routinisation of day-to-day practice, bound by tradition, and therefore strongly normatively embedded (Savage, Warde 1993: 145), towards a dutiful, however ideological, aspiration, and ended up in a “postmodern transformation of the modernist orientation – a willful, romantic, self-satisfaction” (Forman 2002: 31). Of course, that was done with a growing contribution of people from other countries, especially in our global times, engaged directly or indirectly in our interactions (Giddens 2010: 145). On this journey, each of us spot?? is floating between *engagement* in community’s social life (Morenoff 2003), in social exchange as a joint activity (Lawler 2001), and civic bitterness, defamiliarization or *estrangement* (Victor Shklovsky, 1917, coined the term *ostranenie* to describe the replacement of the familiar with the strange, Orgad 2011: 402).

Though, this is not hitherto a fully acknowledged opinion, it looks like we are losing skills of cooperation needed to make a complex society work (Sennett 1990). The desire to work hard and well for the community’s sake, our prior source of mutual strength (Sennett 2008), is substituted by the lack of involvement. Basics such as: tolerance, sociation, public participation, integration, and so on, take a step back and shrink themselves in front of de-socialization, detachment, withdrawal, disconnections, and other symbols of the last places on earth one would expect to find community (Gieryn 2000: 476).

A “new restlessness and fragility of goals affects us all, unskilled and skilled, uneducated and educated, work-shy and hardworking alike” (Bauman 2001: 125); alters our dispositions vis-à-vis what we eat, watch, listen to, shop for and buy, and dream about (Skrbis, Woodward 2007: 735). The increased commodification of daily life (Ward 2003), the colonization of everyday life by the commodity, or the creeping imposition of a total(izing) commodity culture (Swyngedouw, Kaïka 2003: 6), is one of the accomplishments. The “tender touch” of the others has been reduced to *nothing* and the “deep flavor” of the objects completed to *something*. (Significant contributions in researching the nothing-something continuum can be found in George Ritzer’s, 2007, book *The Globalization of Nothing*, structured around four sets of concepts: “places/non-places”, “things/non-things”, “people/non-people”, and “services/non-services”.) Internationalization, mundialization, globalization, and the like, have promoted the erosion of I-you-me system of social interaction, and the rising of post-social object-centred environments (Knorr-Cetina 1999, 2001), forms of human interaction mediated by and constituted through communication technologies.

The supermodernity (Augé 1995) has also challenged the way in which we would conceptualize our surroundings. As some radical scholars argue, “the *places* to which the individuals may gain access and in which they may wish to settle are melting fast and can hardly serve as targets for ‘life projects’” (Bauman 2001: 125). In the concrete reality of today’s world, the “anthropological place” – creator of organically sociality,

stabilizes and gives durability to social structural categories, differences and hierarchies; arranges patterns of face-to-face interaction that constitute network-formation and collective action; embodies and secures otherwise intangible cultural norms, identities, memories and values (Whitaker 1996, qtd. by Gieryn 2000: 473-474);

intertwine and tangle together with the non-place – producer of solitary contractuality (Augé 1995: 78). Should we be willing to find out what is going on out there, we need to embrace the whole continuum of spatial

arrangements (to visualize the place and the non-Place as ideal-typical poles, Sam 2012), to look after those countless sites governed by similitude into solitude, which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity – the classical (inaccurate!) meaning of the place.

My line of argumentation (however a reductionist one, but planned as such since the intention was to sketch a simple heuristic device) states that everyday life is the end result of everyday practices. In fact that is a dialectic process within which who the creator is and which the creation, what was created and how it was created, remain never-ending sources of disputes among philosophers and/or scholars. Furthermore, the routines emerge from the *in situ* combination of identity and social relations: commodified (or not), shared (or not), acknowledged (or not!). Finally, the latter are embedded in various spatial arrangements, they are emplaced. The same as in the case of routines and everyday life, the (non-)place stands in a recursive relation to identity and relationships: “places are made through human practices and institutions even as they help to make those practices and institutions” (Giddens 1984, qtd. by Gieryn 2000: 467). The examination of everyday life, and the search for answers to questions such as “Why am I doing what I am doing at this very moment?”, could start with regular visits to each of these three layers.

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The *International Journal on Humanistic Ideology* (IJHI) is a biannual scholarly journal devoted to the study of humanities and social sciences, the nature and origin of humanistic ideas. IJHI encourages interdisciplinary approaches engaging the following domains: philosophy, philosophy of religions, political philosophy, political science, history, history of religions, history of ideas, history of science, anthropology, sociology, educational science and communications theory. One of its primary aims is the integration of the results of the several disciplines so that its articles will have a synthetic character in order to acquaint the reader with the progress being made in the general area of socio-human studies.

The *International Journal on Humanistic Ideology* was established in 2008 by its founding Editor in Chief Dr. Mihaela Gligor. Since 2012, IJHI became the core periodical of the Socio-Human Research Department, “George Baritiu” History Institute of Romanian Academy, Cluj-Napoca. The articles of the journal are hosted by various international data bases, IJHI being regularly indexed and abstracted by C.E.E.O.L., EBSCO and ProQuest. The IJHI’s printing house is Cluj University Press.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Living on the threshold between cultures and within a multilayered society

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Abstract: The concept of transculture suggests that we need to stay outside of a culture in order to understand the peculiarities of its identity. This paper attempts to find traces of this idea within the narrative of both insiders and outsiders. Interviews both in the academic sphere and among in- and outsiders in a semi-rural Swiss village are carried out and evaluated by objective hermeneutics. The empirical analysis indicates that even in pre-designed contexts it is hard to trace transcultural approaches because people are not yet ready to give up the clear-cut distinctions between what is inside and outside.

Keywords: glocal, transculture, Switzerland, objective hermeneutics, Lake Zurich, integration

1. Introduction

Hardly ever we can find a moment in time when our daily lives were not governed/shaped by the meta-narratives of that stage. Acting to create them in a never-ending manner we ended up being molded by these, so any inquire in how we behave, think, or dream should start questioning them in the first place. The nowadays momentum, which blinds us from finding

viable escape options, seems to be of the dialectics between yesterday's multiculturalism (Taylor, 1992) and globalism (Sen, 2002). After the enthusiastic period of the '70s and '80s when the multicultural policies were adopted by several countries both in the North and in the South, appearing in many different shapes, the motto "integration with maintenance of one's own cultural identity" became less and less appealing at least in the Northern part of the world, given that the immigrants (mainly guest workers doing unskilled jobs) did neither intend to go back to their country of origin (Schalk-Soekar, Breugelmans & van de Vijver, 2009, p. 269) nor adapt to the culture in their host countries to a degree that appeared acceptable for a broad majority (Rodriguez, 2007).

Criticism of multiculturalism has slowly shifted into anti-immigrant discourses and actions, encompassing real and/or imagined threats of cultural purity (Wessendorf, 2008, p. 198). Within European societies, the increasing anxious xenophobia (Appadurai, 2006, p. 8) has been disturbing. Worth mentioning that the flourishing of nationalism and the restructuring of states along national lines, is hand in hand with the growing global interconnections (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 301) and the re-configuration of what connects inhabitants of a national (or transnational) space to one another (Fortier, 2008, p. 2). In the era of globalization, those "born and bred" in an area, have partly lost the local power in favor of those newcomers who became the locally dominant group in some instances (Hogenstijn, van Middelkoop & Terlouw, 2008, p. 147). In this highly dynamic process, important categories of majority and minority, from cultural to sexual and back, are not pre-given any more, they are not rock solid concepts as used to be, and consequently we walk on quicksand when issues like belongingness, identity, or who we are, and how we act, etc., are of concern.

Since the conditions are settled for the fear that the common (the majority) and the marginal (the minority) might morph into one another: "as abstractions produced by census techniques and liberal proceduralism, majorities can always be mobilized to think that they are in danger of becoming minor (culturally or numerically) and to fear that minorities, conversely, can easily become major (through brute accelerated

reproduction or subtler legal or political means)” (Appadurai, 2006, p. 83), we want to find out to which degree people on the threshold between cultures form their own identity with the elements of the prevalent cultures that suit them. In addition, it has to be asked what impact such a transcultural approach may have for the scope of the cultures of these places. For this purpose, the concept of *transculture* is introduced in Section 2. Afterward, in Section 3 we are dealing with the context of our investigation – some of the fieldwork done by us in various Swiss hybrid places is presented, and in 4, with the methodology adopted, objective hermeneutics, to expose the empirical evidences (or, as Cohen, 2010, puts it, the bodily experience) captured there. Sections 5-6 serve to present the results through analyzing interview sequences with an Italian PhD student in Switzerland, a mayor, a scientist and a party functionary.

2. The transcultural approach

The transculturalist message is that we have to look at the phenomena of integration and xenophobia as well as on multiculturalism and globalism both as issues of *the past in their relation to the present*, as much as issues of *the present in relation to the future* (Bhabra & Holmwood, 2011, p. 3), and re-grouping their good (and rejecting their bad) is the new challenge. The term transculturalism was created in the Russia of the 1920's by Bakhtin (for the English translation, see the book published in 1986 by Texas University Press) who suggested that we need to stay outside of a culture in order to understand the peculiarities of its identity. A large part of Bakhtin's work was rediscovered a long time after being written, and the issue of transculture provides no exception. Mamardashvili (1992) took up this concept as one of the first, emphasizing the right of individuals of living beyond and independently of their own culture which he described as “Transcendence into nothing” (p. 336). And Epstein (2009) clarifies the vision of transculture as the link between a nonviolent and nonuniform globalization and cultures which offer diversity instead of bonds, pledging “oppose yourself to nobody, identify yourself with nothing. No identities and no oppositions – only concrete and multiple differences” (p. 350). His proposal was towards a model of cultural development that differs from

both leveling globalism and isolating pluralism (p. 330), that “opens a possibility for globalization not as homogenization but, rather, as further differentiation of cultures and their ‘dissemination’ into transcultural individuals, liberating themselves from their dependence from their native cultures” (p. 328).

The freedom from one’s own culture, in which one was born and educated – Epstein’s (p. 330) key line of thinking – requires ample epistemic-methodological shifts, at hand only for a few of us, mainly for those able to access other cultural realms (beyond the borders of traditional cultures: ethnic, national, racial, religious, gender, sexual, and professional), integrate them and not in the last instance to keep their freedom from any of them. Transgressing and transcending the boundaries of our own culture – transculturalism - or as Epstein put it: “‘being beyond’” in relation to the entire cultural realm as an advantageous situation for its understanding” (p. 332), is ultimately a *tendentially process* – nowhere finished completely or fully enacted, and because of that transculture “does not ‘have place’ anywhere”, but again, in Epstein’s words “it is the force of displacement”. So, as a research solution, instead of useless efforts of trying to depict an “inexistent” global version of transculture, enlightening transculture’s shadows and surveying the visible/real side of transculturalism can be done in a bottom-up manner, by building up emerging macro-trends from micro-realities. *Tracing displacement* in peculiar/particular contexts/milieus, i.e. focusing on the fractures, ruptures, cracks in the cultural mirrors of individuals during their personal developments may be one of the possible ways to achieve that.

If the concept of transculture is to become a useful tool for analysis, there has to be an empirical verification, in spite of Epstein’s warnings that “it always escapes definition” (2009, p. 332). It has not become clear whether the authors, when promoting transculture, follow a normative or a positive concept. Do they aim to describe a strategy with which a lot of global intercultural conflicts could be smoothed? Or do they describe an increasing reality of places where different cultures merge? Are we willing and able to keep intact some kind of cultural identity in a high-speed world dynamics? Are we taking everything from the world bazaar without any

considerations regarding procedures or, of what tradition could say about way of doing things? Can we feel anymore the differences between the ingredients of a big plate in front of us? Do we have the adequate tool for that? Are we even interested in such matters?

3. The Swiss multilayered society

If transculture exists, it will not exist in all places to the same extent. In spite of globalisation, some places are still more remote and untouched by influences from other localities than others. Still, their presence, in general, is not questionable any longer since “no place dominates enough to be global and no place is self-contained enough to be local” (Latour, 2005, p. 204). We are witnessing the change of human topography, the world-wide replication of a scenery within which “the same star-shaped aspect” are taken by both the former global and the former local: “Sites no longer differ in shape or size, but in the direction of the movements to and from as well as in the nature [...] of what is being transported: information, traces, goods, plans, formats, templates, linkages, and so on. It is now the mythical sites of local and global that are hard to locate on a map” (p. 204-205).

One country which has been a testbed for both coexistence and hybridization since its foundation is Switzerland. Kuster (2005) and Kreis (2008) summarize the history in which a country that was multilingual anyway mastered many different waves of immigration. They find many processes in which immigration did not occur or even was consciously denied; it cannot be neglected, however, that the history of multilingual Switzerland is a constant history of different cultures getting into close contact, as emphasized by Wessendorf (2008). At the same time, Swiss culture has become a unique phenomenon, which does not only consist, as Bätzing (2005) shows, in folkloristic and traditional habits, but also in a broad range from art over schooling to sports.

But while Switzerland is a melting pot with a share of over 20 per cent foreigners in the country and four different national languages anyway, the degree of hybridization varies within the country. Looking for transcultural influences, it is probably less fruitful to look within some relatively remote mountain valleys where the culture that has formed since

centuries remains rather undisturbed. We suggest, as follows, that two frameworks within the country are particularly suited to trace transcultural constellations. Urban and rural influences meet on the fringe of agglomerations. Since the distances which people commute to work are growing (Mann & Gennaio, 2011), there is a belt around economic centers which is slowly shifting outwards, towards former peripheral regions. Everything that Switzerland has to offer can be expected to merge in these regions. In the Southern fringe of the Lake Zurich region – our first case point, traditional peasants and their nowadays peers – middle-class urban families in want of low-priced land for houses and a clean environment, are redefining the “glocal” Lebenswelt. A less spatial social world of transcultural merging may be the scientific community – the second case point. Academic careers involve more internationality nowadays than careers in, for example, administrations or selling. In a small and multilingual country like Switzerland, many foreigners fill all levels of academic life and therefore influence its cultural life as well. At the same time, some purely “Swiss” careers are still possible, and it appears promising to trace transcultural aspects of this hybrid professional world.

Our focus on Swiss realities was driven by the idea that here, in this multilayered society, we have better chances to grasp some of the *socio-cultural shifts* that currently take place (almost) everywhere, due to the “massive displacement observed today world-wide” as the end result of cultural, social, and economic processes of capitalist modernity (Escobar, 2003, p. 157-158). Inhabitants *of*, or migrants *into* a country, the unsettled, or the resettled, whether relatively voluntary or forced (Fried, 2000) to physical mobility from place to place – *the displaced* – we “experience mobility and the circumscription of choices (material and non-material) and identities (individual and collective)” (Silberling, 2003, p. 146).

Along with that also time displacement occurs, a significant shift in the overall structure of social time (Pronovost, 2002, p. 52). Either if we talk about the demand to move caused by attractive circumstances elsewhere or by displacement migration caused by a deleterious state of affairs in the home locality (Adger, 2000, p. 355), by “restricted access” to certain resources (Cernea, 2006, p. 9), both of them have impacts (often

negative) on social infrastructure in both sending and receiving areas. Social (dis)integration, the individual's will to participate in his or her social surroundings (Brand & Burgard, 2007, p. 16), will be very much dependent of how the *geographic and economic dis(re)location* – integral elements of our Eurocentric modernity (Escobar, 2003) – will take place.

4. The method: objective hermeneutics

A qualitative method is needed to grasp the difficult phenomenon of living on the threshold between cultures and within a multilayered society in a rather descriptive than in a statistical way. As the objective was to identify transcultural patterns in reality, the most thorough method of qualitative text analysis available was to be chosen. This is objective hermeneutics. Its objective is not to make any standardized statement. According to its founder, Ulrich Oevermann (2004), standardizations miss the object of research to the degree to which the object is not itself standardized, which is certainly the case for the object of transculture. Instead, an attempt is made to explore the lowest level of social substance. This exploration is not claimed to be representative, but the authenticity of the case to be analyzed is important.

Social scientists concerned with objective hermeneutics repeatedly emphasize that, unlike in natural sciences, a description of what is happening is not a meaningful tool. They focus on reconstructing realities. The main instrument for collecting social realities is records of interviews, but artwork or pictures have also been used for the purpose of reconstruction. The records used for analysis can come from narrative or semi-structured interviews, but certainly not from standardized questionnaires.

Every sequence which is taken from the record is reflected by the means of broad societal norms. Oevermann (2000) uses the example of greeting as an illustration. When my colleague says 'Hello' to me, there are basically only two ways to react (called a sequential link by Oevermann). I can either greet my colleague back or I can refuse to greet her. Any other possibility, such as pretending not to hear the colleague's 'Hello' merely delays the necessity of deciding between the two options.

Therefore, the main work of analyzing sequences of records consists of a detailed analysis of what has been said. What would we have expected to be said in the particular situation? In which other contexts could what was actually said have been said? What follows from the (verbal) choice the person made? In order not to measure what was said against the subjective background of only one single researcher, it is preferable for a group of scientists rather than one individual to concern themselves with the analysis of the sequence (Garz & Kraimer, 1994).

In practice, the microscopic process of evaluating a text is rather similar to what is done at the first stage in grounded theory evaluations, namely 'careful, often minute examination and interpretation of data' (Strauss, 2004, p. 169). The principal differences between the two schools arise in terms of the steps that follow. Oevermann (2001, p. 66) criticizes grounded theory for not being

free of the logic of subsumption, because it is not free from the illusion of approaching the implicit theories of everyday reality by coding the material. If you want to be very close to the 'ground', you use the tool of 'in vivo' coding. This is, however, nothing but double paraphrasing and shows how crudely coding, in general, fumbles on the surface of expressions.

Although this critique has partly been rejected by Oevermann's colleague Hildenbrand (2004), it shows the reluctance of objective hermeneutics to make any generalizations beyond a single case. It is argued in particular that every new phenomenon is often obscured if subsumed by other, well-known observations. The scholars of objective hermeneutics, although often focusing on one particular case, are open to including several different cases. They are reluctant, however, to intermingle different cases, as in grounded theory.

A more accepted supplement for analysis in objective hermeneutics is a historic analysis of the family of those interviewed (Hildenbrand, 2005). This analysis may be a very detailed chart depicting two or three generations before the interviewees (in this case, it will usually become

necessary to collect the appropriate data from the interviewees after the interview) or it may be rough biographical information. The depth depends on the need for biographical information in order to understand the specifics of the case analyzed. This focus on the interviewee's family structure shows rather well where the specific qualities of objective hermeneutics lie: there is a serious attempt to understand the structure of the specific case which is analyzed. Every case can be understood in the dialectics between societal conventions and constitutive rules. Therefore, the specific properties of the method of objective hermeneutics are: reconstruction is preferred to classification, because every standardization is a subsumption under already known categories; every case can be generalized on the one hand, but makes the specifics of the case clear on the other; the method of interpreting the data follows defined rules and is therefore intersubjectively valid.

Do single cases matter for social scientists trying to understand broad phenomena? In this respect, objective hermeneutics is more radical than most other qualitative methods. Although schools like the grounded-theory school claim not to aspire to representativeness, they usually look for a fairly broad sample of people to answer research questions. Objective hermeneutics claims that a single case contains sufficiently interesting material to warrant separate analysis. Any single case should provide insights into both general patterns and specific circumstances.

5. Outside actors staging within

Here, the focus will be on the people entering a different cultural environment, on the newcomers who chose parts of that culture for their own life. The first two sequences are therefore taken from interviews with persons who entered another culture, while we chose among several transcripts that we had collected. The first sequence comes from an one-hour interview with an Italian PhD student at a Swiss University, doing his dissertation about a technical subject. The student grew up in Italy's South where he studied as well, and his stay in Switzerland is the first longer stay for him abroad. The sequence below is taken from the second half of the interview when the student had already described his biographical past and

his social situation (the texts in italic emphasize the authors/interviewer's questions or comments).

Mhm. Do you find, well, what what are your plans after completing your PhD? Em, would you like to stay in Switzerland or would you want to go back to any part of Italy?

(...) Oh. That eh depends on the possibilities. I would also like to stay here in Switzerland, I wouldn't, so why not? But of course it depends on the possibilities. So I'm (...) So I would like either to stay here or going back to Italy, so is not (...), it really depends on the possibility, so it's not ehhhh (...) yeah.

On the "why not side" I would suggest, well, you are socially much more linked to Italian people than to Swiss people. Isn't that a reason to go back to Italy?

(...) Yes, that is one of the reasons, of course, of course is that.

Mhm. And on the other hand, what would be the reasons in favour of staying here?

But. But. (...) It depends. For instance, this is a good work environment for me.

OK

Yeah, it depends. So, I mean it depends of the working condition, it depends on the environment that you have, and I am not sure that I can find a working environment as good as eh this one is for instance in Italy or (...) things like that. Ok, under the same conditions I will stay in Italy that is for sure. But you have to balance everything so...

