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ARTICLES

Introduction. Proceedings of *Cultural Heritage and Identities:*
Normative Perspectives, Sustainability and Global Governance

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The present two volumes represent a refinement of some of the talks given at the conference "Cultural Heritage and Identities: Normative Perspectives, Sustainability and Global Governance" and the workshop "Cultural heritage: new forms, new actors, new identities - national, European and cosmopolitan visions." The conference and workshop were centered on the idea of defining cultural heritage. What is cultural heritage? Why do we count intangible heritage as proper heritage? Which concepts are fundamental in defining and shaping our approach to cultural heritage? Interrelated topics such as cultural identity, social groups and communities were discussed either in relation with the topic of cultural heritage, or on their own right, aiming at clarifying, or problematizing some of their essential aspects.

The present two volumes gather, as part of PATCULT project[1], some of the contributions concerning cultural heritage, the problem of normativity, the problem of collective identity and cultural identity. However, some more focused contributions in aesthetics or biocultural ethics are also included. Thus, volume 12.1/2020 was designed to gather contributions on more applied topics, while volume 12.2/2020 focuses on more theoretical topics.

The first volume brings together Stoenescu's contribution on bringing together the idea of sustainable development and environmentalist principles, Bulzan's contribution in the philosophical discussion regarding VALIE EXPORT's works, and Cojanu's contribution on overlapping cultural frameworks and the relation between them.

The second volume's theoretical aim is materialized by Fritsche's discussion on Rawlsian liberalism in relation with policies regarding cultural heritage, Ionescu's analysis concerning cultural identities, Dascălu's attempt to apply John Dewey's philosophy to our analysis of cultural heritage, Matei's discussion on the relation between patriotism and globalization, and Popescu's review of one of the latest

contributions on the topic of collective agency and collective action, namely Kirk Ludwig's *From Individual to Plural Agency: Collective Action* Vol. 1.

Constantin Stoenescu discusses the topic of biocultural ethics and sustainable development in "The Biocultural Ethics and the Homogeneous Sustainable Society." One step in Stoenescu's argument is that nature is part of our cultural heritage, and this is taken as one of the premises of the argument. However, its truth is crucial in developing the main idea of the paper - that preserving nature, on a par with artefacts let's say, is a duty. This duty is no less significant with respect to other living being, than is with respect to human beings. Thus, heritage should not be seen just as the traits in history of our communities, but as integrating the history and heritage of nature as well. We do not have an essential distinction between what communities have to offer and what nature has to offer, and our moral duty is to preserve them both, with the same amount of effort.

Within Diana Bulzan's article, "Identification and Resistance. Strategies of Subjectivation in the Early Works of VALIE EXPORT", we can follow a not only intriguing but also a rather provoking line of thought – one that finds its ground in the constant metonymy between art and ideology. The object of discussion is the work of the Austrian artist VALIE EXPORT, upon which Bulzan stresses the question of the construction of the subject and its ideological entanglements. Such way of vigilant questioning constantly moves between situating the work of art as a by-product of ideology and art as a political tool, or strategy, to emphasize, resist and eventually overturn malicious structures of subjectivation. In this sense, Diana Bulzan's thorough engagement with VALIE EXPORT's works functions as an intriguing detour for the crucial issue of identity – a processual identity that is agonistically moving between the powers of ideology and subjectivity. Following, issues regarding the (feminine) body, and its representations, and the power of the imaginary and its materialized strategies of subjugation – all these are reconfigured by Bulzan throughout particular works of VALIE EXPORT with a significative philosophical inquiry in the topic of identity.

Daniel Cojanu's article, "Inherited Identities and the Concept of Boundary. Mapping the Multicultural Public Space," targets a tumultuous and rather urgent matter that regards the complicated overlapping (that manifests as homogeneity) of cultures in contemporary societies. Therefore, Cojanu's line of thought manages to unveil a series of issues that emerge from such new and eclectic cultural frameworks, issues that collapse under the sphere of identity. Within the discourse of the clash of cultures that happens in the "melting pot" of contemporary societies, Cojanu stresses that the argument for tolerance that we find in classical liberalism is no longer sufficient, for it nevertheless restrains and even eludes the much more important pressure of group identity expression. Thus, the resolution lies in the "*un*melting" of cultures and positively demarcation of their identity through an act of volitional recognition and listening of *the other* in a non-homogenous coexistence.