What is so good about this work environment here?

The organization, the freedom, these kind of things so is em; yeah, it is well organized, you have so (...) yeah, you have the freedom, you have the right financial support to do what you what you like to do, so.

(...) – two seconds pause

The interviewer starts in the sequence with a rather straightforward question about the student's geographical preferences concerning his own future. This seems to be an unexpected and surprising question, given the pause after the question and the student's spontaneous "Oh". This is a first

indication that the geographical dimension plays no more than a minor role in the personal planning process. The same can be concluded from the student's first sentence. There hardly seems to be a preference for a place on its own. If there is a preference at all, this preference is strongly dependent. Dependency is mentioned five times during the short sequence. This indicates strongly that the preference for a place is clearly non-intrinsic. The "work environment" appears to have a much more intrinsic value for the student than the place. The fact that the work environment has a far higher importance than the place is underlined by the fact that the work environment is paraphrased through using the terms "working condition" and "environment". Later the student returns once more to the working environment which he considers as good in Switzerland and therefore intends to stay.

Returning to the first answer in the sequence, it is not entirely clear from the text whether place seems to play a role insofar as other countries may be out of the race. However, when the student states that he wants to stay in either of the two countries, it can also be seen as a non-choice relating to the interviewer's question to choose between Italy and Switzerland.

When the interviewer introduces the dimension of social bonds as a reason to choose the home country, the same happens as after the first question. The student seems to be taken by surprise, for he needs to pause, before returning with a very affirmative answer. This "of course, of course" answer appears to be provided at least as likely due to helplessness as due to real agreement with what was suggested. The interviewer's proposition that social bonds lead to a generic preference for Italy sounds plausible and acceptable, but the student has not given this aspect a lot of attention.

The same strangeness seems to occur when the arguments in favor of Switzerland are questioned. Two aimless "but" occur, then another pause, another statement of dependency and eventually a further reference to the work environment. It is only then and after an affirmative "OK" by the interviewer that the student is able to explain his calculus. Under the same conditions, the home country would be preferred. These same conditions appear to relate to things like the work environment, perhaps the

payment or the equipment, but obviously not the social conditions; because there is reason to assume that the social conditions would be the point in favor of his home country.

It has become clear that the local culture is certainly not an important argument for living in a certain place. The last question in the sequence tries to grasp the essence of the “work environment” that seems to shape the student’s preference in a much stronger way. The answer is revealing for the student introduces a few attributes of major importance to him. One of them is certainly freedom. In scientific work, freedom allows actors to come forward with their own ideas which are a major benefit for the student. In addition, the organization and the financial support seem to be the main assets which working in Switzerland seems to offer.

The next sequence was carried out in a village on the fringe of the Zurich agglomeration. This village experienced a long decline in population development until around 1980. In the decades since, many commuters to the Zurich region started to take advantage of low land prices, built houses and moved to this place. The interview was carried out in German, but the translated transcript looks as follows:

I am also no local in a sense.

Really?

No, I live here since only eleven years. My wife has been born and growing up here, so that I came here (...) through love and marriage.

OK. And do you think that the social structure of the village has changed through that, that so to say the new in-migrants rather keep out of anything and...

No, that is, there have I would say cases of blood refreshment, it were not the old locals, this is the difference between the locals and the native. Now, I am meanwhile a local, but my wife is a native, she has been born and grown up here. And that has surely resulted in a blend, of those living here forever, but also through the many people moving here, from the March. Höfe, Zurich region, maybe some family bonds, a brother, or a sister who came here because it gets about, there is still good dwelling quality, you can afford a house compared to other areas, so one thing came

to the other, many people who now, from the same families not grown up here, who now settled here.

OK, yes.

And this is a good mixture, the in-migrants integrate quickly, well, I am a good example by being voted into my office as an in-migrant. That perhaps would not have happened 30 or 40 years ago.

The sequence comes from an interview about the many people migrating into the village where the respondent works as a mayor. The mayor feels the need to explain that he himself belongs to the group of *in-migrants* in which the interviewer is interested, so he is not only a narrator, but also part of the target group. Reacting to the interviewer's surprise, he explains his biographical background. The explanation that "love and marriage" (even if only admitted after a brief pause) brought him to the village where he is working now indicates some emotional attachment to his new region, a distinct difference to the student who brought no emotions into the game when talking about his migration decisions.

After the interviewer brings the talk away from the biographical to the general issue of integration, the mayor turns down the possibility of separatism among the newly in-migrated. He uses the term "blood refreshment" ("Blutauffrischung" in the German original). This term comes from animal breeding but is occasionally used to describe the refreshment which comes through people from outside. Some commentators find Nazi traces in this terminology, due to its racial focus. However, the mayor uses the term to explain the distinction between locals and natives and the impact of innovation through the new inhabitants. This distinction opens the door for treating in-migrants as local, giving them (at least lingually) a fully integrated status.

The reason for the in-migration is cited by the mayor as being mainly of economic origin. Nevertheless, the picture that the mayor draws is that of a fruitful blend between those born in the village and those coming from other places, probably a blend that he experiences not only in the village, but also in his own marriage. And which results in new

developments like in the election of a mayor who in-migrated only a few years before.

To which extend can transcultural approach be identified in what the student and the mayor said? When the student speaks, the “transcendence into nothing” seems to come close, due to the apparent lack of interest for the Swiss culture in which the student has made himself comfortable. However, the concept of transculture has not been created in order to describe the sheer ignorance of local culture. Since transculture describes rather the careful selection of cultural items and the individualized integration of these items in a self-conceptualization, this is not really something that can be discovered in the student’s text sequence. The freedom which is praised by the student is less appreciated as a cultural value of the Swiss nation, but rather considered as a possibility to concentrate on the personal scientific interests, independently of any localized characteristics. The host country, in the student’s case, is not considered as a cultural entity, but rather as a source of resources. This is certainly different in the case of the mayor since he has not stayed separate from the culture to which he “migrated”. However, there is no insight in any element which the mayor retained from his “old” culture, no remark about something the mayor brought into the village. Instead of transculture, the mayor seems to stem from a cultural nothingness, and to neglect his cultural roots.

6. Insiders performing backstage

It is still well possible that the transcultural approach is better visible from the observation of people within a given system who happily integrate elements from outside in their own culture. The world of transculture would then slowly emerge from particular cultures which are increasingly spotted with foreign elements until they vanish as own cultures. For this purpose, two additional interviews were carried out with very local persons, people still living in the place where they were born, without a long history of migration within their biography. The first interview partner was a scientist and part-time farmer from the Swiss (German speaking) countryside.

All these parts in Switzerland, do they have some common things that keep all these parts together? Could you say that there is some, well we could call it integration?

It is not (...) I still think there is a difference of people from the Italian part or people from the French speaking part. There is a difference. And I think they are (...) not (...) really integrated (...) there is not one general (...) I heard some time that Switzerland is the land of, of minorities, so we are all minorities and that is somehow something that the nation has its identity from. I I I read that before a long time and I think I thought that was very interesting. They are not, they are completely different the French speaking in Switzerland, the German speaking or the Italian speaking, they are quite different. They are not integrated as you say in (...) one Swiss man or Swiss woman, they are living beside, they are all eh, they are all, they have the same eh aim to be in this country and to work in this country and to to to value this country.

So, why do you think then the foreigners are not able to follow the same thing? What is the difference?

I think that depends which which foreigner it is. I think it is a big difference when you have German foreigners or when you have foreigners from Italy, from Portugal or from the Balkans. Because maybe Germans they, they, we have more eh more common mentality like the people from from the Balkans. That is, you cannot say “The Foreigner”, it’s really, maybe also it. There is a eh development, first we had a lot of Italians, foreigners, and there was also some scepticism when they came. Now it’s done, there is no discussion about Italian about Italian foreigners. They are fully integrated. And also eh maybe the Tamils, they also, first it was very, everybody was sceptical, all the colour and that, but because of the mentality of these of these (.) Tamils they are very fast integrated. Because they worked also very hard, they also wanted to be integrated. But I think it is really a problem with the people from the Balkan.

This sequence starts with a pronounced question by the interviewer about the state of integration in Switzerland. This question, motivated by the different language zones and subsequent issues of integration and communication, offers the possibility to say something about the multilayered Switzerland. However, it appears as if the scientist, in a way,

rejects this question with his first few words. He obviously hesitates to apply the scale of integration – usually applied to different national cultures – to the own multilingual culture of Switzerland. Still, after some pausing he starts to approach the question through a diagnosis of persisting differences between the lingual zones, but comes into hesitating again when trying to answer the issue about integration in this context. It repeatedly becomes clear that the scientist is most reluctant to decide whether the lingual groups in his country are integrated or not, leaving most of his first statements unfinished. His only rescue is than to turn to a sentence which he once “read”, not directly relating to integration, but again avoiding this issue through the statement that Switzerland only consists of minorities.

After having avoided the direct confrontation with the question and redirecting it to the issue of differences between groups, the scientist feels free to characterize the coexistence of the different lingual groups in his country as not completely, but quite different. In his attempt to define common ground between the lingual groups, however, the scientist runs into trouble. Apparently, he is (in spite of trying hard) not able to find an adjective that describes the different groups. Eventually, the common ground is defined by sharing three aims. The analysis of the depth of these aims, however, is not very promising, as the aims of being in a country, working in a country and value a country are certainly not specific for Switzerland. Therefore, the scientist’s notion that there is not one Swiss man should be taken serious. The (multilayered) identity seems to be defined rather on a local than on a national level.

This does not apply for foreigners. Asked about this issue, the attempt to differentiate between Swiss people does apparently not apply for Germans, Italians or people from the Balkan. These do now appear as pure stereotypes rather than as individuals. While the scientist is reluctant to define “the foreigner”, he gaily defines the Italian and the Portuguese. In his subsequent statement, it becomes clear from his characterization of Tamils what the criterion is for being a good or a problematic foreigner. It is not the color of the skin, but rather the work ethics. Working hard seems to be the prerequisite for integration in the scientist’s eye. This is an interesting mirror to the student’s focus on working conditions. For persons skeptical

about integration, work seems to be the smallest common denominator for intercultural exchange.

The subsequent interview, carried out in German and translated again, was done with a local politician from the conservative party. The sequence below was taken from a phase of the interview where integration of foreigners was highlighted and the interviewer had been asked whether he knew the story about the Tibetans in his village.

Tibetan kids were adopted. I even have a friend, a Tibetan, who went to army education with me. He was adopted by a Swiss couple, and then he was Swiss of course and had to attend army education. So as I had lived for 20 years in Haslen, he had to attend army education as well. We met there by random and came to know each other. Yes, and (...) an overpopulation through foreigners, was something we never had. We always had perceived the foreigners as (...) important labor force. That's how I grew up. Not a hostility towards foreigners. That's something we don't have. But, as I said, here in the Glarus Canton, that was not determined by the SVP (conservative party) or anybody else, the economy has contributed to that and so on. The rural areas are completely different from urban areas.

Yes, yes. How will make the difference between good and bad foreigners? You don't know them a priori, you know.

How do you distinguish between a good and a bad Swiss? How do you distinguish between a good person and a bad person? I have the motto: Use my eyes to see, use my ears to listen. Good foreigners are clearly, they are integrated. They want to integrate themselves. No matter where, whether this is an association or whether this is within the municipality and so on. Who comes to Switzerland as a convinced foreigner and who goes as a convinced Swiss in a foreign country and wants it and indeed integrates himself, that for me is a good foreigner. However, we also have crooks and gangsters, they have a Swiss passport by origin.

What is integrated in your view?

Integrate, integrate means that I live within the given world at my location more often than not and participate.

In his narrative about the Tibetans, the politician is very quick in jumping from the beginning of the story (when the Tibetans were adopted) to his own happy ending of it, one of them becoming friends with the politician. It is interesting that the label changes quickly. While his friend was still a Tibetan when he was adopted, he was a Swiss afterwards, even of course. The politician emphasizes twice the duty of army education which was imposed on his friend, such as to prove the advanced state of integration the former Tibetan was experiencing.

In spite of the fact that the Tibetan had become a Swiss, the politician quickly comes back to the issue of foreigners. Here, as in other interviews before, labor as a common ground between natives and foreigners is highlighted. The politician sees the economic developments that value foreign workers as a far stronger force than political issues about integration which he appears not to consider as relevant in the rural framework.

The label of foreigners is now strongly revived by the next question of the interviewer. The striking way of the question is still strengthened by the strong attributes of good and bad. That leaves the possibility for the respondent to come out with strong opinions or to reject the simple rationale of the interviewer. He chooses more or less the latter, setting the good and bad into a more general human context.

It is now that the issue of integration is brought into the game by the politician. He expects foreigners to integrate into the native society. His definition of integration is mainly in good accordance with the definitional mainstream. The cultural forms that are defined and shaped through the region's cultural context are to be adapted, at least partially, by the ones who migrate to this region. Playing to the rules, the politician insists, is not only required by the foreigners, but also by Swiss people. It is made clear through the sequence that the politician applies the same rules to all people, regardless of their origin.

Again, the question arises whether the transcultural approach can be found in the messages of the two interviewed persons. One could argue that the concept of transculture can be found with the Tibetan. Because in spite of his participation in the army and other very Swiss attributes, he is still

considered as a Tibetan. However, little of the sequence shows that the description as a Tibetan is anything more than historic, that any cultural reminiscences from Tibetan life have remained active. The issue for the politician is clearly integration instead of transculture. There is the choice in various instances whether to stick to one's former cultural habits or to adapt to the new environment. There seems to be a threshold from which integration is achieved so that integration is largely a 1/0 decision.

A transcultural approach opens the option of bringing the most interesting and fruitful elements of single cultures together. On the individual level, transculture provides the chance to freely choose from a wide set of bricks from single cultures. On the societal level, intercultural conflicts and clashes could be prevented if cultures are combined rather than competing. However, our empirical analysis seems to indicate that even in pre-designed contexts it is hard to trace it, and that is not necessarily because it is not present, but maybe because (discursively at least) people are not yet ready to give up the clear-cut distinctions between what is inside and outside of the domestic/native/global culture. Though, the *insiders* of the domestic culture set far less firm criteria for desirable outsiders, and, the *incomers* adapt themselves, thereby giving up their own culture, in a far less rigid manner.

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Muslim Identity vs. Political Liberalism

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Abstract: A great number of empirical studies on the attitudes of Muslims indicate that Islam or Muslim identity hardly allow any predictions regarding the predilections of Muslims regarding human rights and democracy in the framework of the modern constitutional state, or regarding the principal separation of politics from religion. From these studies one can infer that reasons other than Islam are responsible for the deficiencies in human rights and democracy in Muslim majority societies. Nevertheless, there has been an ongoing discourse among Muslim intellectuals about an apparent “malaise” of Muslims in the modern world, which according to these authors also affects the ability of Muslims to embrace modern democratic ideas and make democratic institutions work. One of their proponents is Akeel Bilgrami, a philosopher at Columbia University, New York, and a critique of John Rawls, one of the most influential theorists of the modern democratic state. The aim of the project is to place Akeel Bilgrami in the contemporary discourse of the “malaise” and to engage with his criticism of John Rawls’ political liberalism, which Bilgrami bases on a philosophically sophisticated notion of Muslim identity.

Keywords: Muslim Identity, political liberalism, John Rawls, Akeel Bilgrami, emergent secularism, internal universalism, emergent universalism, relativism, Orientalism, essentialism.

State of Empirical Research

Current events in the Arab world as well as long-standing empirical research seem to rule out any possibility of an influence of Islam, Muslim identity or Arab culture on prospects of democracy in the Muslim world (an

exception is Merkel, 2005). Thus Schlumberger et al. (2010: 17, translation MD) write:

Popular science often has it that “Islam” or “the” Oriental culture were responsible for the remarkable resistance to Democracy in the Arab world. These arguments, however, are irrelevant in the academic literature. They play no role in discourses among regional experts since they are counted as empirically disproved as well as methodologically questionable.

These findings are not restricted to the Arab world. The different World Values Surveys and European Values Surveys (Inglehart et al. 2003, 2004, 2005) also suggest, that the lack of democratic institutions in the Muslim world is not above all a result of religion. “Islam” or a “Muslim cultural influence” may be variables that exert a bit of a negative effect on the development of democratic values and democratic institutions. The deciding factors, however, are socio-economic development and the corresponding increase of “self-expression values” (Inglehart et al.) in the population.

What is true for the many countries considered in the World Value Surveys is also true for two countries like India and Germany, for example. Based on the data of the Indian National Election Study (CSDS, 2009) Subrata Mitra (2010) determines that Indian Muslims hardly differ from members of other religious communities in their understanding of themselves as citizens of India as a democratic county. If the data from Jammu and Kashmir are subtracted out, where many Muslims strive for their own state independently of India, the identification with India among the remainder of Indian Muslims proves even higher than the average in the Indian population (cf. also Mitra, 1999).

For Germany, Wetzels et al. (2007) have determined that “highly democracy-distant attitudinal patterns” can be found only in ten per cent of the Muslim resident population. Thirty-four per cent have an unequivocally positive attitude towards the constitutional democracy (*Rechtsstaat*) and fifty-six per cent are ambivalent. Compared with the average German

population and taking into account socio-economic factors, Muslim residents fare hardly worse than the German average. The ten per cent of highly democracy-distant Muslims roughly correspond to ten per cent in the average German population who display xenophobic or radical right-wing attitudes and are therefore equally democracy-distant. Only the middle level of democracy-distance does not quite correspond to the German average. Whereas only one third of the average German population displays a medium democracy-distance the figure for Muslim residents is a bit higher (cf. Embacher, 2009). Further below, I shall refer to this middle segment as the “moderate Muslims”.

Even when compared with the average of Muslim residents in Germany, the segment of the moderate Muslims is remarkable. In four out of nine questions, the “moderate Muslims” display a heightened level of democracy-distance. For example, eighty-two per cent of moderate Muslims favour censorship of the media on ethical grounds but only sixty-six percent of the average Muslim residents do so. For sixty-one per cent of moderate Muslims religion ranks higher than democracy. The corresponding value for the average Muslim is only forty-seven per cent. Forty per cent of moderate Muslims demand the death penalty for capital crimes whereas only thirty-four do so among the average Muslim residents. By contrast, in the remaining interview questions asked by Wetzels and his collaborators, moderate Muslims display a higher degree of democracy-compliant attitudes than the average Muslim resident in Germany. This somewhat inconsistent picture of the moderate Muslim calls for further, and more detailed, empirical research, which is, however, not the subject of this study.

As of now, the empirical studies existing on this topic seem to allow the following preliminary summarisation: Islam or Muslim cultural influence do not hinder Muslims to embrace and support the constitutional democratic state as loyal citizens. And they do so in their overwhelming majority just as the majority of citizens in their respective societies does, be they of Muslim or other denomination. Here the nation state as a modern institution (Meyer 2005, 2009; Eisenstadt 2006), modern conceptions of *laïcité*, of politics as independent from religion (Luhmann, 1984), and

society's level of socio-economic development play a much more crucial role as variables than religion. Relative to individual national contexts, however, Muslims, more frequently than citizens of other denominations, display ambivalent attitudes *vis-à-vis* human rights and democracy. Wetzels et al. (2007) speculates that this may be explained by a higher degree of marginalisation and a higher probability of discrimination experienced by Muslims in Germany and other countries. In India, for example, the Sachar Committee Report (Sachar, 2006) suggests a similar explanation. Muslims in India, by a great number of standards, form a disadvantaged group even when compared to other disadvantaged categories such as “scheduled castes”, “scheduled tribes” or “other backward castes”.

Discourse about the “Malaise” of Moderate Muslims in the Modern World

In apparent contrast with these rather unalarming facts, there is a widespread discourse among intellectuals on a cultural or philosophical “malaise” in the Muslim World (Kassab, 2009). Since the Rushdie affair, Bilgrami (1989), for example speaks of a malaise of moderate Muslims in the modern world. Moderate Muslims, according to Bilgrami (1992a), find themselves caught between “Islamic absolutism” and “their faith in a religion that is defined upon detailed commitments with regard to the polity, commitments that Islamic absolutists constantly invoke to their own advantage (ibid.: 824).” In Bilgrami’s analysis

there is a simple but deep *philosophical malaise* at the heart of it; and that insight, in turn, should help them [moderate Muslims] distinguish between different aspects of their faith in a way that allows for its doctrinal reform, and so eventually allows for the conflict they find themselves in to be resolved in favor of a more determined opposition to Islamic absolutism than they have been able to produce so far. What do I mean here by a *philosophical malaise*? I have already granted that the contemporary reassertion of Islamist sentiment in many countries as well as a good part of the moderate Muslim’s own commitment to Islam is the product of a certain history of subjugation and condescension, which continues today in revised but nevertheless recognizable forms. Why, then, am I not showing

the appropriate sympathy towards these defensive stances? It is in answering this question that the specifically abstract character of the *malaise* is revealed. The answer is that Muslims themselves have taken the wrong attitude to this historical determination of their Islamist sentiments. Their own observation of the role of colonialism and the West in shaping their commitments and identity ought to – but, alas, does not – have a strictly limited and circumscribed role in their own self-conception. *The acute consciousness of and obsession with the historical cause of their commitment has made them incapable of critical reflection about the commitment itself.* For too long now there has been a tendency among Muslims to keep saying, “You have got to understand why we are like this,” and then allow that frame of mind to dominate their future actions. This has destroyed their capacity for clear-headed, unreactive political thought and action (ibid.: 835-6, emphases mine).

The philosophical malaise, in Bilgrami’s analysis, prevents moderate Muslims from actively and publicly pursuing a reform of Islam. Their indecision, according to Bilgrami, leads to a defensive attitude and an incapacity to publicly defend themselves against their appropriation by fundamentalist (“absolutist”) Muslims. What is lacking, according to Bilgrami (1990) is an open debate among moderate Muslims that would help them differentiate between political and non-political aspects of their faith.

Their defensiveness, says Bilgrami, stems from the fear that a critical engagement with the fundamentals of their faith would be misjudged as a sign of disloyalty in the face of a common threat emanating from the West that has treated Muslims with disdain throughout the centuries. In Bilgrami’s opinion, it is the historical commitment to Islam as a source of their identity that impairs moderate Muslim’s capacities for self-criticism. By this sort of self-victimisation, claims Bilgrami, moderate Muslims give away their “first-person perspective”, the only perspective that would place them in the driver’s seat of their existence. By their fixation on the West, and their “third-person perspective” on themselves as victims, they permit their adversaries to dictate the rules of actions.

To justify the preoccupation with Bilgrami as the main focus of this study it is important to note that his discourse of the malaise of the modern Muslim is not an isolated phenomenon among post-colonial intellectuals. Nandy (1983), Al-Azm (1969, 1997), Mamdani (2002, 2004, 2005), Mernissi (2002), Ramadan (1999, 2009), Kassab (2009) and many others have come to similar conclusions. Some of them, like Nandy, speak for the post-colonial subject in general; some of them restrict themselves to the Arab – but not exclusively Muslim – world, and some speak only of Muslims, be they located “in the Muslim world”, in India, or in the West. By focussing on Bilgrami, who speaks of Muslims primarily, I do not wish to suggest that one could speak of Islam, Muslims or the Muslim world *tout simplement* and without caveats. These are all categories that are loaded by their essentialist uses in Orientalist literature and therefore problematic. Keeping in mind that no human being is Muslim by essence but either by choice or by way of imputation, and that also not to an equal degree and at all times, and that “the Muslim world” is not a geographic category but a cultural frame of reference that allows human beings all over the world to be part of it, be they Muslim or not, or be they located in Muslim majority countries or not, one can still use these categories, and one has to use them, since they are part of a hegemonic discourse that, albeit misconceived, can not be dismantled without active engagement with its very terms.

This is precisely what Bilgrami is doing and that is why he is interesting. And he remains interesting as he is currently completing a book where he takes up the question of “What is a Muslim?” in more detail (forthcoming with Routledge, New Delhi). However, Bilgrami is not only interesting because of his post-colonial critique and because of his critique of the post-colonial subject’s own entanglements in the categories of the very discourse that was designed to keep him/her in a subject position rather than in a position of free and active citizenship. Bilgrami goes a step further and uses his sophisticated theory of Muslim identity as a launch pad for his criticism of one of the major representatives of Western political thought today, John Rawls. His systematic engagement with Rawls’ political liberalism, one of the most widely discussed renderings of constitutional democracy today, forms the chief subject of this study.

According to Bilgrami, the accommodation of committed Muslims in a constitutional democracy poses principled problems that can neither be solved by resorting to extreme forms of multiculturalism (which, according to Bilgrami at a talk delivered at the Centre of Philosophy, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, on 13 January 2010, offer “too little too late”) nor by amending political liberalism in the vein of John Rawls’. Thus if Bilgrami’s criticism would turn out to be true, both political liberalism and multiculturalism, which mark the far ends of political theories considered viable today, would be faced with an impasse. This concerns the following strands of theory, which this study would scrutinize in detail.

Firstly, we have theorists like Talal Asad, an anthropologist from the City University of New York, who claims the viability of the radical multicultural path. Talal Asad’s (2003) model of an institutional representation of Muslims in a constitutional democracy, which according to him should know of no majority at all but consist of only minorities. This proposal is on the line of communitarian approaches that, rightly or wrongly, draw on Charles Taylor. In Asad’s theory, different conceptions of law and politics co-exist more or less without mediation. This study will try to apply Bilgrami’s critique of multiculturalism to proposals in this radically multiculturalist vein. Secondly, we have legal and political theorists like Andrew March, a philosopher from Yale University, who are well versed in both, Western and Islamic legal traditions, and who consider amendments to Rawls’ conception of *justice and fairness* as a possible way out of Bilgrami’s dilemma. These theorists apply Rawls’ (1985, 1987, 1997) conception of an *overlapping consensus* to the problem of a unified theory of law and politics for Muslims and non-Muslims (cf. March, 2006, 2007a&b, 2009).

Tariq Ramadan, a philosopher from Geneva who is currently teaching in Oxford, is another proponent of the second strategy. Ramadan (1999, 2009) explores the conditions of possibility for an overlapping consensus between basic tenets of human rights and democracy and certain interpretations of Islam that is meant to appeal to even conservative Muslims. Instead of interpreting Islam as a comprehensive ethical and legal tradition, Ramadan suggests focussing only on the five pillars as the core of

Islamic belief and develop out of them rules of conduct for the present. This allows him to treat the compatibility of democracy and modernity with Islamic precepts as an open question that Muslims are at liberty to answer in the positive (or in the negative). Since Ramadan answers this question in the positive, he invites European Muslims and non-Muslims to share in the responsibility of building a just commonwealth in the universal, humanist sense. By this he understands the duty to struggle against unemployment, marginalisation and crime and to act in favour of legal, economic and political reform. This duty can be justified with recourse to Islam. But it can also be justified with recourse to any other religious or secular humanist frame of reference. This conception of justice, which draws on Rawls' (1993) notion of a *free-standing conception of justice*, however, doesn't make it un-Islamic. This argumentative strategy makes Ramadan's proposal a candidate for an *overlapping consensus* in the vein of John Rawls. In Ramadan's wording, adherence to the basic tenets of Islam in Europe is not tantamount to a subversion of European legal standards. Instead he calls for "honest citizenship" of Muslims and non-Muslims within the already established legal framework that Muslims, as far as Ramadan goes, already have accepted by virtue of accepting to live in Europe. In contradistinction to Asad, Ramadan defends a conception of justice that does not, in principle, distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims. Both must be prepared to grapple with the legitimate interests and concerns of the other on the basis of a common understanding of justice.

Baderin (2003) has spelled out the compatibility of Islamic law and modern notions of democracy and human rights in further detail and as pertaining to three fields of justice: gender equality, right to life, and prohibition of torture. For Baderin, it is important that the compatibility of Islamic law and modern notions of democracy and human rights does not rest on a simple retro-projection of an idea of human rights into an historical period where such ideas were simply not to be had. Instead it should be based on a universal understanding of human dignity and public welfare shared by Islamic as well as Western legal traditions. With Ramadan and Muhammad Kalish (2005) he is agreed that this can be achieved through a recourse to the five pillars of Islam taken in the abstract,

i.e. minus the concretisations that Islamic customary law have given them in historical circumstances of the past. Even if Baderin is not always convincing in his argument of the compatibility of Islamic interpretations of law and Western notions regarding gender equality, right to life, and prohibition of torture, he identifies three important challenges for the viability of an overlapping consensus between Islamic and Western notions of law and justice.

Furthermore, permanent settlement in a non-Muslim country, service in a non-Muslim army, and solidarity with non-Muslims in the face of common social and political challenges are identified by Andrew March as challenges for the viability of an overlapping consensus between Islamic and Western notions of law and justice. March (2006, 2007b, 2009) highlights the conditions that have to be fulfilled by either side, the Islamic and the Western one, for the viability of an overlapping consensus in the vein of John Rawls. Therein March takes account of Islamic legal traditions only in so far as they can positively contribute to such a consensus.

Of course all these positive endeavours by Ramadan, Bilgrami, March and others (like Al-Azm, 1969; An-Na'im, 1992, 1996a&b; Abu Zaid, 1999, 2004; Arkoun, 2006; Al-Jabri, 2009 etc.) hinge on the assumption that Bilgrami's (1994, 1997) critique of Rawls' (1971) idea of the *original position*, which is based on Bilgrami's notion of Muslim identity, is not so devastating that Rawls' conception *justice as fairness* is ruled out as theoretical framework for considerations of inter-cultural justice. The proposal is to critically engage with Bilgrami's writings on Muslim identity and commitment and his subsequent critique of John Rawls and to draw the necessary conclusions regarding political liberalism's ability to accommodate committed Muslims and regarding the prospects of an overlapping consensus between Islamic and Western notions of justice.

Bilgrami's Criticism of Political Liberalism in General

Generally, in Bilgrami's (2004) view, political liberalism mistakenly suggests that there could be reasons that bind all rational people and that justify secular and liberal ideals. Here Bilgrami relies on Bernard Williams' (1982) criticism of externalism. Instead he favours internalism which holds

that an agent's action can be regarded reasonable only in view of his or her internal motivations, desires and persuasions and not in view of external principles or propositions. Bilgrami (1998) calls "Archimedean" the secularist stance that draws on externalist assumptions. Archimedean theories, according to Bilgrami, are based on the false idea that they could take an external stance relative to the arena of substantive political commitments. Instead, Bilgrami (1982: 405-408) proposes a model of "negotiated" or "emergent secularism". According to Bilgrami, it is possible to convince the moderate Muslim or other illiberal religionist that he or she could support secular liberalism only if the contestant appeals to the values and principles internal to the reference frame of the supposedly illiberal religious person. Archimedean secularism, in contrast, pretends to be able to present a neutral field of discussion. In contrast with this stance, the negotiated-emergent model proposes that we refrain from seeking such a neutral common agreement and rather create a framework, which renders it possible for the communities to contribute to a secular outcome for different (therefore non-neutral) reasons from within their own very different substantive value economies (ibid. 411). According to Bilgrami "secularism can only *emerge* as a value by negotiation between the substantive commitments of particular religious communities" (ibid. 393).

Bilgrami's Criticism of John Rawls

In "Secular Liberalism and Moral psychology of Identity" Bilgrami (1997) presents a critique of John Rawls' political liberalism based on a criticism of Rawls' moral-psychological presuppositions. In Bilgrami's reading, Rawls' conception of the "original position" can be disqualified as untenable with the help of three moral-psychological ideas: "reinforcement", "akrasia" and "identity". Firstly, in certain cases our desires may reinforce each other without there being an instrumental relation between them. In Bilgrami's example, one's desire to do philosophy can be accompanied by one's desire to be respected by his or her intellectual friends. At the same time, as Bilgrami points out there need not be an instrumental temptation of doing philosophy *in order* to be respected by the friends. Reinforcement, as Bilgrami defines it, is a relation between

desires that is more than simple consistency. He insists that it should not be identified with an instrumental means-end relationship. With this fundamental notion, Bilgrami can describe desires as carriers of certain forms of intrinsic rationality. For Bilgrami, an agent is rational if his/her actions are in accord with his/her values. A person's values in turn are those among her desires that are most highly reinforced (1997: 2528). Secondly, *Akrasia* (weakness of the will), is defined as "that form of irrationality where the most reinforced among our desires points to one sort of actions, but what we actually opt for is something less reinforced in our evaluative economy" (ibid.). Thirdly, identity is defined in terms of an agent's most "fundamental commitments". Identity, for Bilgrami, is constituted by the desires that the agent most identifies with. He points out that we can attribute the role of fundamental commitment only to those desires that are specified in counter-factual terms. "A desire", writes Bilgrami, "is a fundamental commitment if one wants it fulfilled even were one not to have the desire" (ibid. 2529). A desire counts as fundamental commitment "at a given time, if at that time one wants it to be fulfilled at a future time, even if one believes that at the future time one may not have that desire" (ibid.). In Bilgrami's view, those desires are "our identity-shaping commitments for they reveal our deepest self-conception" (ibid.). It is worth noting, that the identities so described need not be permanent or essentialising. Now, Bilgrami argues, Rawls' proposal cannot fulfil the requisites of rationality in the sense derivable from Bilgrami's conception of identity. Moreover, Rawls can not make his position acceptable for an illiberal, albeit moderate, Muslim or or other religious communitarian. When Rawls refers to the higher order desire regarding the satisfaction of our revised desires he supposes that it would be rational to commit ourselves to the principles of political liberalism because "that way we would be taking out an insurance policy for possible future conceptions of the good which were significantly different from our religious communitarian one" (ibid. 2531). This is why, according to Rawls, an illiberal, albeit moderate, Muslim behind the veil of ignorance would contract into the principles of political liberalism, which implies an approval of the equality and liberty of non-religious citizens or citizens of other faiths. Against this, Bilgrami holds that if the religious

communitarian has fundamental commitments as described above, the illiberal, albeit moderate, Muslim would not find it reasonable to admit the principles of political liberalism, even if he or she takes the revisability of desires into account. “This is because his fundamental commitments are structurally defined in a way that preclude making any sacrifices now ... for a different psychological make-up in the future” (ibid.). “Rawls” however, as Bilgrami argues, “has given an argument for a liberal principle that requires us to possibly make sacrifices in the present for the fulfilment of our desires in the future” (ibid.). This counters the very logic of the moral psychology of identity as understood by Bilgrami by misinterpreting the way our present fundamental commitments shape our identities. Moreover, “Rawls *cannot make any similar appeal* to reinforcement from substantive conceptions of the good for his higher-order desire for the satisfaction of future desires since that higher-order desire is introduced by him only behind the veil of ignorance *where, ex hypothesi, there are no substantive conceptions of the good*” (ibid.). Behind Rawls’ veil of ignorance, Bilgrami argues, the opting of the illiberal, albeit moderate, Muslim for the principles of political liberalism would be irrational because he or she “would be opting for an outcome which is not only in conflict with his fundamental commitments (which in itself is not decisive since it gives rise only a stand-off) but also choosing something that is much less reinforced by his other desires. To do this last is to be no different, say, from the weak-willed alcoholic who desires to sober up and fulfil all his other desires (say to be a good husband and father, a good professional, etc.) that are better reinforced than his desire for alcohol” (ibid.). In this sense Rawls would be asking the illiberal, albeit moderate, Muslim to be addicted to liberalism, as it were, which, in accordance with the notion of weakness of the will (*akrasia*) described above would be irrational.

In a footnote attached to “Secular Liberalism and Relativism”, Bilgrami (2004: 185, fn. 5) reflects on Rawls’ conception of the “overlapping consensus”. Here Bilgrami notes a possible similarity between the idea suggested by Rawls’ idea of an overlapping consensus and his own model. In personal email correspondence, Bilgrami explains:

It is interesting that you ask about ‘overlapping consensus’. When I first wrote on Rushdie I had not really read the middle and late Rawls. I had only read ‘a theory of justice’. My ideas were entirely motivated by William’s notion of ‘internal reasoning’. It was really only much later that I began to see that Rawls himself had been abandoning his position of ‘a theory of justice’. So in a longish footnote to my paper ‘Secularism and relativism’ (which was written much later than but overlaps quite a lot with ‘secularism and the moral psychology of identity’ – leaving out only the material on India), that I had read the middle and later Rawls. In a longish footnote in that paper, I address the relationship between my view and the overlapping consensus view. So my response to your question is that if you really believe in overlapping consensus in the form that puts stress on ‘internal reasons’ as I deploy that idea, then you cannot have ANY role for ‘the original position’ because it is now completely redundant. But that is obviously not how Rawls means it since overlapping consensus for him is embedded in the original position both in the middle period of the constructivist lectures and in ‘law of peoples’. The footnote talks about this a little, saying that you have to give up on the original position idea as made redundant by internal reasons and think entirely in Hegelian terms, as that paper explains (e-mail from Akeel Bilgrami sent to the author on 5 March 2010).

Although these propositions should be the subject of further critical scrutiny, Bilgrami is probably right about the redundancy of Rawls’ original position, an interpretation of Rawls (in spite of himself) that I have argued for in my Ph.D. dissertation (Dusche 2000). As already mentioned, the fragmentary comments on the conception of an overlapping consensus wait for further elucidation in a forthcoming book by Bilgrami (forthcoming).

The basic intention of Bilgrami with the invention of the emergent-negotiated secularist model is twofold. On the one hand, his aim is to work out a position that could render possible an inclusivist attitude towards illiberal, albeit moderate, Muslims. He proposes that this model renders it possible that they can subscribe to principles of (secular) political liberalism without compromising their religious commitments. The process of negotiation itself is supposed to take the form of a public discourse and

secularization would result from this process. Bilgrami locates himself in a mid-position between liberalism and communitarianism. The nucleus of his epistemological theory is his thesis about the role of internal reasoning in context of value statements. This stance Bilgrami (1992, 2006, 2011) expounds within a complex theoretical framework, involving fundamental issues like that of agency, identity, commitment, and intentionality. As we have seen, the central element of his argument in support of the model of emergent secularism is the demonstration that the generally applied “classical” liberal strategy is impotent. According to Bilgrami, it is somewhat simple-minded to suppose that in case of value conflicts the consent of the moderate Muslims could be reached by arguments that draw on premises falling outside their value commitments (1990a: 605).

At the same time, it is also important to see that Bilgrami does not subscribe to a pluralistic agenda in terms of value pluralism. He argues against any kind of legal pluralism regarding the outcome of his emergent secularism. For him, pluralism is welcome “only at the level of allowing plural (internal) reasons for signing on to liberal principles and laws without in any way compromising on the principles and laws themselves” (2004: 193). As he admits, this is “an evaluative stance that gives a secular liberal the confidence to insist on the exclusive rightness of secular liberalism against illiberal opponents, despite the loss of externalist reasons and the loss of externalist justifications of liberalism (ibid. 195). In other words, Bilgrami’s intention is to save liberalism from the liberals, as it were, and not to take sides with the communitarians.

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The Category of the Daily Life*

Contemporary theoretical and methodological perspectives.

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to draw attention upon the category of the daily life, the clue of a possible contemporary philosophical synthesis. The daily life – the everyday occurrence, as an ontological reality, category and determination of the human, a cognitive directive, essentiality and phenomenality, authenticity and inauthenticity – represents the aim of some desirable inquiry. This thesis is based on the analysis of Martin Heidegger's and Georg Lukács's works.

Keywords: Heidegger, Lukács, Heller, Ontology, Gnoseology, Method, Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Axiology, Philosophical anthropology

I. Preliminaries

The dictionary assertions of the term (denomination) of DAILY LIFE are important for the 'sedimentary' aspects, for what is accepted as 'common', as 'matter-of-course', for the 'current use', academically certified. Thus, in the *Romanian language*, we have: QUOTIDIAN, meaning: i) adjective, something recurring daily, daily, customary; ii) neutral noun, daily publication – newspaper; in the *Hungarian language*, MINDENAP, meaning: i) adverb, daily, everyday, day by day; ii) adjective, a) daily, quotidian, on a daily basis, of all days, b) usual, ordinary (MEGSZOKOTT); in the *French language*, QOTIDIEN, which signifies: i)

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adjective, quotidian, daily, something recurring daily, something that is done or recurs each day (synonym: JOURNALIER), reiteration, ii) QOTIDIENNEMENT, adverb iii) masculine noun, newspaper published each day of the week – quotidian; in the *German language*: ALLTAG, signifies: i) masculine noun: a) a common, ordinary day; b) monotony, uniformity; ii) adjective ALLTAGLICH: a) daily, quotidian; b) (fig.) customary, of all days, ordinary; iii) feminine noun ALLTAGLICHKEIT: banality, platitude; in the *English language*: EVERYDAY, meaning: i) adjective, daily, quotidian, something recurring daily, customary; ii) noun, everyday, all days; iii) noun EVERYDAYNESS: a) monotony, daily regularity; b) banality (1).

In the XXth century, two of the attempts to approach the ‘daily life’ are truly remarkable: that of Martin Heidegger, and, respectively, that of Georg Lukács and his school.

II. Heidegger and the Daily Life issue

1. *Starting point and method.* In the introductory note to *What is metaphysic?* Thomas Kleininger and Gabriel Liiceanu accurately point the major and constant issue of the German philosopher’s thinking: the issue of the being, «which is nothing else but the raise at the level of thinking of that *to be* which circulates in the day to day life». [6, p 29]

Generally, the heideggerian specific terminology comes from the ordinary vocabulary and designates natural, usual circumstances. Only, the specific terms appear ‘transfigured’ from the perspective of the method used. This method is the phenomenological one and it is adopted and developed, in a specific manner, from Edmund Husserl (1859-1938).