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The Biocultural Ethics and the Homogeneous

Sustainable Society

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Abstract: It is obvious that the concept of sustainable development was traditionally thought in an anthropocentric framework. My aim in this paper is to challenge this traditional view and to try to offer some arguments for an attempt to incorporate into the theory of sustainable development, some strong environmentalist principles which are based on a biocentric perspective. The structure and the content of my argument run as follows: First of all, we may equally speak about respect for human beings and nature if we agree that we have the duty to respect human beings. Second, all living beings have to be considered from a moral standpoint because they have their own interests and dignity. Third, the environment as an ecosystem with its own equilibrium and diversity has also the status of a heritage. Therefore, the duty to preserve the nature as a patrimonial value becomes a part of our culture. The so-called Biocultural Ethics developed initially by Paul Taylor is an adequate philosophical framework in which we can talk about nature, wildlife and human practices, as a common heritage of our communities.

Key words: biocultural ethics, biotic community, sustainability, homogenization, Paul Taylor.

To Negruța, the dog

I. THE EXTENSION OF MORALITY SPHERE: FROM SOCIAL TO BIOTIC COMMUNITY

The project of an extension of moral community was proposed by John Rawls in his book *A Theory of Justice*. In the chapter "The problem of justice between generations" he developed a theory of inter-generational justice which was used then both as a model for an extension of moral community and as a principle for the theoretical foundation of the sustainability ideas. The temporal dimension was introduced in the discussion about the moral relations between generations and it was then used to propose a new view about society, economic development and environment. First of all, the principle of inter-generational justice was interpreted as an equitable access to resources.

I think that one of the challenges in moral philosophy was to continue to expand the realm of morality beyond the point where Rawls stopped, so that to include in it all the entities which could have a moral standing. This theoretical task was amplified by the new developments in environmental ethics, a new domain of philosophical reflection which suggests a reconfiguration of the traditional boundaries of morality sphere. (See Stoenescu 2016, where I have developed this analysis. Some passages from that paper, especially the standardisation of some arguments, were used in this first part of this article.) Various ways to ensure this extension followed, either on the grounds of

normative principles or rules or starting from the traditional concepts like that of moral value. My aim here is just to sketch the mechanism of transition from human community to the biotic community and to reveal the tension between the inclusion principle and the need for a hierarchical order structured inside the biotic community.

The sphere of morality was traditionally demarcated starting from the human community. I think that the extension of it depends on the theoretical framework in which we are constrained to thought about the human beings. From Aristotle to the modern philosophers who supported the emancipation of society the extension of morality sphere was usually done by including into it some individuals which in fact belong to the human community but they were excluded on arbitrary reasons. It is enough to remember the Aristotelian theory about slavery and its modern practitioners and critics, then the movements for the recognition of citizen rights. As a result, the sphere of morality and the moral community were thought as coextensive with the human community: only human beings, as rational creatures, with a conscious and sensible life, able to use natural language in order to utter moral judgments, are members of the moral community. Some dilemmas regarding our common moral intuitions and the limited cases such as babies, dotards, and persons in a coma, who don't fulfil all the strong criteria, provided an opportunity for a theoretical debate which were then used in environmental ethics.

The question is whether the extension of moral community beyond the borders of human community may be justified starting from these limit cases which belong to the community of humans? May we use the same mechanisms of extension or do we have to consider seriously the objection that the inclusion of the mentioned limit cases is just a matter of degree while the extension beyond the borders of human community is a matter of nature? Shall we keep the criteria as strong as they were asserted in traditional ethics or we can overpass the dilemma if we follow the way to the weakening of criteria? Is logically and in principle equivalent the inclusion of all the members of human community into the moral community with the extension beyond the borders of human community?

I think that a strategy is proposed in a short commentary by John Rawls in his *A Theory of Justice* Here is the passage:

"A conception of justice is but one part of a moral view. While I have not maintained that the capacity for a sense of justice is necessary in order to be owed the duties of justice, it does seem that we are not required to give strict justice anyway to creatures lacking this capacity. But it does not follow that there are no requirements at all in regard to them, nor in our relations with the natural order. Certainly, it is wrong to be cruel to animals and the destruction of a whole species can be a great evil. The capacity for feelings of pleasure and pain and for the forms of life of which animals are capable clearly impose duties of compassion and humanity in their case. I shall not attempt to explain these considered beliefs. They are outside the scope of the theory of justice, and it does not seem possible to extend the contract doctrine so as to include them in a natural way.

A correct conception of our relations to animals and to nature would seem to depend upon a theory of the natural order and our place in it. One of the tasks of metaphysics is to work out a view of the world which is suited for this purpose; it should identify and systematize the truths decisive for these questions." (Rawls 1999, 512)

First of all, we have to remark the tension between the traditional ethics and its metaphysical foundation and the new environmental ethics which implies some changes of our view about natural order.

His main claims are the following:

1. A theory of justice is limited to the community of human beings because the capacity to grasp a sense of justice is exclusively human.

2. But this doesn't mean that our relations with other beings didn't have a moral content. (It is wrong to be cruel to animals)

3. Therefore, we have some duties to those forms of life which have the capacity for feelings of pleasure and pain.

4. But we can't extend the contract to include the other beings in the moral community in a natural way.

5. It is the task of metaphysics to change our vision and to propose a new theory of natural order.

Environmental ethics is based on a paradigmatic change of our vision about the natural order so as to include entities other than humans into the moral community became possible and the agreement that these other beings have a moral standing was obtained. The extension was made in a few steps and was based on the so-called "naturalizing morality process" by which the realm of morality was drawn according to biological properties and criteria. For example, the inclusion of animals starts from the fact that the animals can suffer and this is the basis to infer that we have the moral duty to avoid suffering. The demarcation line between humans and other living beings which can feel pain becomes an arbitrary one and ceases to have a moral significance. "All the animals are equal", is the famous assertion made by Singer. (1974; 2009) Moreover, it is possible to revise the contractualist theory and to accept that the living being that could be prejudiced have a moral status and can be a part in a contract. (Scanlon 1977)

Anyway, the environmentalist philosophers have continued to enlarge the moral community using the inclusion principle and the criterion of own good for every creature. An imaginary experiment proposed by Routley (1973) and mentioned again by Attfield (1981) is a good example for the new way of thinking. Let's suppose that on the Earth only one human being survives, the last human person, and that person cuts the last tree from a cedar species. It is obvious that this last person doesn't produce any prejudice to another person, but on the basis of our moral intuitions we are tempted to qualify this act as an immoral one. An environmentalist assigns some interest to the tree and agrees that it has a moral status even if it hasn't any of the psychological capacities proper to living beings.

This new enlarged moral community is the so-called biotic community. I will take over from Brennan (1986) his argument which express the hard core of environmentalist approach:

1. The biotic community consists of animals and plants in mutual relations, as would be the food chain.

2. Any biotic community is inevitably in relationship with other communities, so that we can extend the notion of community up to the entire biosphere.

3. Every community tends to get to a final state of equilibrium and diversity.

4. No biotic community can stand without abiotic resources because it needs to process some inorganic resources into organic components.

5. The global ecosystem can be conceived as a system composed from all the biotic communities and the abiotic environment.

6. The biosphere as a whole tends to stability, equilibrium and diversity.

Other environmentalists completed this extension and went much further to include the natural entities like forests, landscapes, islands, caves, rivers, rocks and so on. Others were focused on an extension based on the inclusion of collective entities and wholes, as would be the species, the ecosystems and the biosphere as a whole, and they have developed a theory about the duties to protect these species and about the responsibility to assure the biological diversity.

The application of an inclusiveness principle is supported by a metaphysical change in our view on natural order from an anthropocentric perspective to the so-called biocentrism as it was described by Paul Taylor (1986). The anthropocentric presuppositions are neutralized if they are captured into the theoretical framework of biocentrism.

It is easy to make a reasonable transition from anthropocentrism to biocentrism without an aggressive replacement of humans privileged position. This set of four claims is an acceptable description of this environmentalist accent:

1. All human beings, like all the other living beings, belong to the biotic community of terrestrial life.

2. The human species, like all the other species of living beings, is integrated in an ecosystem of interdependences in which the survival of every living being depends on the environment as a whole and on the relations with all the other members of the biotic community.

3. All the organisms are teleological vital centers following their own good, each in their own way.

4. The human beings aren't superior to all the other living beings, neither regarding their merits, nor their intrinsic value.

The next step is to derive the moral rules which govern the life inside the biotic community:

1. We have the duty not to harm the living beings.

2. We have the duty not to interfere in living beings' life. We have to let the nature follow its course.

3. The rule of loyalty. The moral agents have the duty to be loyal to the nature.

4. The rule of distributive justice. We have to assure the equilibrium of justice in the extended moral community.

The first rule has priority over the other three.

But if all the members of the biotic community pursue their own good, then how is biocentrism able to solve the conflicts between different interests? If the liberty of a living being consists in its possibility to do the best for its own good, it's easy to imagine situations in which different living beings have divergent interests. For example, in the case of current pandemic state of facts the virus Covid-19 fulfils its own good by invading the human bodies and this process can cause the death. How can we judge correctly in these situations? If the inherent worth hasn't grades then we can't make any difference between the welfare of different beings or entities. Taylor's answer is that we have to act in such a way that to minimize the infringement of our duties (1986, 238). This means that we can accept in some restrictive conditions, following the rule of the lesser evil, that some interests are more important than others, in this case the health of humans.