The husserlian transcendental phenomenology, initially exposed in «*Logische Untersuchungen*» - «*Logical Investigations*» (2 vol., Halle 1900), imposes two fundamental ideas: a) the doctrine must presuppose nothing and b) this must be a doctrine of the «intuition of the essence» («*Wesenschau*»).

Husserl considers that all previous philosophical doctrines depart from certain *presuppositions, points of view, categories, etc.*

The phenomenological method, via the «phenomenological reduction», focuses on eliminating these «mental habits», in order to arrive at the ‘pure conscience’, which no longer presupposes anything. The operation throughout which the essences (universal significances) are isolated from any presupposition, in order to become the object of a pure intuition, is the ‘bracketing’ (Einklammerung) of the *natural attitude* thesis. The mental disposition throughout which, usually, the ‘outside’ world is separated from the ‘inside’ world is suspended. The Conscience hereby becomes a ‘field’ of «lived experiences» in which various objects are discovered as «having appeared». These objects no longer are «outside» or «inside» the conscience, but they are a *phenomenon* in the Greek sense of the word «*phainomenon*». The phenomenon (without any assumption) is the ‘thing itself’, the object or the fact, immediately grasped, under all its aspects, a primary fact of life of conscience's intentional acts. [5, pp 802-804].

Martin Heidegger, by *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)*, his fundamental work published in 1927, explicitly assumes the phenomenology elaborated by Husserl, nevertheless operating important semantic and ideological mutations.

In the heideggerian conception, the phenomenology is, before everything, the *method*, and, thus, it represents the intention to keep the equidistance between ‘subjectivism’ and ‘objectivism’. By ‘phenomenon’ one must understand «which is showing-itself» («das Sich-an – ihm selbst-zeigende»), and by «logos», «letting be seen» («Sehenlassen»). The phenomenology is the method to reveal, via a research, ‘which shows itself’, the ‘how’ of what is researched, it is a way and a mean of access to what must be the theme of the ontology: the sense of the being. Judging from this perspective, ontology is only possible as phenomenology. Therefore, the phenomenology is not only ‘method’, but also ontology, ‘a fundamental ontology’ having the task to reveal the *fundamental structures of the human being* («Dasein»). The husserlian program is developed in a logical-methodological horizon, the heideggerian one, in an ontological horizon. It may be achieved by *researching the daily life phenomena* for the purpose of finding some continuous structures and to establish their

meaning. The interpretation of the meaning of the phenomena transform the 'fundamental ontology' in a special 'hermeneutics': "analytics of existence's existentiality", analytics of the "Dasein" [4, p. 176-177].

«The Dasein exists for itself, as a mineness», «the fact of My-to-Be» is an ontical fact and not a result of the will [6, p. 104]. What is «Dasein?». I prefer to use it non-translated, as a technical-philosophical term, recognized as such. Still, certain explanations come handy. The Romanian usages to which I tend to adhere are the following: a) «the Being-present-at-hand» (fiinta-aici) (V. Dem. Zamfirescu) ; b) «the Being-in-the-open» (fiinta-in-deschis), a being part of the being and in relation with the being (Th. Kleininger and G. Liiceanu) c) «an act of *spatial and temporal projective presence*, specific to the human being» (my synthetic assumption).

This «specific to the human being» must not, I believe, be taken *stricto sensu*. At Martin Heidegger this specificity does not appear to be exclusive, but specific to any possible structure of being that achieves (is capable to translate into facts) the triple relation: to itself, to the world, to the relation between itself and the world. Jacques Derrida describes this in the following terms: "We can see then that Dasein, though *not* man, is nevertheless *nothing other* than man". Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man", Margins of Philosophy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

2. *The meanings of the Daily Life in Sein und Zeit*. The herein below clarifications represent the outcome of an analytical processing of the assumptions of 'Daily Life' and 'Everydayness'- 'Alltaglich si Alltagslichkeit' – present in various paragraphs of the work. It is especially applicable to the paragraphs: 9, 26, 27, 35-38, 51, 52, 59, 71 (the translations from Hungarian to Romanian are produced by the undersigned). In order to overcome, provisionally, the understanding and translations difficulties of many 'lexical creations' specific to the entirely *non-prosaic* language of the German thinker, we referred to the editions, notes and comments, the index of terms mentioned in the bibliography.

2.1 *The Phenomenality*. In order for us to get to the existential determinations (those via which the structures of the human being are

revealed), we must assume the phenomenological way: we must bracket everything that is not essentially significant. «Dasein» must reveal itself and be revealed «as it is prior to everything and most of the times: within the average everydayness» [9, p 107].

The existential phenomenology, thus accepting the teleology (the meaning and the deployment with meaning), bears the virtues and the risks of the valorizing projections, of the ontical neutrality and of the ontological significance. 'The average everydayness' means both 'what is current,' 'daily', 'timely average continuous', and the 'ordinary', 'the common platitude'. This semantic ambiguity is constantly detectable in the heideggerian discourse 'aiming to equidistance'.

2.2 The *Non-differentiability feature ("indiferentia")*. «This non-differentiability of Dasein's everydayness is not a nothing, but it is the positive-phenomenal feature of this being. Out of this kind of Being-and back into it again-is all existing, such as it is. This everydayness non-differentiability of Dasein, we call *averageness* (Durchschnittlichkeit)». [9, p.142]. The Daily Life, in the heideggerian ontological sense, is 'the average section' of 'Existence' (the being to which Dasein 'emphatically' relates to), the 'mediocrity'.

2.3 The *Non-mediation*. The 'Proximity' represents the existential horizon in which the ontological interpretation of the structure of being may be perfected or missed. The «Dasein hides itself and fails to find itself in its very everydayness way of being» [9, p.263-264]. The everydayness is, once more, a phenomenon: a reveal of the 'thing itself' and an 'apparent' conceal, which has to be 'pierced' by the phenomenological method.

2.4 The *Impersonality*. The Dasein is 'Da-sein', being 'here' and 'there'. It possesses an essential opening, that of its own being: being-in-the world ("In-der-Welt-sein") and cohabits with the world. The Iness ("Selbst") has an existential mean based on an opening with the same rang of 'originality' as "Mitsein" (Being alongside) and "Mitdasein" (Being-present-at-hand-along-with). Prosaic: the human, as individual, is a social being and, as such, it does not exist as "individuum", a personalized subject. The subject of the everydayness is 'anybody', 'anyone' – "das Man" – the general without identity, the anonymous [9, p. 240-241]. «The being of

everydayness is prescribed by *das Man* whom is not *somebody determined*, but *everybody*, even if not as a sum» [9, p. 259]. Hence, by explaining the heideggerian thought, the succession of determinations would be: *averageness* → *non-differentiability* → *impersonality*. The everydayness does not mean 'the life of all people', but 'people's life as average'. Deprived by the 'singularity', Dasein is marked by 'inauthenticity'. *Das Man* (The Inn) may supply safety and peacefulness, but it compels us to 'lose ourselves', to 'fail' ("Verfallen").

2.5 The 'Concern' ("Besorgen"). The condition of 'being-in-the-world' is a mutual implication between the 'Inn' (inness) and the 'World' ("Existenz"). The Dasein being forms its 'world' ("die Welt") via its ownmost pragmatism: that which Dasein meets 'along the way' is the 'immediate reality', the 'presence-at-hand' ("das Zuhandene"). The 'appearance' announcing itself from the very beginning is the 'usable', the 'handily' ("Zuhandenes") – which we may 'catch (even) by hand' [9, § 41].

2.5.1 Ontical (therefore, 'prereflexive'), "Besorgen" has the following meanings: a) to finalize something, to solve, to put in order; b) to take care of something for my very self (in the sense of 'procuring something for me, personally'); c) I am concerned that the action I assumed may fail. All these meanings must be 'ontologically' overcome.

2.5.2 As 'existential' determination, "Besorgen" indicates the being of a 'being-in-the world-possible'. Dasein is an 'essential project'. 'Thrown' ("Geworfen") in an already constituted world, «Dasein, in its being, permanently transcends itself» [9, p. 348]. This is its very 'concern': «Sorge als Sich-vorweg-sein».

III. The Lukács-Heller model.

1. *Starting point and method.* Constructively appraising Martin Heidegger's effort to re-substantiate the human ontology starting from the Daily Life, the lukácsian school shall develop a vast research (by Heller Ágnes even with monographic ambitions) in *realist, structural-genetic* perspective, in which the social existence of humans is synchronically (systemically) and diachronically (historical) analyzed. Human

determinations are no longer perceived as ‘eternal’, but they appear submitted to the historical forthcoming.

The value and valorizing projections are only temporary, and the «forbidden immixture of the existence issue with the value issue» [10, vol. 2, p. 173] therefore avoided. The heideggerian vision is considered tributary to a passeist-romantic attitude which leads to an overstressed contemporary western daily life, alienated and alienator (‘manipulated’).

The phenomenological method is considered risky, marked by the arbitrary (what is really revealed as the ‘thing itself’?) and liable to deformations of the ontological issues due to the extrapolation of the teleology over the whole existence.

The conception I hereby present was drafted, in its essential lines, by Georg Lukács in his *Esthetics*, present in the *The Ontology of Social Being* and developed within a vast theory by Heller Ágnes in *The everyday life* (A mindennapi élet). In my *reconstruction*, the starting point is the *distinction* operated by Lukács within his dynamics. «The social being /.../ presents, as its fundamental structure, the polarity of two dynamic complexes, which mutually constitute and cancel themselves in an always renewed reproduction process: the human individual and the society itself» [10, vol. 2, p. 179]. The ‘complex of the individual human’, the life concentrating around it, represent *exactly* what one may call the ‘daily life’.

Heller Ágnes vaguely formulates the idea that: «The everyday life is the complex of activities focusing on the individual reproduction, activities determining since always the possibility of the social reproduction» [12, p. 17]. *This is the fundamental thesis.*

2. *The abstract-essential determinations of the Daily Life.* We extracted these determinations from the analysis of chapter I of the cited work of Lukács’s disciple [12, p. 17 and the following].

2.1 *The Generality:* every society has an everyday life and all people, regardless of their place in the labor social division, have a daily life.

2.2. *The Particularity:* the structure and the content of the daily life are not identical for all individuals and for all societies. The reproduction of the individual is always the reproduction of the concrete individual.

2.3 The *Sociality*: the individual reproduction is a moment of the social reproduction. Only by achieving its social function, the individual may reproduce itself. The abstract-identical community of the activities focusing on the reproduction of the individual as natural being does not exhaust by far this reproduction.

2.4 The *Necessity*: under concrete-historical conditions, all individuals are born in a world existing independently of them. In this world that appears to the individuals as ‘achieved’, they must support themselves and must prove their capacity to live. Born in the middle of some concrete relationships, of concrete social behavior systems, in the mist of some given things and social institutions, before anything, the individuals must learn how to use it, how to decipher it and they are compelled to do so according to the possibilities of the era in which they live and given their specific social status.

Clarification: not each individual must assimilate in the same manner and not each individual must assimilate everything. But, each one must form a minimum of important habits in the absence of which they could not prove themselves apt for life. This process happens ‘naturally’, by social growth, without this meaning the end of it. There is here a social-historical variation depending on the degree of social mobility.

2.5 The *Temporality*: a) *historical*: during the mankind development and socialization, new categories of the daily life emerge (which may turn to evolution or involution). The daily life possesses, in this sense, a double relevance: it is a *mirror* of history (the social revolutions radically transforming it) and a *ferment* of it (it expresses the alterations appeared in productivity, mostly before the beginning of the revolution); b) *at the level of the individual*: acquiring various manipulative and orientation skills, putting it to work, happens *currently*. Still, the continuity does not identify with the ‘daily’ (the fact that it pertains to the social function of a farmer to cultivate the land does not mean, yet, the actual daily exertion of this function). The daily activities *stricto sensu* (eating, going to the office, etc.) are included in the general-daily-life activities. These differentiate, also, depending on the various stages of the human life.

2.6. The *Primarity*: a) the complex of daily activities within a distinctive life stage, distinguished by a compulsory continuance (as main line), form the grounds of *people's* 'way of living'; b) the appropriation of the concrete sociality, the activity within it, configures the specific profile of the individual, the basic structure of his personality (its expression may be exclusively in the horizon of the daily life, but the fulfillment is only achieved in the superior objectivations); c) the commonness *mediates towards the uncommonness* and is, simultaneously, its 'preschool'.

2.7 The *Non-mediation*: the individual selfobjectivates differently in the daily life. Via these objectivations (objectual and nonobjectual), the individual forms his world and, simultaneously, by this, he forms himself. But the daily life always 'flows' within the immediate (non-mediated) environment and it refers to the non-mediated environment. The individual transforms (forms) his world as his immediate world. All those objectivations that do not refer to the individual, respectively to his non-mediated environment, go beyond the daily life stage.

2.8 The *Sociological Generality*: for most people, the daily life represents the 'life itself'. Here, their personality's unity is achieved. The generic activity (in relation to the society, the mankind) is possible for the average people only as an exception.

2.9 The *Heterogeneity*: the daily life has a single central point, the *individual himself*. Around the individual is unitarily organized the multiple variety, extremely heterogenic, of the forms and kinds of activity, always important from one or another, always a different, point of view. All this is pulled together by affects, aptitudes, skills –heterogenic, as well – the subject of the daily life being the "whole man", with "the surface of his entire being" (Lukács).

The generic activities' (science, arts, etc.) subject is the "integrated man", with a subjectivity transfigured in the direction of a homogeneity and a coherence necessary for their assimilation and practice.

3. *The everydayness attitude.*

3.1 Highlighting the specificity of the everyday man's cognitive-accomplishing interaction with his existential horizon allows a more

specific determination. We are here in the «*non-mediated unity between theory and practice*» /the italics are ours/ as an expression of the general-pragmatic orientation of daily life and thinking [11, vol. 1, p. 104]. The ‘unity’ and the ‘mediation’ require clarification. *Significance of unity*: the everyday intellectual activity functions as *preparatory element* of the actions aiming at achieving certain immediate practical goals, in connection with the individual reproduction. *Significance of non-mediation*: the thoughts – in relation to the task to be solved – do not part in the direction of composing a particular, distinctive sphere, in other words, they *do not get organized in the homogenous form of a theory*; their significance is asserted only in relation to the established goal and in the context of the task to be solved. Only by this second aspect – decisive – the pragmatic orientation of the everyday thinking differentiates from other types of similarly directed types of thinking (for example, the political thinking). As for these, the unity between thinking and action involves the mediation of the results of a relatively autonomized theoretical reflection, results that intercalate between «a predictable situation and the optimal form of action applicable» [11, vol. 1, p. 105].

Once the significance of the ‘non-mediated unity’ avowed, we may go on to its circumscription in attitudinal order.

3.2 The following define the everyday subjectivity: the ‘apparent motivation’, the bonding with the situation (circumstances), the absence of the perspective of the remote consequences and of the ‘objective significance’ of actions, the «oscillation between momentarily-based motives, ephemeral and fluid, and decisions determined by rigid reasons /.../ conceptually fixed (traditions, customs)» [11, vol. 1, p. 104]. The presupposition, the precedent, they both are, here, in the plenitude of their rights. Options are based on them and, as a consequence, they are *never problematic*. As a consequence of the non-mediated relation, the daily life objectivations appear as ‘a given fact’ and the entire mediation system generating them disappears; in front of the daily-life-man stands only the concrete being of these objects, in their complete natural objectuality.

Within, the everydayness attitude is *non-reflexive*, the world is seen as self-evident, no part of it is doubtful until it begins to be problematic for

itself. «The circle of the immediate world is a circle of evidences» [13, p. 385].

3.3 The sensorial-manipulative processing of this world is, in itself, *programmatically confident* and focused on a utilitarian function. «The specificity of the necessary economy of the daily life is that, generally, people perceive and judge their entire environment – as long as it functions – exclusively on the grounds of its practical functioning (and not on the grounds of its objective essence)» [11, vol. 1, p. 105]. The pragmatic attitude becomes, thus, the quintessence of the everyday 'point of view'. Lukács reiterates the description (not only pertinent, but also extremely suggestive) from *Sein und Zeit*: «in such a using relation – Heidegger says – the care is subordinated to the constructive destination for the respective thing; less the man does nothing but to stare at the hammer-thing, less it is actively used, more the relation with it becomes more natural, more unveiling, it welcomes the man as what it is, as thing. The hammer itself discovers the hammer-specific 'handiness'... The purely 'theoretical' view of things lacks the understanding of their quality of being used. The manipulation-using relation, thus, is not blind, it has its own point of view, which leads the manipulation and confers its specific reity» [11, vol. 1, p. 128]. Thus, by the non-mediation of the daily life approach, the genesis of things is lost of sight, and the mediations are suppressed.

3.4 The social-historical *Explanation* of the apparition of such an attitude is the high social division of labor, which makes out of each production branch and its partial moments a precisely delimited specialty field and imposes the average on those activating, in the daily life, this non-mediation.

3.5 The *Generality* of the everydayness attitude, thus circumscribed, is merely tendential and never absolute. The very pragmatic necessities (the strife for success) are those which often oblige to the suppression of this non-mediation. Facing a problem or a problematic issue for which there are no prefabricated 'formulas' at hand, we are very capable of uncommon attitudes, too. But – and *this* thing is significant – the uncommon attitude showing itself in the field of the common life lasts only until the issue is solved and then it melts in the totality of the self-explanatory evidences. In

other words, synthesizing: the *theoretical attitude* – problematic and problematizing, oriented towards innovation and knowledge – is *temporary* and *fragmentary* in relation to the relative continuity of the everydayness attitude.

3.6 The 'relative continuity' does not refer exclusively to the sphere of the daily life activities, it appears on other coordinates - and in that of the superior objectivations, the science included.

Suddenly, we cannot think everything and so much less we may dispose of a radical knowledge (aiming at the genesis) about everything. And, in the horizon of the theoretical reflection, some non-problematic areas are left, knowledge functioning for the reflection and praxis in their quality of 'everydayness'. The 'background knowledge' accompanying the knowledge attempts of the science man functions as evidence.

3.7 All humans, regardless of the place they occupy in the social division of labor, remain fatally "built-in" (Lukács) the soil of the daily life. The everydayness attitude may and must be suspended - inevitably throughout science – but not everywhere and not always. The suppressions in a certain place, in a certain direction, generate induction phenomena: the strongest the suppression at one point, the more virulent it strikes in other points, non-submitted to the theoretical perspective. The classical example: I may be an eminent physician, and where the social life is concerned, I may have common visions and conducts. The two are not exclusive, on the contrary, they cohabit more often peacefully in the conscience of the individual, unconsciously. «Generalizing the uncommon attitudes would complicate enormously the life of the individual, making it even impossible» [12, p. 86]

IV. For a theory of the Daily Life

1. The thematic horizon (fundamental issues).

Paraphrasing the considerations of the coordinators of the volume *Materialien zur Soziologie des Alltags* [2, p. 8 and the following], *four groups of issues* seem to be of importance:

- the concrete importance for the philosophy to study the daily life;
- the categorical importance of the notion of 'daily life';

- the significance of the everydayness problematic for the elaboration of a comprising philosophical theory;
- the methodological exigencies of a philosophy of the daily life.

2. *The table of criteria.*

With no pretention of a rigorous order, the table of the utilized criteria, implicitly or explicitly, for the configuration of the concept of daily life (current and theoretical assertions), presents itself as follows [v. and 3]:

2.1 *the extraordinarity criterion*: the 'daily life' (also in the sense of the 'people's life') is the ordinary day-to-day (meaningless, valueless, with no consequences whatsoever), the absence of events, the boring, the spiritless versus the festive, the aristocratic, the heroic, the historic;

2.2 *the frequency criterion*: the 'daily life' means the current activities, the routine versus the uncommon, the exceptions;

2.3 *the average generality criterion*: the 'daily life' is the life of most people within the society versus the life of the generically oriented 'minorities';

2.4 *the quality of activities criterion*:

2.4.1 the 'daily life' means particular activities versus the generic ones (the social ones);

2.4.2 the 'daily life' means productive activities versus non-productive activities;

2.5 *the normality criterion*: the 'daily life' means ordinary, natural, non-artificial activities of the people versus artificial, non-spontaneous, scientific;

2.6 *the mediation (natural-social) criterion*: the 'daily life' means the activities which mediate between man's natural, biological and social dimension versus the 'purely' social activities;

2.7 *the officiality criterion*: the 'daily life' means private activities versus public activities;

2.8 *the cognitive-attitudinal criterion*: the 'daily life' (the everydayness conscience) is the non-reflexive, the false conscience, the non-problematic versus the reflexive, the exact, the true.