Therefore, we have to propose a hierarchical order based on acceptable principles which don't enter into conflict with the inclusion principle. Varner proposed a principle which expresses the so-called priority of desires view:

P1 "Generally speaking, the death of an entity that has desires is a worse thing than the death of an entity that does not." (1998, 78)

But if we accept this principle which gives priority to the entities that have desires, then we are able to derive another principle which gives priority to the human interests:

P2: "The satisfaction of the desires of humans is more important than the satisfaction of the desire of animals." (1998, 79)

It is obvious that we are ready to follow a theoretical "slippery slope", but it is avoided if we make some distinctions between some categories of interests and try to find a reasonable balance between inclusion and hierarchy. Robin Attfield (1987, 88-89) proposed a simplified theory of priorities:

1. The satisfaction of human basic needs takes priority over the satisfaction of all the other human needs.

2. The satisfaction of human needs takes priority over the satisfaction of all the other human preferences.

3. The lives of all creatures, actual and possible, are of equal value.

4. When the needs of a more complex creature are in conflict with the needs of a less complex creature, the first have priority.

5. When the needs of a sentient creature are in conflict with the secondary preferences of a more complex creature, the first have priority.

6. The good of insentient animals and plants have a slight moral significance if their welfare isn't in conflict with the basic needs of other more complex beings.

But this balance between inclusion and hierarchy is still enlightened by the anthropocentric presuppositions. The question is if biocentrism is able to offer us at least as much as anthropocentrism in order to find a solution to the tension between the inclusion principle and the preference for a hierarchical order of interests for a good life? I shall try to propose an answer based on the so called bioculture as a new framework in which we think.

II. THE ETHICS OF BIOCULTURE AND ITS CHALLENGES

Although the above mentioned ethics of bioculture may seem somewhat odd from the traditional perspective, it will be better understood if we reveal the structural symmetry between human ethics and environmental ethics (Taylor 1986, 41). Even if some philosophers promoted the idea of a rupture between traditional ethics and environmental ethics this is, let's say so, just a shallow meta-theoretical accent because in the deep the two are symmetrical (Naess 1973). This symmetry is rooted in our unique rationality as a condition of logical correctness. This means that even if traditional ethics and environmental ethics are different in their content, they have in common the same formal structure. Together with Taylor we have to identify these three main components together with their formal relations:

- A belief system. Every moral agent conceives ethics in a certain way. The question is whether there are some moral principles common to all, or if a relativistic approach is a better way to understand the realm of ethics.

- An ethical attitude. Every moral agent respects others or has an attitude of respect for others. There is no ethical attitude without respect. The question in this case is whether our respect is equal for all the members of our moral community or we are ready to accept the differences?

- A system of rules and standards. Every moral agent has to respect a system of rules and standards which are accepted by the moral community to which he/she belongs. This normative structure guides the behaviour of moral agents and makes the difference between good and bad. Our moral assessments of facts are based on these pre-existing standards.

The starting point to build up a theoretical framework for the ethics of bioculture is the recognition of the scientific fact that humans are animals. We, humans, are a part of nature and we fit into a zoological taxonomy: we belong to the kingdom *Animalia*, the phylum *Chordata*, the class *Mammalia*, the family *Hominidae*, the species *Homo sapiens*. We depend on the stable order of a global ecosystem and we share this natural condition with all the other species and just like all the other beings we try to survive in a biological niche according to our own interests for a better life.

The difference is that *Homo sapiens* have the technological power to transform the natural order and the global ecosystem. Humans have the capacity to use all the other things or beings as instrument for their ends so that all of these acquire an instrumental

value. Traditional ethics takes for granted this instrumental relation between means and human ends, while environmental ethics and ethics of bioculture substantiates the ethical principle according to which the value of nonhumans does not depend on their instrumental value for human ends.

Taylor argues for a new approach of the relation between humans and natural order starting from the recognition of the fundamental duality between our biological nature and our moral autonomy. The decisive question is this: "Is our biological nature at all relevant to the choices we must make as moral agents, and if it is, in what way it is relevant?" (Taylor 1986, 48) It is obvious that humans, as biological beings, have the interest to survive and they try to adapt the natural order to this goal. Therefore, at least a part of the natural order is transformed and artificialized by us. As a result, our choices, according to our biological aim to survive, will have some effects on the natural order and on the members of biotic community, so that the legitimate question becomes: '*What is the ethical significance of our being members of the Earth's Community of Life?*' (Taylor 1986, 49)

The ethical significance of human conduct is a triple one as an effect of human different interactions, the first, inside society as a community, the second, with the natural order, and the third, with the anthropized nature. Taylor proposes a distinction between three kinds of ethical human commitments. He draws a distinction between interactions with human beings, with natural environment as such, and with the environment which was already changed by the human activity. The threefold distinction will be between *Human Ethics* which is focused on the moral relations among human beings, *Environmental Ethics* which is devoted to moral relations between humans and the natural world, and the *Ethics of Bioculture*, which is about "human treatment of artificially created environments that are completely under control." (Taylor 1986, 53)

Ethics of Bioculture is an aspect of human culture and it is an expression of human domination over nature. Humans use the environment in their own benefit, according to their own interests and goals. Bioculture includes all these activities regarding the management of environment, its exploitation and protection for the benefit of humans. This mean that the power belongs to humans and that the decisions taken by humans, their choices and preferences are crucial for the life of non-humans organisms. Bioculture is a system of social institutions and practices which were historically developed with the evolution of human society, from the initial stages of hunting and fishing to the contemporary roles of animals in leisure activities.

Taylor proposed a list of the main social institutions and practices which express a Bioculture:

Agriculture, grain, vegetable and fruit farming

Raising and slaughtering animal food and clothing (chicken farming, sheep raising, pig farming, and cattle ranching)

Cultivated forests for timber production

Plant nurseries for raising garden flowers, shrubs and trees

Breeding and training animals for various tasks (work horses, racing horses, hunting dogs, watchdogs, circus animals)

The pet trade and all activities involved in the private ownership of pets

Raising, collecting and using animals and plants for scientific experiments

Zoos, animal exhibition, parks, aquariums, and "marineland" establishments

Sports that depend on the use of animals (horse racing and dog racing, rodeos horseback riding, bullfighting and cockfighting.)

Some wildlife management practices aimed at the benefit of humans, not the good of the animals being "managed" (sport hunting and fishing) (Taylor 1986, 54).

These practices have in common two characteristics which were mentioned above:

- they depend on human dominance over nonhuman living things and their environment;

- they involve treating nonhumans as means to human ends.

This means that the nonhumans have just an instrumental value and that the social institutions and practices of the bioculture are exercises of absolute, unconditioned power, unfortunately, even in the aggressive form. The nature was conquered by the humans and they believe that they have the right to use it. Some humans agree that we may destroy nonhumans if it is necessary for our aims. The nonhumans may be benefited or harmed, just like in the natural ecosystems where the natural selection is the mechanism to survive. After all, humans are just like any other predators and we may say that *Homo sapiens* are the most invasive species on the Earth.

But is it moral to use our power arbitrarily? Do we have some responsibilities? The so called Bioculture contains the answers to these questions. Our social institutions and practices were developed having respectful relations toward nature, and in some humans are emotionally related with personal feelings of love or affections.

Finally, it is easy to conclude that traditional vision on natural order was based on two strong principles which are the sources of morality:

1. All social institutions and practices are aimed at benefiting humans;

2. Nonhumans have an instrumental value, like other artefacts, machines, buildings, tools.

The Ethics of Bioculture changes this vision: "Just as our *power* over other living things does not absolve us from all responsibilities regarding their welfare, so our lack of personal caring about them does not entail freedom from all moral constraints on how we treat them." (Taylor 1986, 56) Therefore, the Ethics of Bioculture became an ethics based on duties and responsibilities in the moral space of biotic community.

III. TOWARDS THE HOMOGENEOUS SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

But we have seen the Ethics of Bioculture preserves a vision on the natural order which is based on a balance between inclusion and hierarchy. How can we solve the tension between different interests? We accept that although we, all the living beings, are

members of the same biotic community, we are different in a crucial aspect regarding our own good. Our interest is to maintain the diversity and the equilibrium of ecosystems, but, at the same time, the realization of our own good, puts us on different and divergent positions. Is it possible to find a way out from all the dilemmas raised by this polarity of life as a biological process?

Let's consider the case of animals and our attitude towards them. It is obvious that their life can be made better or worse by us. Some people think that the core of our attitude towards animals has to be strictly guided by our interests to survive. If we take into account just our need for food, then it is inevitable to reduce the relation between humans and other animals to the fight for survival. But if we take into account the feelings towards the animals, we will put them in another position in the social network: the animals become our partners, they have social and emotional roles and they ensure the fulfilment of some soul needs. Therefore, they become a part of our moral community.

But what shall we have to do if a dog bites a human person or if a human person hurts a dog? Here is a case of a conflict of interests, and the animal liberation movement have recognised this polarity. Peter Singer, in his essay about animal liberation tried to find a biological unification criterion based on our nature as sensible creatures. Taylor, as we have mentioned, proposes respect for nature as the general criterion which is managed to adjust our biotic community in a sustainable way. If we respect nature and agree that every natural entity and the natural order as such have an inherent value, then the relation between society and nature have to be reconsidered in terms of Biocultural Ethics.