3. *Research openings.*

3.1 The heterogeneous multitude of the utilized criteria – each one, individually, or grouped, thus framing as many theoretical orientations – proves the *yet problematic* stage of the philosophy of the daily life: the justification of the research field and of our own approach, the phase of the conceptual and methodological clarifications.

3.2 The ‘daily life – everydayness’ theme represents a challenge for the psychologists, the psycho-sociologists, the sociologists, the historians, the philosophers.

3.3 We are in need of an integrative perspective, an axiological, *anthropological-philosophical* one.

3.4 The daily life - everydayness, in terms of ontological reality, category and determination of the human, cognitive direction, essentiality and phenomenality, authenticity and inauthenticity, represents the object of some desirable investigations, in the Romanian culture, too.

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**The Structural Marks of Factory Life
in the Late Period of Romanian Communism
as represented by the 23 August Works**

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Motto:

*They were all connected to the factory
because one didn't have another universe.
So, it was all very simple: through elimination,
lacking another universe, all that was left was the factory.
(R.B., former employee of the 23 August Works)*

Abstract: My paper deals with the structural paradigms of the planned economy in late communist Romania. With the use of an anthropological method of analysis, I try to establish a pattern in the contextualization of daily factory life by using the example of the 23 August Works, chosen because of their symbol-function in the propaganda apparatus of the Ceaușescu regime. The first segment of the paper presents the theoretical considerations of such an analysis, while the second part is a short case study regarding the perceptions of former employees in an enterprise which can be interpreted as a mirror of Romanian society near the end of the communist experiment.

Keywords: industrialism, industrial anthropology, communism, case study, factory, hierarchy, 23 August Works, planned economy, bureaucracy.

Theoretical considerations

The origins of industrial anthropology, as a sub-discipline of anthropology, are found in the psychological and psychiatric studies from the 1930s and the 1940s, of E. Mayo¹, W.L. Warner², and W. Whyte³, about workers and industrial processes. Influenced by the functionalist school of anthropology, Mayo studied in 1927 inside a spinning factory from Philadelphia the relation between productive efficiency and social organization. Subsequently, Mayo developed a series of studies on the relations between employees at the Chicago Electric Company, to see if there could be established a connection between working conditions and the incidence of fatigue. Warner participated, as a consultant, at the Hawthorne project in 1931, creating a classic study about the informal organization of workers, about the implications of peer pressure on the decisions taken by the individual. There have been numerous critiques against the individualistic perspectives that do not see the working space or the industry as a social system. Whyte suggests that these are centred exclusively on “vertical” relations of authority, opposed to those structured on the “horizontal”, which imply relations between employees situated on the same hierarchical level, but in different productive sectors, or opposed to those on the “diagonal”, established between employees on different hierarchical levels, but in different sectors, which implies that there is no authority based conditioning of one group in connection with the other. Likewise, Whyte underlines the fact that psychologists often study human relations in a structural and technological void. The conclusions of these first studies are based on the observation of behavioural patterns in themselves, more than on an analysis of the attitudes and gestures of workers.

¹ E. Mayo, *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization*, New York: Macmillan, 1933.

² W. L. Warner, “Introduction: The committee on human relations in industry”, *The Man in the Middle: Problems of the Foreman, Applied Anthropology*, 4 (2):1, 1945, Special Issue.

³ W. F. Whyte, “Introduction: Human relations in industry”, “Conclusion: Industry and society”, *Industry and Society*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1946, pp. 1-3, 187-198.

As a result of his position in the bureaucratic organization, the worker is socially inserted through a pattern defined by both superiors, as well as co-workers. Ultimately, the worker's contacts with administrators remain limited up to a certain level. The impositions of the hierarchical structuring of systemic decisions contribute to the contextualization of a typology of impersonal relations between the different echelons in a factory. The contacts with superior levels of leadership are limited to impersonal directives or simply orders given through intermediary supervisors of production. For Schneider⁴, the social relations of workers in their environment are few and limited to a certain domain of activity, and this is a direct result of technological development and expanding bureaucracy.

Begging with the 1970s, an entire corpus of theoretical literature brings to discussion a series of central concepts like: *industrialism*, *industry as a societal pattern*, *industrial case study*, *the process of industrialization*, *anthropology applied to industry*.

The *Webster New World Dictionary* (1962) defined industrialism as an "economic and social organization characterized through vast *industries*, machinery production, concentration of workers in cities and capitals". Such a non-empirical approach appears in the sociological study of Lipset and Bendix⁵ about social mobility and the processes that lead towards and hierarchization of specializations in an industrial society. A similar approach can be applied to the studies undertaken by Haire⁶, Van den Berghe⁷ and Warner.⁸ Because of the socio-cultural complexity of the industrial space there is a tendency to develop multiple definitions of industrialism. In this sense, some researchers are operating successive modifications in the explicative area. In most cases, the analysis isn't

⁴ E. V. Schneider, *Industrial Sociology. The Social Relations of Industry and the Community*, Second Edition, 1969.

⁵ S. M. Lipset, R. Bendix, *Social Mobility in Industrial Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.

⁶ M. Haire, "Size, shape and function in industrial organizations", *Human Organization*, 4 (1), 1955, pp. 17-22.

⁷ P. L. Van den Berghe, "Ethnic pluralism in industrial societies: A special case?", *Ethnicity*, 3 (3), 1976, pp. 242-255.

⁸ W. L. Warner, *op. cit.*

directed towards a systematic examination of the qualitative dimensions of industrialism.

Sub-disciplines as industrial archaeology and gerontology⁹ complete the ensemble of industrial anthropology. Usually, the term “industrial” defines a societal typology and it is used in the context of an evolutionary paradigm. Evidently, industrial society is placed in an opposition with other modes of economic production and social structuration, the emphasis being placed on the interdependence between productive technologies and the organizational forms of society.

Faunce¹⁰ observed that the distinctive attributes of an industrial society include, next to the rapid technological and social modifications, an extended division of labour and a segmentation of social experience. Others believe that industrial societies are characterized by certain systems of value, incompatible with those of traditional societies. Geertz¹¹, for example, considers that an industrial society: “may not necessarily involve free enterprise capitalism, but it does involve the decline of magic, the construction of a universal legal and moral code, increased social mobility, the bureaucratization of government, and the isolation of the elementary family from strong extended kinship ties.”

The theoretical models used in these types of analysis start from a series of socio-structural, behavioural, ideational, and motivational categories, extrapolated from European and North American industrial contexts, connected to the historical specificity of mutations that took place in a certain period of time. To strengthen this idea, Moore¹² refutes the habitual models of explanatory scope, in favour of limited alternative sequences of development, in which the generalization of the Western model of industrialism is not possible.

⁹ The term refers to the studying of employee attitudes at later stage, and the aspects of worker retirement in different age groups.

¹⁰ W. A. Faunce, *Problems of an Industrial Society*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1968.

¹¹ C. Geertz, *Peddlers and Princes: Social Development and Economic Change in Two Indonesian Towns*, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 1963, p. 143.

¹² W. E. Moore, *The Impact of Industry*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1965.

In the recent decades, case studies treated industry as being analyzable through the internal structure of factories.¹³ The research has been concentrated on human relations inside a factory, on the flow of labour, on the levels of organizational complexity, and on the relations with the outside world, from the communities in which the production process is located, to the institutions with which there an operational contact. The industrial case studies have a long history in the anthropologic literature. We can mention those undertaken by Mayo, Chapple¹⁴, Gardner¹⁵, Richardson¹⁶, Whyte, that are analogous with the idea that factories were societies in themselves. The analysis was centred on roles, statutes, types of personality, on the axiological structure of communication, on the hierarchal links in the formal division of labour, on the establishment of informal relations between workers, on the operational specialization of women, and last but not least, the integration of ethnic minorities. An emphasis was put on the “scientific” character of the studies, especially when it came to the character of informal relations between co-workers. It became clear that the factory offered the appropriate context for the study of social interaction and dynamics, and for the appraisal of group structuring.

Richardson and Walker¹⁷ have developed a series of important studies regarding private factories, in which they analyzed the levels of stress and the tensions that affected co-worker and worker-administrator interactions. Such a formulation took into account the vertical and horizontal scheme of interconnectivity, as well as the equilibrium of operational attributes inside the system of production. This required a precise definition of the role played by each member of this complex ensemble. The model of functional equilibrium is also underlined in the analytic scheme presented by Gardner. Researchers characterized the

¹³ C. S. Holzberg, M. J. Giovannini, „Anthropology and Industry: Reappraisal and New Directions”, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 10, 1981.

¹⁴ E. D. Chapple, “Organization problems in industry”, *Applied Anthropology*, 1 (1), 1941, pp. 2-9.

¹⁵ B. B. Gardner, *Human Relations in Industry*, Chicago: Irwin, 1945.

¹⁶ F. L. W. Richardson, *Talk, Work, and Action: Human Reactions to Organizational Change*, Monograph 3, Society for Applied Anthropology, 1961.

¹⁷ F. L. W. Richardson, C. R. Walker, “Work flow and human relations”, *Harvard Business Review*, 27, 1949, pp. 107-122.

factory as a micro-society, and, accordingly, described its culture, its symbols and models to trace a satisfactory description of formal and informal social organization.

The rising interest in cognitive processes has generated a number of case studies dedicated to the explanation the links between knowledge, industrial labour, and the structuring of time. For example, Blauner¹⁸, in a study on phenomena of alienation that is implied by factory work, takes into account the way in which the passing of time is acknowledged. The tracking of the clock is the best measure of this type of alienation. There are periods of waiting and rest, but also periods of intense activity. Some studies are focused on the verbal and non-verbal communicational patterns of factory workers. They analyze the jargon, the technical language, and occupational argot. All cohesive groups tend to develop an argot, and professional groups make no exception. For example, a type of aggressive language could be considered normal in a factory environment, as it loses a part of its emotional content. It is a mark of the group and it allows for social acceptance. A worker that is completely integrated inside a work group must have a circumstantially adapted language.

Industrial anthropology is also interested in the theoretical dimension and practical utility of discipline. Researchers that are interested towards an applied analysis are conscious of the fact that they now possess the analytical instruments and conceptual methodologies to make predictions and recommendations of planning for the industrial personnel – workers and administrators, as well as for governments and for institutions interested in the development of solutions for the systemic dilemmas of industrial societies and also for the environmental problems caused by industrial processes.

The first applied studies were led by anthropologists hired by the private sector of the economy, for the purpose of solving work-related conflicts in private enterprises. The anthropologic perspective underlined the importance of cultural studies, the direct observation of behavioural

¹⁸ R. Blauner, *Alienation and Freedom: The Factory and His Industry*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964.

patterns and conceptual holism.¹⁹ Social relations at the workplace are described by Schneider in the terms of a personal, affective relation, as would be the case of an extended family. Of course, situations differ according to special circumstances that suppose higher or smaller degrees of contact in the process of social cooperation. Such “special circumstances” would be, for example, the noise present in some spaces of the factory, which can contribute to an isolation of a segment of the workers.

Industrial workers are at the base of a hierarchy of authority, at the end of a chain of communication and command, their being that of fulfilling productive norms in a limited sphere of action. A conditioning of their position in the organizational chart is represented by the characteristics of connections with persons situated in superior positions in the institutional structure, and also with co-workers. Both types of rapport are delineated in a well defined pattern. Contacts with superiors are limited to impersonal directives, transmitted through the filter of intermediary supervisors.

The bureaucracy presupposes, essentially, a hierarchical organization, in which typologies of interaction are directed on the vertical, descendingly, between superiors and subordinates. The typologies can be varied at a closer inspection. One conclusion remains, though: workers tend to transfer their social priorities inside the space of the factory.

The 23 August Works and late Romanian communism

The case of the late period of Romanian communism is a special one, given that a series of erroneous economic decisions led to an exponential growth of the external debt at the beginning of the 1980s. This happened after a period of apparent sustainable economic growth and a great improvement of the quality of life. The imperative of the fast payment of this cumulated external debt, after the fear caused in the upper echelons of the Romanian Communist Party by the economic crisis and the state of emergency declared in Poland. This produced systemic modifications in the industrial space, meant to increase the productive capacity. In this sense, a

¹⁹ C. Holzberg, M. J. Giovannini, *op cit*, p. 347.

decree from 1981 emphasized the discipline in the state enterprises, and industrial units started to be administered under a quasi-military regime. The propaganda directed for the purpose of increasing the productivity of labour rose in quantity, salaries based on output were introduced in all factories, and minimum income was not guaranteed anymore. Furthermore, enterprises were obligated to accept a global agreement for salary levels.

To understand the way in which people restructured their operational space and activities in connection with the harsh socio-economic realities of factory life in this period, I will offer a series of contextualized examples with the aid of a selection made from a series of interviews²⁰ with former employees of the 23 August Works. This illustrates a small part from the multitude of aspects that were generated by such an atypical industrial space, for its placing in an economic macrosystem with a character determined by ideological justifications, rather than rational choice.

In some sectors of the factory, the nature of accelerated production implied difficult working conditions. The personnel were exposed to the risk of contracting diseases and they had a lowered life expectancy. Workers describe the unsound environment in terms of a harsh experience, accompanied by the adoption of various methods of resistance and protection:

I lived like in Siberia there. The working conditions were very bad. Where I've worked for about 22 years, in this unit, in the summer it was like staying in a greenhouse, we couldn't function because of the heat, and in the winter it was preferable to stay outside. There were some heaters that had no effect. They took them out, too! (N.B.)

It was extremely cold during the winter, I don't have words to describe it... [...] During the summer, it was the exact opposite: a heat that made you feel the air in your lungs was on fire, and this in the processing hall, not in the Foundry or in the Forge, where I, personally, never understood how

²⁰ Some adjustments have been operated on the literary content of the interviews for the purpose of allowing a better legibility.

could those people work in there; the image was hellish. When you would open the doors, the cast iron dust, the smoke from the Foundry, noise... I have never heard such a noise, ever. (B.R.)

The condition of the “hour of Occupational Safety” became a purely symbolic one. It was presented to teams of workers by the foreman or by the team leader once a week. In the last part of the 1980s, only ten minutes were allocated each day. The chart signing of “acknowledging” the risks involved in the condition of the acceleration of production was the equivalent of assuming personal responsibility for work-related accidents:

Theoretically, communism gave some high responsibilities even on paper. [...] It was an individual responsibility of the foreman, but it also had consequences for the section head, and those people at administration learned many tricks to make things less serious [...]. It had only one purpose, for the foreman to be absolved of responsibility. “I’m not the one to blame!” “But who is it?” “I don’t know, but it’s not me!” This was the general atmosphere... [...] It was not a thing of morality. (B.R.)

In the second half of the 1980s, the incapacity of the economic system to show signs of readjustment became evident. The anachronistic technical possibilities and structural inefficiencies of state enterprises did not allow a synchronization of the numbers presupposed by the five-year plans, under the spectrum of massive exports, with results at least partially close to the directives. The paradox of command economies of a Stalinist type can be eventuated in these situations, when the equilibrium between the administrative nucleus and the auxiliary segments was maintained through mutual practices of disinformation. Thereby, the centre imposed exaggerated numbers, without securing details with a functional purpose, while the cadres of plant leadership found compromise solutions to hide the unfulfillment of the plan and, implicitly, to maintain their functions and their implied privileges. The reactions of the employees, faced with an impossibility to achieve the volumes of production set by the plan are inscribed in the area of generalized unhappiness characteristic of the late 1980s:

Towards the end of 1989 they started to cause us much unhappiness. Because of those exaggerated requests, even the [factory] leadership realized that they were forcing the issue. This human force has its own limit. The material part, the machinery was worn out. (M.P.)

They said that the plan was so and so in millions, and in reality it was half. [...] I knew what production was being made, what plan we had to achieve. They said that we have to make three capital improvements, and they reported five. I was a foreman and knew what was needed to be done... How could I have said that I had five instead of three? Did they grow over night? (F.T.)

I couldn't stand the Party because of the lying, that they didn't communicate the reality, they were embellishing. Why say that a production of 10 billion is, in fact, 15 billion? [...] They told me that this is the way it has to be reported, but they didn't tell me the reason... (F.T.)

The improvisational character of the methods used to overcome the productive deficiencies is confirmed by the discussions resulted from the visits undertaken at the plant by Nicolae Ceaușescu, when new plan numbers were being advanced:

Before the visit and after, they met inside the department and they gave directives, for each factory. "Build 1500!" [motor reserves]. And at the next visit: "5000 motor reserves!" He gave the money, the halls were constructed, between the Laboratory and Thermal Intervention, where there had been an empty lot. It became the Toolmaking sector, four new halls for engine production... Eventually, he [Ceaușescu] reached the number of 15.000 engines. This became the plan. We barely managed to build 1.000. (P.I.)

Ceaușescu's visits at the plant (named "the first worker of 23 August Platform"), are a constituent part of the visual and auditory archaeology of late communism. The collective and individual memory relays different aspects from its composition. A propagandistic demarche transformed the

23 August Works into the voting district in which the president of the republic could exercise his right to vote. Ceaușescu visited the plant about two times per year, escorted by a numerous party apparatus. The prestigious character of the enterprise transformed it into a necessary component on the route of official visits of foreign heads of state. Preparations for such events were begun a week before and included an intense activity in which a large part of employees was engaged. The tense atmosphere before Ceaușescu's visits, as well as their result represents an important point in the discourse of symbolic authority manifested through a paternalistic structure of representation:

The visits where very frequent! They meant only one good thing: they made the unit beautiful, because in the moment when a visit was being announced, we didn't have to work in the next week. We painted everything in the Foundry, each cable, pipe, machine, everything. [...] Before each visit we poured tons of concrete, we made alleys through the unit, a good thing, because we got something in the end. (P.I.)

These visits weren't always planned. They could be, once or twice, but there was also the organization of visits made by heads of state, which were followed by a conference at the plant club. The visits started with a general cleanup [...]. It was started from the exterior and unto the inner part of the plant. [...] It was an enormous volume of labour. (M.P.)

There was frenzy when Ceaușescu arrived; he was expected in certain sections, but sometimes it happened that he decided to enter other areas than those which ore planned in advance, and then there were problems. Dismissals followed. (N.B.)

After the visit ended, Ceaușescu met with the Council of Working People, in a conference room with about 200 people and asked different questions regarding production. Afterwards, he drew some conclusions, and he left. After this, promotions and dismissals took place. Either the section director advanced, either he was changed. (R.I.)

The methodological implications of such an analysis are vast. I have attempted in this paper to express a part of the results pertained in a research analogical to the method of analysis proposed by industrial anthropology. The structure of the 23 August Works can be compared to that of a micro-society because of its inner logic of production, consumption, and group contextualization. The plant apparently functioned as a fine tuned mechanism, but a closer analysis leads us to conclude that the inherent operational inefficiency, as well as the class-based tensions, somewhat paradoxical for a socialist enterprise, serve as a mirror of Romanian society in the latter part of the communist system.

Former employees of the 23 August Works, interviewed between 2004 and 2010. The order is that present in the text.

1. R.B., male, 46 years, tester at the Laboratory of Mechanical Trials, worked at the 23 August Works (after 1989, Faur) between 1988 and 1994. Interview taken on June 10th 2008.
2. N.B., male, 78 years, miller at the Mechanical Section, worked at the plant between 1962 and 1990. Interview taken on June 8th 2008.
3. B.R., male, 46 years, turner, appears in the interviews taken to R.B. and N.B., he didn't work in the 23 August Works, but at the 23 August Industrial Platform.
4. M.P., male, 63 years, foreman at the Motors Section, worked at the plant between 1967 and 1997. Interview taken on October 31st 2007.
5. F.T., male, 61 years, mechanic at the Mechanics Section, worked at the plant between 1974 and the time when the interview was taken, July 2010.
6. P.I., male, 83 years, engineer, administrator of the Cast Iron Forge between 1977 until 1998. Interview taken on April 28th 2006.
7. N.B., female, the plant psychologist, she worked in the *Technical, Economic, Social, Administrative* (T.E.S.A.) Department. Interview taken in May 2004.
8. R.I., male, 49 years, metalworker at the Forge Section between 1980 and 1986, assistant secretary in the Communist Youth Union (U.T.C.) of the plant between 1986 and 1988. Interview taken in July 2010.

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Humanist values in everyday moral thinking

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Abstract: The origin of the folk morality in the society of our days is an understudied subject. The present paper is meant to be a contribution in that direction, by positing that a major source of the current folk moral theories may be represented by humanist ideas that have leaked from scientific literature into the common public discourse, influencing finally the moral thinking of laypersons. Several such humanist ideas, with their correspondent humanist values, were analyzed from that perspective, identifying some of their common interpretations in the laypersons' thinking and their consequences in what respects everyday moral implications at an individual and social level. Based on that, a final conclusion was drawn, in accordance with which a misunderstanding of many humanist ideas may represent a dead end for the people trying to solve with them moral issues in their daily life, especially when they are conveniently selected and reinterpreted by those people, ignoring the whole original humanist picture that confers them another meaning.