But how is it possible to harmonize this diversity of interests not only between humans and all the other animals but also between the animals? Has the Ethics of Bioculture enough resources to find the best answers to different challenges? Callicott (1980, 330) mentions the difference between domestic and wild animals. He claims that there is a strong difference regarding their condition and their rights, if we accept to talk about animal rights. Domestic animals are "living artefacts", they have a condition which is similar with that of the objects crafted by humans and, moreover, they serve to human purposes. Domestic animals aren't natural kinds, they have growth in culture, not in nature. A philosopher mentions a paradoxically situation: although the domestic animals have growth in culture, they can't enter into the culture which support them (Holmes 1988, 79). They are like some cultural objects, they can suffer, but they lack cultural subjectivity. Actually, their cultural condition altered their natural status. The wild animals are different because they are natural kinds and they entirely belong to nature. To put a cheetah in a cage is reprehensible, but to keep a calf in a pen is normal. Moreover, it is possible to find a friendly argument for industrial farms which would be based on the claim that the animals have a good life in the farms, according to their interests. The industrial farm is for domestic animals a better world than the others, a world of well-being, because a farm is their chance to have a life as such and to receive a lot of rights and liberties.

All the living beings, as members of the biotic community, have the same inherent value as subjects of their own life. Therefore, the natural order has to be ethically based on the co-existence of all forms of life, on their importance in the ecosystem as a whole. The biodiversity and the equilibrium have to be preserved in the benefit of all the members of the biotic community. We conclude that nature becomes a new kind of patrimonial values which have to be preserved in a sustainable way with respect of the different interests of the living beings. All of them, from a unicellular organism which looks after light to a human creative genius who contemplates a natural landscape, are teleologically oriented according to their own goals and are focused on their own welfare. The so-called Biocultural Homogenization, a concept proposed by Ricardo Rozzi (2019), is understood from a relational perspective as the vital link between *habits* of co-inhabitants who share specific *habitats*. From an ethical standpoint, homogenization is manifested as respect for all the other co-inhabitants and as recognition of their inherent worth as living beings. Biodiversity becomes a natural heritage and the relation between the patrimonial value of natural and cultural entities have to be reconsidered.

This Biocultural Homogenization have to be understood as a relational one, as a bridge between culture and nature. I think that this approach was already developed in literature, at least for the case of cultural landscapes. Taylor and Lennon (2011) described cultural landscapes as relationships amongst people, events and processes through time, a combined work of nature and culture. A cultural landscape becomes an interface between the two, nature and culture, between biological and cultural diversity, and a link between communities and their heritage, humankind and its natural environment (Eriksson 2018). Humans are builders of their own historical niche and this process is based also on biological transformation of culture. The so-called Bioculture became a necessary product of human evolution.

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Identification and Resistance. Strategies of Subjectivation in the Early Works of VALIE EXPORT

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Abstract: In the following article, I would like to discuss three works of VALIE EXPORT, namely *Ping Pong* (1968), *I Am Beaten* (1973), and *Movement Imaginations* (1974-75), as portraying different strategies of constituting subjects and as entering into dialogue with different theories of subjectification. Thus, I will argue that the relation between viewer and screen that is presented in *Ping Pong* lays bare an understanding of cinema as an ideological apparatus at the core of which we find an intricate connection between the constitution of subjectivity and ideological interpellation. Furthermore, the same process is underscored in *I Am Beaten*, which portrays a process of identification where we can read an understanding of subjectivity as subjection. Lastly, I will argue that, in contrast, in *Movement Imaginations*, we can distinguish a focus on resistance and on the body's capacity for endurance, starting from which we can begin to trace a different understanding of subjectivation, neither as ideological interpellation nor as subjection, but as an assertion of a radical equality. However, while *Movement Imaginations* depicts this search for resistance in active terms, the search for possible paths of emancipation and resistance is present in the other two as well, at first in *Ping Pong* as the denunciation of a closed path and, secondly, in *I Am Beaten* as a refusal. In this way, the question that runs through the text is the search for possible modalities of resistance in the artistic practice around 1968, which will also take into account the role of media technologies and the constitution of a regime of visibility.

Keywords: VALIE EXPORT, cinema, subjectivity, ideology, apparatus, Rancière, Butler, Althusser.

In the second edition of the *Maraisiade*, a short film festival taking place in Vienna, an Expanded Cinema film entitled *Ping Pong* received the award for the most political film of the year 1968.[1] VALIE EXPORT's expanded film consisted of a projection of black dots

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1] Briefly put, Expanded Cinema represents an artistic movement and a particular way of engaging with the filmic medium which surfaced in the 1960s and whose sources should also be traced back to the investigation of this medium within structural film. However, it must be stated from the beginning that the forms of Expanded Cinema that were present in the American context will not be of interest to us here. Instead, the focus will fall solely on the Austrian context which was present in the second genera-tion of filmmakers of the Austrian post-war experimental film context. Expanded Cinema is here defined as "the expansion of the commonplace form of film on the open stage or within a space, through which the commercial-conventional sequence of filmmaking – shooting, editing (montage), and projection – is broken up […]." (EXPORT 2003)