Keywords: humanist values, folk morality, self-actualization, moral decision

People's decisions and attitudes in everyday life are frequently impregnated with a moral character. Such decisions and attitudes have an inherent moral content, deriving from their implications and consequences for other people that may be affected by them. That is why, some scholars (e.g., Cushman & Young, 2011; Knobe, 2010) have supported the idea that people, in their thinking about moral problems, are like moral philosophers,

supporting implicitly some lay moral theories when they consciously decide in a moral matter. Recently, other scholars (e.g., Banerjee, Huebner & Hauser, 2011; Haidt, 2001) have suggested the view that, actually, ordinary people do not decide in a conscious manner in what respects their moral choices. Their theory is instead that those choices are based on some innate or acquired automatic processes, which are unconsciously activated and used by the usual person, and which are manifested as some form of moral intuitions. As a consequence, in this situation, the significance of a conscious moral judgment, and, implicitly, of its underlying moral theory, is not anymore to determine a moral decision, but only to justify it a posteriori. But, no matter if lay moral theories are supposed to determine moral decisions or only to justify them, it may be an important issue to know more about those theories, and to analyze their consistency.

Reviewing the literature, it was surprising to find out that, actually, very little is known about the moral ideas and theories invoked by ordinary people in moral decision situations. To my knowledge, there is a lack of systematic study in that respect. Until now, I am aware of studies that have touched only some aspects related to the topic of the theories of the everyday moral thinking. Predominantly, those aspects are currently linked with the issue of a hypothetical natural moral law, with the issue if everyday moral thinking is compatibilist or not (Nahmias, 2006; Nahmias, Morris, Nadelhoffer & Turner, 2005; Nelkin, 2007), with the issue of the way moral judgment is changed as a response to the nature of the harm done in a moral situation (Abarbanell & Hauser, 2010; Cushman, 2008), and with the issue of the social representation of what it means to be a moral person (e.g., Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). But there is a need also to investigate systematically the source and the content of the moral theories of the lay people from our current secular society. This could be an important research topic, considering the major implications of those moral theories, and of the moral values deriving from them, at an individual and social level. Although it is not a fact widely and explicitly recognized in our days, the way an individual thinks morally may influence her/his psychological health. For example, social moral injustice or the reaction to immoral deeds may cause intense negative emotions. Those intense negative emotions may

cause, in turn, psychological troubles or even psychological pathologies. From the social point of view, moral issues may lead to social tensions and conflicts.

The usual common belief is that, in traditional societies, moral values and lay theories have a religious source predominantly, although this belief lacks an empirical solid support (Borgwardt, 1987; Evans, 1999; Schafersman, 2011). Even less is known about the sources and the content of the moral values and theories in the current secular society. One possible important source, discussed in this study, is humanistic philosophy and psychology. This hypothesis is based on the observation that social environment is impregnated with humanist values. And those values have leaked into the minds and into the commonsense moral thinking of individuals. But, frequently, they got there without a critical reflection and in a distorted way. The nuances and the vagueness of the original ideas are sometimes bluntly excluded, leaving only extreme interpretations, or clear ideas become sometimes blurred into a cloud of interests. Besides that, by an uncritical taking over of the humanist ideas, people are not aware of their potential self-contradictory nature. The purpose of this study is to reveal some ways in which humanist values are reflected in the usual moral thinking, and to show that their potential self-contradictory nature can generate problematic situations at an individual and social level.

It should be stressed from the start that, as it is known (e.g., Evans, 2005), there is no standard humanist theory or no standard list of humanist values. I selected for the present analysis only some humanist values that apparently are more frequently encountered in the daily life, having a significant moral impact.

Although the self-contradiction and the problematic character of some of the humanist ideas are noted also by other authors (e.g., Bennion, 1994; Schwertley, 1996), those aspects have been investigated so far mainly in the context of the comparison of the humanist stance with the religious stances (e.g., Borgwardt, 1987), in the context of moral education (Likoudis, 1986), or in context of its comparison with the postmodernist view (Clark, 1993). In the present study, those aspects will be investigated by taking into

consideration the way humanist ideas got incorporated in the moral thinking and behavior of the common people.

One humanist theory, originating mostly in the humanist psychology, is the one positing that human nature is intrinsically good, that all humans are inherently good, that they are basically born with the ability to develop a high level of moral behavior through self-actualization (Borgwardt, 1987). That theory, in a popular interpretation, may lead to some unexpected results in the daily life. For example, in the first place, there are people who, believing in the humanist idea that all people have an inborn value, ignore the aspect of its actualization through personal effort. They delude themselves that they already valuable through those inborn qualities and, therefore, they do not have to make efforts to actualize them. For the same reason, they demand, in the same time, an unconditional admiration from other people. In the second place, people who adopt this view in what respects their children tend to favor the convenient *lasses-fair* pedagogy in their education. They distort the humanist idea of an inborn ability for a positive development, deriving from it the wrong idea that, as a consequence, their children do not need guidance in their education, that their good seed would grow without their help as parents. This idea has been echoed even at the level of schools, which were ready to let their pupils to choose freely what they want to learn, assuming that their innate wisdom, their ability to self-actualize, will guide them into the right direction. Accordingly, in their opinion, any interference coming from adults would impede or constrain that assumed self-actualization, the free manifestation of its internal creative autonomous force. This attitude is in contrast with the actual humanist view in which adults should be involved in the process of the young people's value clarification in the moral domain (Borgwardt, 1987). In the third place, there are also people who believe that humans are born with an unlimited capacity of autonomous development or that the power of the inborn human abilities such as reason or will is unlimited, having, therefore, unreasonable expectancies and demands from themselves or from others.

The humanist idea of an intrinsic wisdom and creativity leading to the autonomous actualization of the inherent positive potential of every man

may get translated into the folk belief the every person is allowed to develop personally, from a spiritual point of view, at all costs. So, there are people (e.g., those involved in all kinds on New Age sects) who paradoxically are chasing superior levels of spiritual attainments, ignoring, in the same time, the material and affective needs of their families and friends, or refusing the involvement in the solving of the problems of the society in which they live. They understand the idea of self-actualization as their supreme duty, being ready to invest their time and money, and a major part of their psychological resources in order to obtain so called spiritual achievements. But, for most of them, their endeavor is merely an egotistic quest, meant only to compensate the lack of satisfactions in other domains of life, in which they think that they are unable to attain a higher status, or it is a way to isolate themselves, hiding form life problems that they feel that are unsolvable for them. So, the self-actualization process, as an ego-transcendence, is sometimes popularly understood in a paradoxical way, as a personal development with egoistic accents, in which other people's needs are ignored in the name of an unconstrained expression of their assumed inner self. People who distort in that way the humanist idea of self-actualization by concentrating exclusively on the development of their self, being afraid of any external constraint that might limit its autonomous unfolding, do not notice that, in that way, they may constrain the personal development of other people, impeding the self-actualization process in their case.

The same idea of an intrinsic positive human potential that manifest itself autonomously may lead in the laypersons' thinking to a confusion between what is an authentic, spontaneous action originating in the so-called authentic self and what is an uncontrolled, unrestrained manifestation of every internal impulse, of every whim. Not being aware of the subtleties, vagueness, and problematic character of the notion of authentic self (as different of other parts of the Self), laypersons tend to think that every spontaneous action, anything produced by them, coming from their own person is authentic and should not be repressed by anyone (not by themselves, not by another person). They believe that, otherwise, their positive human potential is impeded in its manifestation, any external or

internal control being perceived as an obstacle or constrain for the free development of their inborn human qualities. In this situation, it is revealed another potential tension in the lay humanist theory originating in the humanist psychology, namely the tension between the glorification of the human reason and exaltation of the spontaneous manifestation of every affective state in the name of authenticity, of an autonomous development of the authentic inner self.

Although, originally, the humanist stance rejected the appeal to any other authority or force that should guide human moral decisions than the human authority, the idea of a mysterious authentic self, with inborn human qualities, which develops in an autonomous manner, pushed the solving of all the problems of the humanist stance at the level of this mysterious entity: the authentic self. In this way, the laypersons that embrace the idea of an authentic self, or of some inborn human qualities coming from nowhere, may replace, in the same time, their traditional religion with another “religion”, a humanist one. As any religion, it uses mysterious entities to explain and to morally guide the personal life. For such peoples, that authentic self may be perceived as a higher unknown instance that manifests itself mysteriously in an autonomous manner, leading their life. It may be perceived as an internal hidden force, like the spiritual forces acting in the traditional religious faiths, which should be found, contacted and followed, letting one’s person into its power.

That humanist branch that praises the value of such an authentic self represented a seed for the development of the transpersonal psychology, which has gained such a high popularity in our days. People striving for spiritual attainments have found in transpersonal psychology a way to satisfy their spiritual needs that is not degraded by outdated traditional religious notions, that has the prestige of an apparent scientific credit. In a society in which science seems to have gained the competition with the traditional religions, such persons believe that they would look foolish to follow traditional religious paths in order to fulfill their spiritual needs. But, by apparently glorifying reason and scientific knowledge, they replace, in the same time, old discarded ideas with new ones, which do not have actually the pretended scientific support. They only mimic scientific ideas

in their form, in their appearance, at the level of spiritual discourse, not having in reality the substance and the content of the proper scientific ideas. So, besides the replacement of the notion of an immortal soul with the idea of an authentic self, with an inherent human moral potential, at the level of the folk spiritual faith, the idea of spiritual divine beings or deities was replaced, for example, with the idea of some spiritual positive or negative energies, with levels of resonance that have a spiritual significance. In that way, people may feel that, by depersonalizing the mysterious powers that are assumed to act in their lives, they maintain the humanist vision that there are no other spiritual authorities higher than the human authority. Paradoxically, the anthropomorphic representations of those powers are seen to be less humanistic than their depersonalization, as if that anthropomorphisation would diminish in some way the human status and powers. In the same time, by positing that those presupposed unknown powers that guide our personal development are like physical energies, they are made amenable to the same kind of control as the one used in their case, by using procedures and techniques that guarantee their successful mastery. But the notion of spiritual energy so frequently encountered in the common public discourse is only apparently like the scientific notion of physical energy. It is mere an analogy through which the scientific prestige of that latter notion is illicitly transferred to the first one. Moreover, the idea of spiritual energy may be attractive because it seems to empower humans by offering them the possibility to control the assumed impersonal forces through their personal force, using reliable, unfailing spiritual techniques. In that way, spiritual practices with an uncertain effectiveness are replaced by popular spiritual techniques (e.g., mediation, relaxation techniques), and priests are replaced by spiritual teachers. But people fail to see that, in that way, paradoxically, their human status is threatened for several reasons. One reason is the fact that, in that way, they treat their humanness, their spiritual substance on a par with physical substances and processes, believing that it can be manipulated in the same way. Depersonalizing the spiritual powers means also a kind of depersonalization of the human being, and, implicitly, her/his dehumanization, by treating her/his person as an object.

In the traditional religions, people were in dialogue with other spiritual beings as persons through the prescribed spiritual practices. But by replacing those spiritual beings with positive or negative spiritual energies, humans may be in relationship with them in the same determinist manner in which they are in relationship with the natural forces. In such a context, the idea of moral decision and of human moral responsibility may be undermined, in the measure that those supposed spiritual energies are perceived to be uncontrollable using the human forces available at a particular time. For example, people may justify their moral failures by claiming that they were victims of the influence of some negative energies, as it is, for example, in the case of the so popular Feng Shui explanations. But, by considering the spiritual human being to be comparable with the human physical body, the result of some mysterious energetic processes, the uniqueness and the value of the human person is diminished. The initial idea of the humanism of an unique and irreducible value of the human nature and of the human person is threatened in that way. There is a very tight link between the idea of humans as persons and humanism. Humanism does not promote depersonalization. But through its popular interpretation as a stance in which reigns only reason and science, rejecting any religious authority, it may give rise to some pseudo-scientific views that have as an ultimate consequence a kind of depersonalization, which leads to the loss of moral responsibility in a way or another. It is hard not to let humanism to be mistranslated into the common thinking of laypersons as a divinization of the individual or as a materialization of the human person, degrading his unique status.

Praising the value of every individual and of every culture, as the product of human creativity, the humanist stance that has incorporated in it the so much claimed modern values of tolerance (Clark, 1993; Schafersman, 2011; Sikes, 1999) and, implicitly, multiculturalism, spread all over the world through mass-media, may lead to other potential problems. For example, Western people with humanist views are claiming that every human culture should be preserved. In the same time, when it comes to ethnic minorities living with them, they require the integration of those minorities in society, in the culture of its majority. But that integration

may mean that only some superficial aspects of the minority culture are preserved, which are extracted from their initial context, losing their meaning. A paradigmatic case in this respect is the Roma minority. Western people are willing to accept, for example, their music, their clothes, their handcrafted products, but not their entire way of life. For an important part of this ethnic minority migration, begging, or theft are a way of living, a part of their culture, a part of their current socialization. But this part is unacceptable for the people from the cultural majorities of many countries. So, in fact, multiculturalism may take the shape of a covered majority censorship of what is culture and what is not for a minority. A cultural minority is allowed to express itself freely as long as the laws of the cultural majority are obeyed. But those laws incorporate the culture and the way of life of that majority. Therefore, the idea of multiculturalism may be mere an unattainable humanist ideal, as long as not every aspect of a culture is tolerable for the members of another culture.

Another important humanist idea is that all people are free to do whatever they want as long as they do not harm other people (e.g., Hillar, 1995). Maybe this humanist idea is the one that is the most frequently encountered in the philosophy of life of the ordinary people. It seems to be for many people of our days a simple rule to morally guide their behavior in society, replacing, in a way, in their minds, the moral golden rule: do what you expect other people to do for you. From a humanist perspective, this replacement was not explicit in the humanist general stance, on the contrary (Bennion, 1994). But, usually, people are heard more frequently invoking the rule stated above instead of the golden rule when they want to justify their behavior. They seem to not realize that the notion of harm is a vague one, leaving the impression that they think that it is a clear matter. It is hard to establish what constitutes harm for a particular person or to determine what harm an action could produce sometime in the future. Ultimately, by our mere existence, we disturb in a way or another the complex environment in which we live and, as a consequence, people living in the same environment may be affected in an unpredictable manner on the short time or on the long time by each action of ours. So, one cannot be certain of the effects of her/his actions. Moreover, the environment in which we live

offers limited resources, and people are engaged in a competition for those resources. As a consequence, a person satisfying her/his needs might impede other persons to satisfy their needs. One can refine the raw rule stated above by saying that one is free to do whatever she/he wants, as long as one do not intentionally harm other people. But with this version, too, the problem of the vagueness of the harm notion remains. Its significance can be consciously or unconsciously manipulated by a person in accordance with her/his situational personal interests. For example, a person can think that no harm is done for her/his neighbors if she/he listens loud music. On the contrary, she/he may think that her/his neighbors enjoy that music as much as she/he enjoys it, and that she/he even is making them a favor by allowing them to listen to that music. Another solution would be to take into consideration social standards for what is generally viewed to be an acceptable or unacceptable harm. But here occurs the problem of the manipulation of the social norm selected as guidance for what might constitute an unacceptable harm. For example, many young people of our days consider that no harm is done if one cheats at a written exam if one is managing to that without being caught by the supervisor. Students generally accept or tolerate their colleagues to cheat, whereas supervisors do not accept that behavior. One reason for which the students do not see that cheating at exams is a moral problem might be the fact that, in their view, the principles of equity and freedom are respected. Any student is free to cheat if the possibility is offered by a negligent supervisor, i.e. they are enjoying the same possibility in an equitable manner. Therefore, they may not feel that a colleague of them who is cheating robs other colleagues in some way, as long as all can cheat if they want to and are offered the opportunity. If there are colleagues who choose to guide themselves taking into consideration the social standards of their supervisor is their problem, their free choice, and they could not claim that they are robbed of something as long as they were free to cheat, too. In the student's minds, the long term negative consequences of cheating are not taken into consideration, especially given the fact that they seem to them to be uncertain. Moreover, they might not consider as relevant for their current decision such negative long term consequences of cheating because their

choice may be viewed by them to be only situational, acceptable for the conditions existing at the moment of their decision, and not affecting future similar choices. They may feel free not to cheat anytime in the future. Furthermore, they might not conceive that their cheating could be a negative example for others as long as others are also free, like themselves, to choose whatever they want, no matter the way other people around them are behaving.

Another humanist idea that has penetrated the moral philosophy of ordinary people is that moral decisions could be taken solely based on personal reasoning and experience (Borgwardt, 1987; Evans, 1999; Kurtz, 2001). Frequently, this idea is encountered in the version of an unlimited trust in the unlimited power of reason to solve all human problems. In the first place, in the lay version of this idea, there occurs a confusion between the power of the personal reason and the power of reason in general. Humanist theories support rather the second view, but people may tend to support the first one, no matter how unreasonable it might seem. In the second place, people tend to ignore that even the second view might be an unreasonable one. Ultimately, in practice, reason may have limits, if not for other cause, at least for the fact that people are limited creatures with limited resources that constrain the access to the unlimited information required in order that the reasoning results to be perfectly certain in what respects the knowledge about the world and ourselves, and the moral value of our actions. So, this second view may entertain an unguaranteed optimism in what respects the possibility of reason to solve human problems, and, consequently, a possible excessive disillusion when one is faced with the limits of the human reason in solving personal and social problems, leading to its rejection altogether.

Ultimately, the humanist idea that moral values of every person depends solely on her/his reason, needs, and experience (Schafersman, 2011), when translated by laypersons, may lead to the idea of a moral relativism, as it was noted also by Schwertley (1996) in what respects the particular case of the secular humanism. In such a situation, ordinary people may tend to think that everything is permissible, and morality is merely a convenient convention adopted temporarily on a personal utilitarian base, not being

supported by immutable transcendental principles. Such a position might contrast with the above-mentioned humanist position that advances the view that moral values are part of an assumed human nature, that every man has an intrinsic positive moral potential.

Many traditional values with their correspondent virtues are praised by humanism supporters, but there is a particular traditional virtue that is not openly and frequently mentioned by the humanist authors: humbleness. But this fact is not strange, given the high value that humanism is placing on the intrinsic goodness of every human being and its reasoning abilities, as it was mentioned above. In the same time, that virtue is considered as essential in many religions. It is paradoxically that humanism, which puts such a high value on human reason, has not found yet a reasonable solution to the contradiction stemming from the idea that a person cannot promote or defend in the same time her/his individual needs and the needs of the other people. The only way out found by the humanist authors was to posit, in an artificial manner, a need to sacrifice personal needs for the sake of others, considering that to be a kind of superior personal need, attained through self-actualization, as a higher source of joy. But common people without a religious commitment do not seem, in a significant proportion, to consider that idea a reasonable one (Hauser & Huebner, 2011), not being ready for a moral self-sacrifice, in spite of the fact that they are ready to embrace other humanist ideas. Furthermore, even in humanist psychology, that idea was viewed to be somehow arbitrary, as an exception introduced merely to justify the fact that there are people who sacrifice the fulfillment of their lower needs for the sake of higher principles and ideas (Neher, 1991). So, that possible part of humanism referring to individual self-sacrifice was not readily translated into the common moral thinking in the version of some praised virtues such as humbleness. On the contrary, the idea of humbleness is currently frequently confounded by laypersons with a situation considered by them to be unacceptable: humiliation, i.e. a situation in which human dignity defended by the humanist stance as it is understood by them is somehow threatened.

The idea of self-sacrifice reveals another internal tension in the humanism as it is commonly translated into the everyday moral thinking.

To sacrifice individual needs and interests for the sake of another individual may mean to undermine the humanist idea of equity. It means that a person renounces to her/his right to be treated in an equal manner in comparison with other people. It may be said that if, by her/his sacrifice, she/he is satisfying a superior need, the problem of equity does not disappear entirely. By allowing to another person to disregard the principle of equity in her/his case, she/he sets a precedent. That gesture may be interpreted by that person as an encouragement to disregard that principle in the future for other people, too, or it may serve as an example for other people. So, the moral decisions from everyday life guided by humanist ideas may encounter not only the difficulty to define what represents harm for another person, but also the problem of how one should react when another person harms her/him. If she/he does not answer according with the humanist principle of equity (which in the common thinking may be translated into verbal formulas like: “All should be treated equally”, “I should be treated equally with other people”), she/he may harm other people indirectly, by setting a precedent.