In addition to the breakdown of the cinematic apparatus, Expanded Cinema works also replaced and modified the constitutive elements of this system – the aim of the artistic practice was the modifica-tion of the relation between the apparatus and reality, such that "state-reality is not reproduced, but rather the subject and its experience predominate. The 'world' is no longer simulated; rather the possibility of producing 'world' is demonstrated." Peter Weibel quoted in (EXPORT 2003). In its larger context, the engagement of Expanded Cinema signified a point in the development of visual technology that clearly understood that this technology was constitutive to the experience of reality as such. Neither *subject*, nor *collective*, nor *reality* could be understood apart from a theory of media. Additionally, it is also a response to the different modalities of subjection that were implied in the development of visual media and new modes

appearing in different places on a solid screen, a small tennis racket and a ball. The viewer is invited to become a player and engage physically with the film by using the racket and ball to match the points appearing on the screen. It enforces a relation between viewer and screen in which presumably the spectator is invited to make the passage from passive recipient to active participant or to operate a switch from the assumed static position implied by the projection of films in the dark theatre of cinema to one based on action. Thus, at first glance, *Ping Pong* plays with the categories of consumption and production, pushing the spectator towards an area resembling active production. However, what *Ping Pong* manages to bring out instead is that this switch cannot happen along the lines thus portrayed, making it clear that the only realm open to the player is that of reaction. In other words, emancipation cannot take place because the rules of the game have been set in advance. There is nothing for the viewer/player here except the established channels of communication and action, which have been pre-determined in advance by the real producer – the director. The timing of the work is not to be disregarded – it speaks of an interrogation of the viability of some forms of democratic participation. Therefore, we can perceive a number of layers present in the work, which extend from a critique of the cinematic apparatus to an interrogation of the relation between state and individual (in which case, the figure of the director parodies into that of a dictator, as amusingly postulated by Peter Weibel in the description for his *Action Lecture*).[2]

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of communication. In his text on Expanded Cinema strategies that were developing around the year 1968, Matthias Michalka connects this point to a crisis of the viability of certain forms of democratic participation. (2004, 99)

2] *Action Lecture*, a performance by Peter Weibel in 1968, in Cologne, at the opening of the *XScreen*, a festival for independent film, takes audience participation to absurd dimensions. In the performance, Weibel stood in a front of a screen, while a number of films were projected on his body, as well as on the screen behind him; meanwhile a tape recorder attached to his body reproduced one of his speeches, while he was speaking the same content live via a microphone. The main component of the performance/action was the inclusion of the audience with the help of a mechanism which created a correlation between the amount of noise made by the audience and a switch which connected a spotlight, the projector, the tape recorder and a cassette player. Thus, "if the audience is loud enough, the spotlight lights up and the tape recorder and projectors are automatically started via a light-dependent resistor. However, the spotlight dims the light of the screen, and the noise made by the audience drowns the sound of the tape recorder. A wave of interaction is thus produced between stage and audience." (Weibel n.d.) The "wave of interaction" revolves around the possibility of understanding the replayed speech and seeing the films – the louder the audience, the stronger the light of the spotlight and the more difficult it is to perceive and understand the projection. In much the same way, lack of audience participation means no light is reflected and the projection and the playback don't occur. Therefore, in the interaction between audience and stage, between the two spheres, a breakdown in communication occurs. In the German description of the work, quoted by M. Michalka, Weibel points out the 'privileged' function of the artist as the only stable element: "with clamour: a lot of light, louder audio, with silence: no light, no audio, except for my live spoken voice. likewise, I can – as some sort of dictator – hold my hand between the lamp and the light dependent resistor and stop the loop." (original: "bei geschrei: viel licht, lauter ton, bei stille: kein licht, kein ton, außer meinem live gesprochenen ton. desgleichen kann ich – als eine art diktator – meine hand zwischen lampe und ldr halten und den kreislauf stoppen." The translation is my own.) (Michalka 2004, 99)

The fiction of the artist as dictator parodies both the role of the producers within an increasingly

In a video-action from 1973, titled *I Am Beaten*, the artist is lying on the floor, under a mirror, looking at her own image. Near her is a tape recorder playing the words 'I am beaten' on a continuous loop – the performer repeats the same words, at first in the interval, in the in-between of the loop, but progressively coinciding with it, such that the two become indistinguishable by the end. The process of identification, however, is not shown as simple repetition and interiorization via language or via a doubling through the mirrored image but is rather emphasized as reproduced through the media as well. Namely, the aforementioned arrangement of the action is supplemented by the presence of two video cameras and two monitors – one camera which captures, at first, the entire mirrored image and transfers it on monitor 1 and a second camera which is oriented towards monitor 1, initially capturing a close-up of the head and transferring it on monitor 2. Together with the diminishing discrepancy between recorded speech and its live reproduction, each of the cameras slowly change their images until these coincide as well. At the end of the action, the process of identification is complete (EXPORT n.d.c.). The same image is reproduced, multiplied and re-affirmed through mediatic channels.