Finally, the Maslow’s solution of a needs pyramid (Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg & Schaller, 2010; Neher, 1991) may be translated at the level of the laypersons thinking into the raw form of a strict and undifferentiated conditioning of the actualization of the assumed higher needs by the absolute fulfillment of the lower needs. Therefore, the unfulfillment of the basal needs from the Maslow’s pyramid may be invoked as a justification by people who do not want to obey or follow higher moral principles. It may be a ready-made rationalization to excuse a life guided by material interests. Although, in psychology, Maslow’s ideas about a needs pyramid are disputed, and unclear (e.g., Neher, 1991), at the level of folk morality the humanist notion of a needs pyramid get translated into the extreme idea that as long as one does not have assured a “decent” life, or the minimal conditions of her/his existence (food, clothes, a place to live, safety, affection of other people), one is absolved by the duty to follow the moral laws. But then, invoking that excuse, the notion of “decent life” is manipulated through the lenses of the personal interest in order to include supplementary prerequisite conditions in order to get to the higher self-

actualization need. Ultimately, as the material, biological, and affective life is never perfectly assured, no matter the current situation of a man, then the need of the self-actualization may be indefinitely postponed in its activation by trying to follow to the moving target of fulfilling the basal needs. The question of what constitutes a reasonable threshold of fulfillment of a need in order to begin the fulfillment of a higher need was not answered satisfactorily so far at a theoretical and pragmatic level. There is always a subjective and moving threshold for every person. Moreover, that threshold is settled by comparison with other people. What is “decent life” for a citizen of an undeveloped country is not a “decent life” for the citizen of a developed country. By accepting the invocation of the conditioning of the moral behavior by the fulfillment of the basal needs, at the social level it is admitted that such a behavior is not expected from everyone and that that behavior is merely a luxury afforded by a minority of people, who were able to fulfill all their basal needs. Besides the fact that the threshold of the fulfillment of basal needs is a moving target, the chances to get to the level of self-actualization may be extremely low, especially in a society with limited resources offered in order to satisfy the basal needs of its members. Moreover, if, in order to satisfy their basal needs, people are involved in a competition for the existing limited resources, they may manage to satisfy them by provoking a harm to those who are defeated in that competition, or by ignoring moral laws, as they do not afford the luxury to obey them. So, when they finally get to the level of the self-actualization need, the moral purity of this status will be inevitably spoiled by the immoral path that lead to that status. So, the idea of needs pyramid may seem to be in everyday life as self-contradictory from a moral point of view.

As a conclusion, it might be said that the humanist ideas that were gathered in the common philosophy of life, and moral lay theory are mere distorted pieces forced together into an incoherent whole, in which they might lose their meaning. But that incoherence is not perceived as such by the laypersons, because, in everyday life, a person’s worldview is never considered in its entirety in order to guide her/his moral decisions. Usually, only some humanist values or ideas are used for a particular moral decision. Therefore, there are very few occasions that provide the opportunity to

reflect on the relationship between several humanist ideas. So, people may be tricked into believing that the humanist hope is more than what Baron von Münchhausen was trying to do, rescuing himself from a mud pool by pulling up his own hair. A misunderstanding of many humanist ideas may represent a dead end for the people trying to solve with them moral issues in their daily life, especially when they are conveniently selected and reinterpreted by those people, ignoring the whole original humanist picture that confers them another meaning.

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Morality and Philanthropy: A Discourse

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Abstract: This paper examines the nature of morality in human society, that is, what ought to be done to alleviate the sufferings of others in the society and give a helping hand in situations of necessity and empathy. This shall be done by theorising on the issue of philanthropy, which might be equalled to altruism- a theory of conduct that aspires to the good of others as the ultimate end for any moral action. This is a form of support being rendered to individuals, societies and groups; looking at it not only from the normative angle but also examining and thematising it from meta-ethics – language discourse and analysis.

Keywords: Morality, philanthropy, language discourse, society, altruism, modern world, ethics

Introduction

Ethics as a field in philosophy could be examined in three different but related senses. In one sense, it signifies a general pattern of ways of life. It is in this sense that we can discuss of ethical thinking that seeks for principles or reasons upon which moral positions could be justified. In another sense, it signifies a set of rules of conduct; here, we discuss about ethics of profession such as medical ethics, legal ethics among others. In the last sense, the word is used to denote inquiry about ways of life and rules of conduct. In this sense, ethics is a philosophical study of right and wrong

modes of behaviour, the natural meaning of moral predicates, propositions, values and judgments. It is also the concern of meta-ethics to clarify moral terms as well as the analysis of the structure of moral claims.

In this paper, our study shall be concerned with the third sense of ethics, that is, inquiry about ways of life towards the clarifications of moral terms and predicates. There are basic questions, which call for attention as some are stated thus: why should anyone be moral when being moral is contrary to self-interest? Is anyone, as a matter of fact moral when being moral is not to his advantage and so, why? Can anyone know what is right and if so, how? It is the first question that will catch the attention of this paper in its relation to the issue of philanthropy.

To begin with, there is the need for justification for morality and unless this is so, then, it is irrational to be moral when it is disadvantageous to be so. More often than none, morality is not to the agent's advantage. Unless reasons could be given to persuade us to be moral in circumstances where morality is disadvantageous, then, morality would appear to make no sense. Immanuel Kant has attempted to justify morality when he claimed that wrong-doing is acting in the way contrary to reason; he based his conclusion on the categorical imperative. Thus, when we do what is right, we obey the categorical imperative and when we do whatever is wrong, we disobey it. It is contrary to reason to act in opposition to categorical imperative and he was of the view that the effort to be irrational is at once an effort to be immoral.

It is at this point that morality and philanthropy would be examined. In the process of doing and or achieving this set-objective, our discourses shall follow thus: introduction that has already begun, conceptual clarification of morality and philanthropy in which major parts will be alluded to altruism in connection with egoism whether ethical or psychological; morality and philanthropy in human situation and the conclusion.

Morality – An Analysis

Morality is either wholly or almost wholly concerned with relations among men, with how they ought to behave toward each other, with what

general rules governing relations man and man, a society ought to adopt. In Hobbes' words, the province of morality is limited to those qualities of mankind that concern their living together in peace and unity. Morality is the study of human acts by which we call them right or wrong, good or evil. Fagothey has this to say about morality that it is a common term covering the goodness or badness of human act without specifying which of the two is meant. The opposite of moral is properly unmoral (1959:112). It is as a result of this that the need for morality arises because men are social animals. The human baby survive without the help of its parents; and as a small human group such as the family needs mutual support and co-operation for defence against other groups, against other animals and against the forces of nature.

Along with the direct and indirect need for the company of his fellows, man has tendencies that disrupt the society on which his life and happiness depend. When goods are scarce, his limited generosity and his desire to preserve his own life lead man into competition with his neighbours. And if these motives get the upper hand, there results what Hobbes called a condition of war in his *Leviathan* that:

... and such a war as is on every man against every man ... in such conditions, there is no place for industry because the fruit there is uncertain; and consequently no culture of the earth, no navigation nor use of the commodities that may be imported by seas, ... no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear and dangers of virulent death; and the life of man is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short (Kolak CD Rom).

As stated above on the social nature of man, morality is a social enterprise, not just a discovery of the individual for his own guidance. It exists before the individual and it is not social merely on the sense of being a system governing the relations of one individual to others. Frankena writes that morality is sometimes defined as an instrument of society as a whole, as is individual, family or social class cannot have a morality or moral action-guide of its own that is different from that of the society (1973:6). He continues saying that morality must be contrasted with

prudence; it may be that prudence and morality dictate some of the same conduct, for example, honesty (1973:7).

In the analysis and interpretation given to Freudian terms, morality and prudence are both attempts to regulate the *id*; but while prudence is simply a function of the reality – principle in the *ego*, morality is the function of the *super-ego*, which does not think merely in terms of getting what is desired by the individual *id* or even in terms of salvaging the greatest balance of satisfaction over frustration for it. To say that morality will always be needed is to take one step towards explaining why it originally was needed. Moral judgment and concepts are creations of human thought. It was Hobbes in his *Leviathan* that claimed that both morality and the apparatus of the state arose out of a need for protection. It is as if he said, our ancestors had signed a social contract giving up certain liberties in return for security. Kupperman says that the protection that morality and the state provide is not absolute. Morality cannot function unless the majority of people behave morally most of the time, and something similar is true for our system of justice (1983:5). Nowell-Smith notes that there are three kinds of motives, which lead men to act morally, that is to say, the moral rules of their society. They are as follow: enlightened self-interest, we obey moral; rules even when it is irksome or inconvenient to do so (1972:150). He furthers that respect for rules – we are creatures of habit and have been trained to obey the rules of our society from our earliest years . . . other regarding motives are included love, sympathy, benevolence, and a respect for the rights of others (1972:150-151).

Morality examines what ought to be done and ought not to be done. And for the singular reason can be applied as social factor, morality, then seems to have two countenances. Kupperman says that one is the countenance of strict demands on oneself and the other is outward-directed consciousness (1983:4); this emphasises on the dynamism of morality as a concept in a society of men. Hence, morality is of greater importance in the day – to – day activities of man in his relations to others. Therefore, it is at this point that philanthropy would be examined.

Philanthropy (altruism) and Human Values

The term 'philanthropy' is not as controversial in meaning as the motive behind it. It is seen as the practice of helping the poor, the less-endowed as Rawls (1971:76) affirms in his book, *A Theory of Justice* and those in need especially by giving money and other valuable things. It can also be seen as an active effort to promote human welfare by the dispensing or receiving aid from funds set aside for humanitarian purposes and set-objectives. Philanthropy is said to have emanated from the Greek words, *philo* and *tropo* meaning love of mankind and it includes concept of voluntary giving by an individual or group to promote the common good. Fletcher (1966:15) argues that there is nothing that is good or bad in itself but he moves forward to say that love is always good and that love can make us to break moral principles in order to satisfy some obligations. Here, it should be noted again that altruism as a philosophical term would be examined to reflect what philanthropy is all about.

Altruism as a philosophical term may be mostly seen in opposition to egoism (ethical). Egoism rests on the hypothetical that morality could be explained ultimately in terms of self-interest. The word is sometimes misused for egotism, the overstressing of one's own worth. Egoist doctrines are less concerned with the philosophic problem of what is the self than with the common notions of a person and his concerns. For the egoist, the apparent conflicts between the demands of morality and of personal gain are merely conflicts between different aspects of our self-interest – indirect against direct. A general explanation of morality and interest might be stated that all our benefits come from the existence of a stable society. Frankena characterises ethical egoism as an ethical theory and not as pattern of action or trait of character, and is compatible with being self-effacing and unselfish in practice (1973:17). He further considers two tenets of ethical egoist thus, an individual's one and only basis obligation is to promote for himself the greatest possible balance of good and evil; and second, even in making second and third person moral judgments, an individual should go by what is to his advantage (1973:18).

In any case, ethical egoism is advocating prudentialism as the whole story about our moral life. Here, Butler says that prudentialism is by no

means . . . the moral institution of life even though it is a much better guide than passion (1949:16). And even it is allowed that prudence is a virtue and that we do have a moral obligation to consider our own welfare, which is debatable, it is hard to believe that there are no other moral virtues or obligations that are independent of our own welfare and prudence. This argument seems paradoxical because for one thing; in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, self-love, even of an enlightened mind has generally been regarded as the essence of immorality. Thus, the ethical egoist may, of course, reply that he is preaching a new moral gospel, and that we cannot simply take our prevailing moral ‘gospel as true or as a basis for rejecting his, without begging the question (1973:19).

Altruism in ethics is a theory of conduct that regards the good of others as the end of moral action. The term in French *altruisme*, derived from Latin *alter*, “other”) was coined in the nineteenth (19th) century by Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism, and adopted generally as a convenient antithesis to egoism. As a theory of conduct, its adequacy depends on an interpretation of “the good.” If the term is taken to mean pleasure and the absence of pain, most altruists have agreed that a moral agent has an obligation to further the pleasures and alleviate the pains of other people. But critics have asked, if no one has a moral obligation to procure his own happiness, why should anyone else have an obligation to procure happiness for him? Other conflicts have arisen between immediate pain and long-range good, especially when the good envisioned by the doer does not coincide with the vision of the beneficiary.

How altruistic should we be? That is, to what degree should we come to give everyone’s interest, including our own, equal weight? And secondly, how should morality be shaped and modified in the light of the answer to the first question? Kupperman answers the questions thus: the question of how altruistic we should be touches both on intrinsic values and on consequences, . . . that we must ask whether, in general, it is intrinsically preferable to be an entirely altruistic person than to be someone who has some attachment and is prepared to favour his or her own interest or the interest of loved ones (1983: 143).

Rachels in *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (1995:62) explains human nature being what it is, people will respond to the needs of others only when there is something in it for themselves. Pure altruism is a myth – it simply does not exist. Almost every system of morality recommends that we behave unselfishly. It is assumed that people ought to take into consideration the interest of others in the society, even if it means forgoing some advantage for ourselves. But in egoism, each person is so constituted to the point that he would look for his own interest. Hence, Rachels reaffirms that it is unreasonable to expect people to behave “altruistically.” (1995:62). There would surely exist in the society of men, effects of philanthropy if it carried out. Thus, human relations clearly have to change if one of the parties is as detached, and two things are important at this point as Kupperman writes that:

... something to be lost and something to be gained. What will be lost is warmth ... which many people find very satisfying ... what will be gained is a cool relaxation, which removes the clinging and possessiveness that normally attend close relationships ... (1983:144)

So, there is connection among those in a society because of the social nature of human beings, therefore, the connection between morality and philanthropy would be dealt with in its relation to human situation and or human condition.

Morality and Philanthropy in Human Condition

The central claim of altruism is negative; that is, that the explanation of morality cannot be reduced to self-interest. This could be restated more positively in the sense that an interest in other people for their own sake is a necessary condition of morality. While this statement of fact is no doubt true, it does not support the stronger claim that a desire to help others is a sufficient condition of morality. From Hobbes, the psychological problem has been a consistent issue, that why should men do other thing than act to their own immediate advantage? Macintyre says, either it suggested that there is an independent source of altruism in human nature, or it is

suggested that altruism is merely disguised self-love (1980:185-186). And if the above is accepted, then, Loudfoot's article on *Morality and Human Situation* (1975:116) points to the fact of human condition that:

The view that the connection between morality and the human situation is synthetic might be stated in general terms ... then, people causally must accept a set of rules with certain features – the features being that they contain at least an indirect reference to the human condition.

Altruism acknowledges correctly that the form of moral behaviour appears generally to be other-regarding. But egoism has a long history traceable to Hobbes' emphasis on "desires and aversions" (Loudfoot, 1975:116) and to Bentham's denunciation of "ascetism" (1970:17). Altruism, according to Cox (1981:190), without a practical sense is naïve; egoisms without a social reference is vicious. Kurt Baier holds in his account of the content of moral rules that observations of moral principles should be for the good of everyone alike (1980:200); a moral rule is for the good of everyone alike if it furthers the common good. Few rules, however, writes Lonnes, will further the common good of everyone, but even if a rule does not further the common good of everyone . . . it may still be in the interest of everyone alike (1975:138). All these analyses suggest that morality ought to guide men in society to be altruistic or rather philanthropic no matter how disadvantaged it may be.

An act in human society is to help ameliorate the conditions of the worse-off and hence, moral rules should in fact affect the way people behave in accordance with the experiences of humanity in the search to helping others. An interpretation is to effect that the point of morality is to better the human situation. And due to the fact of human experience, it is appropriate to speak of William James' moral relations to emphasise the complexity and variety of morality in actual experience (1956:190). Thus, acting morally in the pursuance to allay the bad conditions of other fellows in the society does not involve genuine sacrifice for the purely unselfish man, this person is one who considers the basis needs and wants of his fellows equally with his own (1975:142). The view behind this assertion is

that philanthropy from moral point of view ought to be to the satisfaction of the less-privileged in the society and self-happiness of the philanthropist/altruist as asserted earlier that:

... something to be lost and something to be gained. What will be lost is warmth ... which many people find very satisfying ... what will be gained is a cool relaxation, which removes the clinging and possessiveness that normally attend close relationships ... (Kupperman, 1983:142).

The term, morality is taken to mean those systems of obligations usually voluntarily enforced, which members of groups adopt and impose upon themselves and each other that systems ordinarily take the form of rules. Philanthropy is an expression of voluntarily enforced that affects and ameliorates the human situation. Taken the excerpt of Loudfoot again on the interpretation of the effect of morality, he is of the opinion that the interpretation could either be in the weaker or stronger forms but the essence of it all is to better the human condition. He writes:

In the weaker form, ... the agent or agents who adopt it must believe that its implementation will ameliorate the human situation ... In the stronger form, the interpretation is to the effect that the implementation of a rule must in fact ameliorate the human condition before the rule can be a moral rule or, in other words rules by definition better the human condition (1975:113).

As an instance, it is believed in some quarters from this part of the world (Nigeria) that what late Abiola did during his life time was to benefit the lives of so many, and in the development of sports in Africa. This is one form of philanthropy! We might consider another instance in the person of Aliko Dangote who is establishes many firms and companies where thousands of people benefit and get their daily bread. This is another form, although, working and sweating for what they gain from the 'altruist' Dangote, which is quite different from that of Abiola. A pertinent question that needs to be answered here is: which of these two instances is altruistic in nature and which is egoistic? One might assert that the second instance is

more altruistic in nature because there are degrees of altruism explaining it from the greatest good to the greatest number of people - utilitarianism. An intention to be famous could be attached to that of Abiola in that sense and even in the line of politics, later manifested itself. This form is not different from what obtains in psychological egoism – an argument from human nature. Here, Frankena is of the view that:

It is usual for the psychological egoist to say, “yes, we do things for others, but we get satisfaction out of doing them, and this satisfaction is our end in doing them ... hence, even in doing altruistic things for others, we are seeking own good (1973:21).

Also, he says that an egoist may reply, “I always do what I want to do, even when I do something for something else; and the satisfaction that results is my satisfaction. So, I am the centre of it (1973:22).

Cox examines that to be moral, defensive behaviour must have two additional characteristics: it must be social and intelligent (1981:187). This is the point where the latter instance is more philanthropic because of the gains people get through the establishments, although as stated earlier, labouring for whatever they have. Hardly could it found anywhere in which an action could be termed in totality as altruistic. This following example should not be a shock to religious fanatics in Christendom as the coming of Christ to be the saviour and redeemer of the world could also be termed as psychological egoism. One might ask: how and why? The *parable of the Lost Sheep* gives a vivid experience of this form of egoism in its totality by saying that his (Jesus) Father in heaven will be most happy seeing a repentant sinner coming back to ‘behold the grace of God’. The happiness that is derived by Jesus and his ‘Father in heaven’ from the parable is a form of psychological egoism as the two are at the centre of it as Cox would affirm; and Kuppermann that what will be gained is a cool relaxation, which removes the clinging and possessiveness that normally attend close relationships.

Conclusion

This paper has been able to examine the relationship between morality and philanthropy in human situation. From the different analyses examined and discussed in this paper, it has been argued that no action or an act of man could be totally devoid of egoism self-interest. It appears most times that there is a form of contradiction when morality is interpreted reflecting self-interest and general apprehension of morality as altruistic respectively. Here, Cox says, “the contradiction is only apparent, and the tendency to limit the meaning of morality to altruism results from a failure of method in which only one aspect of moral phenomena is considered instead of viewing moral systems as wholes” (1981:188). For Sahar Akhtar (2008: 5), his position seems different saying that:

While the question of whether there is any altruistic motivation is uncontroversial—it seems obvious that people do have desires to help others or, more generally, desires for the improved welfare of others—the answer to the question of whether there is genuine altruistic motivation is far less obvious. That is, at least if we maintain the standard definition of genuine altruistic motivation. This is because a persistent problem for the existence of genuine altruism has been that critics can always seemingly reduce an altruistic motivation to seemingly egoistic motivations — to prudential motivational explanations such as “she’s kind to them because otherwise she would not have relationships with them,” or, especially, to hedonistic motivational explanations such as “he gives to charity because it feels good to give to charity,” and “he feeds his children because it hurts to see one’s children go hungry.

Sahar’s argument is based on the view-point that altruism will not be a problem if we maintain the standardised form of altruism, which is that under the standard view, and in line with common belief/desire folk psychology, what triggers or causes an altruistic preference is a belief, such as the belief that someone has been harmed. The combination of belief and desire constitutes a complete motivation to act (2008: 26). This opinion differs from the egoism, which emanates from hedonism that man does whatever he wants based on what constitutes happiness for him.

The arguments of standardised form of altruism and reductionist altruism seem to be the issue in this contemporary age as there are divergent opinions concerning the discourse of altruism. Even the thesis of standard altruism, which is that of motivation, cannot negate the fact that human beings will continue to be enterprising in whatever they will not derive joy from. This does not seem to say one is expecting “a good turn deserves another” theory but that the joy derived is a form of psychological egoism or what Sahar calls reductionist altruism. A hypothetical example could be laid here to examine the above position. Arguments had been laid that late Mother Theresa of Calcutta was motivated to assisting the poor and the needy without any returns from. But it should be pointed out clearly that there was an intent of ‘making heaven’, which to her is a corporal work of mercy that must be done before one gets the reward of heaven; and the condition of sainthood in the Catholic Church. This clearly shows that altruism is psychological egoism in disguise! A pertinent question arises: does altruistic idea depend on kinship and or on reciprocity? If it is, then, what form of morality does it possess? Could these forms of behaviour be the basis of human ethics? It should be clearly known that if morality is based on kinship and reciprocity, does that lead to what philanthropy (altruism) is? This cannot be more than egoism; at least, one is at advantage of whatever he does. Or rather that the individual is at the centre of whatever is being done and carried out.

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**Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Accattone* and the Condition of the Underclass
Heretical Semiotics as a Method of Overcoming Dialectical Materialism**

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Motto:

*There's no lunch or dinner or satisfaction in the world
equal to an endless walk through the streets of the poor,
where you must be wretched and strong, brothers to the dogs.*
(Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Lines from the Testament*, 1969)

Abstract: My paper presents the connection between the ideological structure of Pasolini's first film, *Accattone*, and the heterodox nature of his theoretical discourse. The "heretical semiotics" which he alludes transforms an apparent dialectical materialism into a form of abstracted extrapolation of symbols from objects, characters, and actions. I suggest that the spatial contextualization of these ontological elements plays a key role in the negation of a supposed fatalism in Pasolini's work, and in the affirmation of the validity present in his disseminating theoretical justification of social praxis as a means to change an unacceptable reality. Beyond these considerations, I have also touched upon the sacredness implied by Pasolini's use of technical means to suggest an iconographic stacticness of images and actions, and to establish what I consider to be the "visual archaeology" of a passing world: that of the borgate – the marginal townships in which the underclass lives.

Keywords: Pasolini, *Accattone*, borgate, ideology, Marxism, lumpenproletariat, underclass, alienation, semiotics, Christianity, sacred, profane, consumerism, spatialization.

Any discussion regarding Pier Paolo Pasolini and his work must necessarily start from an understanding of his philosophical system. A placement in the category of a Marxist world view will not suffice. This would imply a reductionist approach that doesn't take into account the latest developments in the field of critical theory. The apparent ambivalence of Pasolini's thought represents, in a meaningful way, a singular reflection of the macro-systemic changes that took place in post-war Italy. The two decades of Fascism tried, in vain, to apply the old Northern project of centralization and uniformization on the coordinates of socio-economic corporatism, an attempt to rationalize and readjust a capitalist system that lacked the necessary mechanisms of equilibrium. In fact, the penetration of this mode of production was late and unequal in social and geographic terms, and Italy suffered such a cleavage on the northern-southern axis, that after the First World War, even a part of the liberal elite supporter the cause of Mussolini as a result of the fear caused by rising communist and anarchist movements. Pasolini was born in this world of contradiction and volatility. Beyond the coincidence of his birth in 1922, the year of the March on Rome, in one of those rare ironies of history, his father, Carlo Alberto Pasolini, a lieutenant in the Italian army and a devoted fascist, was responsible for the saving of Mussolini's life when the young anarchist Anteo Zamboni attempted to assassinate him at the anniversary of the March, in October 1926. The intellectual development of educated young people in such a society doesn't leave room for apathy and neutrality. In this sense, there are probably only two alternatives: a collaboration with the regime and the commitment to the values it implies, or an opposition in action and theoretical contestation. Pasolini chose the second option in its radical form by propinquity with the Communist Party after the war.

This relation, favoured by his attraction to Antonio Gramsci's work, from a literary, rather than theoretical outlook in the first phase (Pasolini admitted: "Sono un marxista che ha letto poco Marx. Ho letto di più

Gramsci”)¹, was nevertheless marked by mutual rejections and critiques. Beyond the problems caused in this sense by Pasolini’s homosexuality, the degree of support which he invested in the causes of the party fluctuated because of his repudiation of any dogmatic forms of thinking. The sterile theorization of the human condition and the undermining of the individual as an ontological reality, to a series of abstract concepts connected to a historically deterministic class struggle and to an a priori intrinsically materialistic understanding of human relations and experiences, represent, in Pasolini’s entire work points of deconstruction. They are constantly challenged, even though he himself, up to a certain point, used discursive segments from their content in various public appearances. It is thus important for us to perceive his entire work as a continuum of heterodox, even transgressive ideas and concepts, as a series of literary and visual representations, connected to a certain personal understanding of Marxian eschatology, situated under the paradoxical spectre of Christian symbolism, and simultaneously adapted to the challenging metamorphosis of the Italian socio-economic system.

In this sense, the early pasolinian works, from the novel *Ragazzi di vita*², published in 1955, to the approach of the possibilities offered by the manifestation of ideas in the visual space through the film *Accattone* in 1961, represents an ideologized discursive unit of and not the fragments of the gradual contextualization of the theory of social critique. Their form is a primary one through a semiotic lens, but in the same time presents a coherent structuring of the analytic justification in connection with an incipient form of post-Marxism and with the existential implications of Christian theology. This reunion of ideational concepts opposed through the means of rapport to materiality would apparently be contradictory, but Pasolini’s method detaches the work from abusive analogies precisely through its anti-dogmatic character. What seemed to be in that certain moment a problematic approach, both from the perspective of the right and also the left, may be understood today as a manifestation of a freedom of

¹ Wallace P. Sillanpoa, “Pasolini’s Gramsci”, *Modern Language Notes*, The John Hopkins University Press, vol. 96, nr. 1, ian. 1981, p. 121.

² Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Ragazzi di vita*, Torino: Einaudi, 1972.

analysis and transposition into a literalized³ structure of concepts which are connected in their desiderative essence. In my opinion, the divergent factor is represented by the discursive structure that presents apparently different value systems. For Pasolini, the Marxist dialectics seems to be a form of eschatological sublimation, and this is why the concept of internalized transformation and of salvation which is essential to Christianity doesn't appear to be different in the area of abstracted and transcendent projections of human extrapolations operated from social experiences and material constructs. In the case of Marxism, the ascending transformation of the human being is stage-based and determined by external factors with an economicistic character, and therefore it can be extrapolated that an external materiality of "things in themselves" can transform the inner one, seen as a neurological synaptic reaction, and perfectible in content. However, Christianity brings the option of free choice, cancelling the materialistic paradigm from the spectre of possibilities to transcend the evil in human nature and to return to the primary essence of divine intrinsicness.

By transgressing a prefactual "logical" order of ideas, Pasolini imposes a form of "heretical semiotics"⁴, a method of extraction, dissemination and exposition of hidden meanings, but attached to our perceptions about the surrounding world. Although lacking in certain constitutive elements with a deterministic character, Pasolini's Marxism is evident in the conditions in which his own understanding of reality is inscribed in the marks of an encrypted system of culturally determined symbols. But the factor that transforms his approach into an abstracted intellectual effort is the belief that the only method to validate knowledge is to accept that something in the existing object, connected to materiality, surpasses the mediation attempts of received meanings.⁵ In my opinion, this transfer of interpretative value from the simple material perception of the object towards a form of semiotic rearrangement of the symbols implied by

³ In *Accattone*, the image tends to become an annex of the narrative structure, it is a written word that comes to life through a spectral technical process.

⁴ Fabio Vighi, *Traumatic Encounters in Italian Film. Locating the Cinematic Unconscious*, Bristol and Portland: Intellect, 2006, p. 25.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

the contextual implications of the object and by the nature of the receiver, represents one of the elements that confers to Pasolini's philosophy a special enforcement of an unconventional rapport to the Marxian outlook.

The aimless wonderings of Accattone and the characters that surround him, all belonging to the underclass, or the lumpenproletariat according to the Marxist definition used by Pasolini himself, through the borgate, the squalid townships located at the edges of Rome, a dantesque labyrinth of poverty and socio-economic marginalization, are exposed through a fragmented narrative, punctuated by an axiological spectrum of symbolic suggestions. Possessing the rare quality of allowing differentiated levels of perceiving the degrees of profundity in meaning, the work allows a type of "visual archaeology" made possible by the method of analysis that takes into account the considerations which I have previously presented. With this understanding, the unity of concepts like: Marxism, Christianity, salvation, underclass, alienation, capitalism, and so forth, is not a simple allegorical game with a purely poetic function. Nor is it a form of baseless intellectual rebellion on the part of Pasolini.

Avoiding the trap of ideological pragmatism, Pasolini's manner of creating can be perceived as an attempt to bring a mystical communion with the world that he knows will disappear. Is the universe of Accattone a Purgatory or an Inferno of Dante? Probably no means of interpretation can situate a statement in the domain of absolute truth. Surely, Pasolini was not a relativist. For him, truth, as an autonomous entity, possessed an objective value; otherwise he would not have adhered to a certain mode of interpreting society and the human being. What offers the illusion of relativism is the apparent contradiction between spiritual and political convictions, and aesthetic finalities. The central truth claim in this work is the fact that the human being is intrinsically valuable in itself, and its dignity must be preserved by all means. From the aesthetic options presented above, I tend to favour the second one, the possibility of an allegorical Inferno. The Purgatory is an uncertain, ambiguous, enigmatic space in its essence and so, it presupposes a temporary existential condition. The inherent finality of the ontological condition doesn't represent an integral part of the Purgatory's character, but only the fluctuating, bordering

space localized between the two possibilities of existence for the soul: the material one, through embodiment, complementary to the physical body, and the pure, liberated one, happening timelessly in what could be called the sacred essence, in communion with God, or even in the state of estrangement, as a result of a conscious rebellion through sin.

An existence deprived of the communion with God represents for Pasolini a conditioning toward suffering. His conception, still, is different through the assumed dialectical method. Although Marxist by the methods described, and, of course, at the declarative level, this world seems to be, in his view, the mirror in materiality of the sacred and eternal one. The substance dualism of the condition of alienation intervenes at this point, in conformity with the context implied by the parallel between Marxist presuppositions about materiality and the theological implications for the condition of the human being. Thus, in Pasolini's view alienation, of course, has a socio-economic component, but its purpose is, beyond the arguments of class discourse, the transformation of the members of the underclass in the paradoxical annexes of the sacred, in the condition in which they are placed in a state of "ontological ignorance".⁶ This supposes a lack of necessary consciousness in the process of understanding one's own alienation and a life spent without cognitive means of self-reflection. This involuntary innocence is what confers a certain detachment from the worldly in the case of Accattone and that of the typological characters surrounding him. It is clear to me that Pasolini's early works are created under a mystical spectrum, and he himself acknowledged the fact that the sacredness of the film came from „nel modo di vedere il mondo: nella sacralità tecnica del vederlo”.⁷ Beyond the poetic dimensions of Pasolini's statement, this „technical sacredness” resides in the iconographic character of the scenes, in the imposing of a staticness of the camera, and in the frontal placement of the characters and the environment. The abrupt

⁶ Armando Maggi, *The Resurrection of the Body. Pier Paolo Pasolini from Saint Paul to Sade*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009, p. 45.

⁷ Pier Paolo Pasolini, "Confessioni tecniche", *Uccellacci e Uccellini*, Milano: Garzanti, 1966, p. 45, apud Robert S. C. Gordon, *Pasolini: Forms of Subjectivity*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 207.

montage has, in its own right the role of setting these segments as the recovery, in the sense of a visual archaeology, of an immediate material reality, whose long term statute seems to be uncertain. Another line of interpretation could be that the apparent abnormality of *Accattone*'s spatial construct is rather a paradoxical island of normality in a world dominated by gradual dehumanizing processes.

In this manner, the miserable and dangerous life of Accattone can be interpreted as a rebellion from the sacred space that already surrounds him, as well as his social class. I think that for Pasolini this existential option of Accattone, to deny oneself the common values of society, is a result of choice, but more importantly of socio-economic conditioning. Nevertheless, it presents itself as a refutation of the options characteristic of the other social classes, working in common, in apparent systemic functionalism, for stability and to negate the classic Marxist paradigm. The stability is in reality only the automation of production, an indefeasible alienation of people from the essence of their own nature, and also from those around them, and last but not least, a maximal fetishization of consumption.

Taking these facts into consideration, it would surely be an error to place *Accattone* in the sphere of Neorealism, then at its zenith, even though the subject would recommend it for such a placement. Pasolini does not treat subjects and ideas in the manner of Cesare Zavattini, one of the main theorists of Neorealism. What some critics see as the preponderance of existential fatalism, a conscious negation of political solutions⁸, in fact gives the film a possible function of contestation directed against the values of Neorealism. Pasolini undertook this critique against the theoretical limitations which characterized the Neorealist movement and a surpassing of typological representations and of reductionist solutions. He didn't consider that the simple "proletarianization" of the marginals would automatically bring a desirable finality, but this doesn't permit the assumption that political action had lost its potentiality.

⁸ Naomi Green, *Pier Paolo Pasolini: Cinema as Heresy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1990, p. 25, apud John David Rhodes, *Stupendous, Miserable City: Pasolini's Rome*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007, p. 66.

The emphasis put on the spatial contextualization of action and on the placement of characters in an ideologically and socially-structural symbolic geographical and architectural area, represents, in my opinion, certain elements of theoretically disseminating discourse that fortify the validity of social praxis. The exposition contains many details that allow an empirical analysis of meanings and so the work cannot be placed inside the area of the negation directed against ideological prepositions as elements with a practical power in society, as it was erroneously catalogued by the Marxist Left of that moment. What Pasolini denied was only the reductionism situated in historicist-deterministic canons, which were then at the centre of theorizing analysis and in the cultural products of the Left. Thereby, the presumed fatalism residing in the impossibility to transcend a certain socio-economic condition of marginality stands in direct opposition with the reality of the careful spatial placement of the action.

Accattone dies just in the vicinity of one of the corridors of entry in Testaccio, a former borgata that became, in the years following the Second World War, a neighbourhood of the working class. This area was already inserted in what I would call the functional space of Rome, a systemic-utilitarian component in the economic ensemble of the city, a space whose character was modified by the restructuring of post-war Italian capitalism. In productive terms, this area has an obvious meaning, and for Pasolini it is precisely this operational transformation of space the factor that doesn't allow a place for Accattone, represented as an allogenic element in such a context. Consequently, his death takes place on Ponte Testaccio, after the theft of a motorcycle used as a means to evade an impending police arrest⁹, beyond any durable space in what are the values of a structured existence. This way, the borgata becomes a closed, hermetic, system, whose

⁹ A parallel with the film *Ladri di Biciclette* by Vittorio De Sica is, at this symbolic point, evident. However, the theoretical motivation is different. In De Sica's film, Antonio Ricci steals a bicycle because he is socio-economically determined not to have another solution to secure an income for his family. He is a pauperized proletarian, and the stolen object doesn't have the role of temporary escape, as it does for Accattone, but that of securing an occupational insertion in the long term.

inhabitants are conditioned to die when their values succumb at the contact with an unforgiving and alien outside reality.¹⁰

The symbolic value of Accattonne's last words, "Mo, sto bene"¹¹, is very powerful, their suggestion being the unavoidable dissolution of the lumpenproletariat under the spectrum of capitalism's efficient expansion. Pasolini understood that for both the Left, as well as the Right, this underclass did not represent a valid segment in ideological impositions. Beyond other theoretical considerations, the Left saw in this class an impossibility of generating any type of meaningful consciousness to oppose the system, and the Right saw in it a powerlessness to integrate itself in the productive and consumerist hierarchy.

By the way in which this structure is developed, it is clear that Pasolini desires an improvement of condition of these people, but in the same time he denies the redemptive function of immediate material gratification, supposed by the entrance into "normality", or in other words, the domain of the consumers, whether we refer to the already embourgeoisied proletariat, or the middle class. The logic of alienation persists, albeit not in the orthodox Marxists sense, but in that of a multifaceted critique, that announces the theoretical evolutions from the period of the "great contestation", at the end of the 1960s.

This interpolation into the socio-economic context and the placing into the system represented by his entire work, reveal to us the typology of thinking which is atypical for a Marxist thinker of this period. It doesn't adhere to the parameters of classic determinism and essentialized dialectics. Let us not forget that we are talking about a period before a re-evaluated analysis though the judicious renunciation of a static dogmatic load and of ossified ideas, through the intellectual labour of Herbert Marcuse and other representatives of the New Left. But even in the conditions subsequent to the publication of Pasolini's works, the theme of the lumpenproletariat, of the underclass, of the marginals, continued, in my opinion, to be underlined

¹⁰ Barth Davis Schwartz, *Pasolini Requiem*, New York: Vintage, 1995, p. 397, apud John David Rhodes, *Stupendous, Miserable City: Pasolini's Rome*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007, p. 112.

¹¹ See the ending of *Accattonne*.

on three politically separate directions, but similar in conclusion: the Marxist Left which saw this “unusual” category of people as a certain product of the contradictions resulted from a mode of production centred on the accumulation of capital, but practically void of any revolutionary potential. Here, we must mention the Trotskyist view, still favoured in that moment by the anti-Stalinist Left, and that tended to portray the underclass as even possessing an anti-revolutionary character, through its condition of marginality and its vulnerability to reactionary and fascist propaganda. The second direction of interpreting the underclass came from the Right, which observed the category of those lacking a well defined role in society as a symbol of abnormality resulted from various psychological, mental, even genetic deficiencies. In the more extreme versions of this argument this population had to be kept under strict control by coercive means. Finally, the third interpretation, belonging to the theorists of the Frankfurt School, saw the underclass as a temporary anomaly due to the unequal penetration of capital in certain areas. The general thesis was that once production would rise exponentially and the capital would be multiplied, the underclass would be assimilated in the uniformized work force, as the proletariat would effectively unite with the middle class.

This presentation of the typologies of explanation in a structuralist manner, of the condition inherent to social marginality is important for the contextual clarification of Pasolini’s heterodox philosophy. As well as in the case of the third interpretation, Pasolini saw the world of the underclass as being near extinction. An observation would be that his view doesn’t imply the habitual cold detachment of a theorist that merely ascertains a macro-historical phenomenon. There is certainly an almost melancholic closeness to some aspects of this marginal space that he considered to preserve an authenticity and sincerity of human behaviour. It is this element that offers a sentiment of communion and belonging to a space so varied that it allows conceptual exuberance, as Pasolini remarked: “In nessuna

città italiana il fatto presenta aspetti così impressionanti, complessi, direi grandiosi, come a Roma”.¹²

Pasolini is not interested in the usual canons of representations. His love towards this environment is a love connected to what he considered to be vivid, authentic, and untouched by the consumerist capitalism that substitutes real human beings, with all their imperfections, a series of prefabricated models, atomized in action, void of any sincere sentiment, and dominated by impulses of narcissism. This critique is theoretically innovative for this period, when the penetration of the consumerist lifestyle was in its primary phase. In fact, even the Italian Communist Party had the abstract idea of “progress” as a central element in its programs. In the 1970s Pasolini would differentiate the Left from the Right solely by underlining a linguistic nuance: the Left desired progress, while the Right wanted development.¹³ In the condition in which the structural inheritance of industrialization was unavoidable, the only way in which the Left could have achieved this “progress” would have still been through the logic of increased productivity, brought by the alienated work of salaried personnel.

The director as theorist is confronted with a dilemma. His empathy is manifested in the way Accattone is developed as a programmatic representative of his social class: he suffers, but he also brings suffering. It is a form of relational dialectics that seems to be unsurpassable in any way except death: “It is therefore absolutely necessary to die, because, so long as we live, we have no meaning, and the language of our lives (with which we express ourselves, and to which we therefore attribute the greatest importance) is untranslatable; a chaos of possibilities, a search for relations and meanings without resolution.”¹⁴ This could be a form of conferring meaning-value to what seems to be a disjointed existence, and it would be misleading to consider the statement nihilistic, without contextualizing it in

¹² Ian Thompson, “Pasolini’s Rome”, *London Magazine*, July 1986, p. 36, apud Pei-Suin Ng, “Poetry of Squalor: Exploring the *Borgata* in Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Accattone*”, *Opticon 1826*, No. 2 (Spring 2007), p. 6.

¹³ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Scrieri corsare*, Iași: Polirom, 2006, trans. Oana Bocșa-Mălin and Corina Anton, p. 178.

¹⁴ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Heretical Empiricism*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988, trans. Ben Lawton and Louise K. Barnett, p. 236.

the larger picture that I have offered. As a purposeful social critic Pasolini saw the permutation of the underclass as just another process of alienation through its insertion in an artificial environment represented by the consumerist ensemble of society. The deviant behavioural patterns exhibited by Accattono and his peers (pimping, theft, aggressiveness) are an unconscious rebellion directed against the consensual norms of structured living, driven by a repudiation of routines established by administrative bureaucracies and by the systemic priorities of the economic system. All of these are understood as means of efficientize the human being.

Another point of divergence inside the theme of alienation is represented by the structural condition of the borgata. This periphery of the urban social space can be interpreted as a corrupted village, in the sense that not the space per se, but the population itself is in a condition of existential disjunction. These people are in a sort of “no man’s land”: they do not possess rural values, but they are also inadapted in the rationalized urban space of the centre. An almost mythological memory of an undetermined past is what keeps a common feeling of belonging, considering that values like morality cannot be quantified in any objective form of social rapport.

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