By contrast, the video performance *Movement Imaginations* (1974-1975) brings to light a different aspect of subjectivity and resistance while at the same time portraying another possible interaction between body and video medium. A series of actions performed in the first half of the 70s, *Movement Imaginations* focus more on issues of endurance and resistance of the body (Mueller 1994, 59). Thus, in the discussion on *Movement Imaginations,* a few themes will be concentrated, which can be also be traced in her other performances from the first half of the 70s, such as *Eros/ion* (1971) and *Hyperbulie* (1973).[3] Additionally, what especially marks the artist's passage from the medium of film to video, is a preoccupation with the latter's ability to interact with the dimensions of time and space. In following this final aspect, we will attempt to engage

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mediatized society, the one-sided relation usually implied within media communication, as well as a questioning of the viability of usual channels of participation. Perhaps it would be helpful to note that Michalka connects Weibel's take on communication to the conservative media and repressive state institutions prevalent within Austrian society at that time. For their performances and films, artists were arrested, fined and faced persecution in sanctioned media channels. I believe however that, from our contemporary perspective, the issue at stake appears stronger, especially if we extend the question towards the problem of consensus and the fabrication of the public sphere through media. For what was at the heart of this artistic commentary around 1968, the relation between media, representation and reality, has never left us at all. The very viability of this question has not decreased and is perhaps nowhere better reflected than in a society permeated by a discourse of *fake news* and particularly during a pandemic where the function of mediatic communication and representation has been drawn ever more clearly. (I concede however that this is a much more complex point to make than indicated here, for although it may appear that the battleground between truth and false has reached absurd dimensions, the conditions for it are historical and identifiable).

3] While I will address neither *Eros/ion* nor *Hyperbulie* in the present essay, the themes to which I refer are resistance and its connection to the body as a site of struggle. In these performances the body appears as the site of resistance precisely because of its dual position as a medium of communication – it is both a sign, a surface on which civilisation leaves its marks, while nonetheless being endowed with a capacity to signify and to resist its imposed signification. Stated differently, the body appears at both the medium of subjection, as well as the site where the pathologies of this subjection emerge.

her work in a dialogue that seeks to understand her artistic practice as part of a strategy contesting a certain regime of visibility – in other words, what is at the centre of these works is a certain relation with the image along the lines of assigning subject positions which involve distributions of different conditions of experience. If we are now to return to *Ping Pong*, we can also see an interrogation of the relation with the apparatus similar to the production of subjectivity, concordant with the Althusserian basis of Apparatus Theory. However, the later reference to works stemming from the first half of the 1970s will serve as a means of searching for strategies of resistance and emancipation, which are based on a different understanding of the process of subjectivation. In this sense, the intellectual trajectory of Jacques Rancière will prove to be useful – a former student of Louis Althusser, for whom Althusser's reaction to the events of May '68 proves the intellectual bankruptcy of the latter's theory of ideology. Then, what will start as a confrontation with Althusserian ideology will become in Rancière's later thought a certain manner of conceptualizing political subjectivity through acts of dis-identification and disagreement.[4]

<center>I. PING PONG. *EIN FILM ZUM SPIELEN – EIN SPIELFILM*[5]</center>

According to the artist:

> Ping Pong explains the relation of domination between producer/director and consumer/spectator. What the eye tells here to the brain is the occasion for motor reflexes and reactions, not intelligible or emotional reflexes. Audience and screen are partners in a game whose rules are dictated by the director. Nothing shows the

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4] In this regard, it is necessary to make a few additional remarks. Althusser's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" was first published in 1970, while an earlier essay of Rancière, in which he criticizes the former's response to the student movement of '68 has 1969 as a publishing date. In addition, VALIE EXPORT's *Ping Pong* was also presented in 1968. Despite this break in temporal continuity, I still believe it is possible to place these works in a dialogue, as they can still function as tools of response and interpretation to the same context. The fact that the events and artistic productions around 1968s both react to the developments of previous years and have reverberations in the theory that is to come should not come as a surprise. From the same logic, neither is reading parts of *Ping Pong* with Althusser a theoretical imposition of the work, but rather an interesting point of departure. Having this in mind, the present paper will refer only to the works cited above, for the purpose of clarity leaving aside the complexity of Apparatus Theory, its psychoanalytic basis, as well as the explicitly feminist writing within Apparatus Theory. The reason for this is not indifference – for VALIE EXPORT's work has a strong feminist emphasis – but rather taking issue with the presuppositions of the Apparatus Theory, in particular the way it conceives of the relation between the viewer and the screen. In this sense, I interpret *Ping Pong* as making explicit this basic presupposition as well as issuing a verdict: *the emancipation of the spectator cannot take place.* I will search for a response and a way out of the predicament within Rancière's notion of disagreement and the resulting political subjectivity (which can also be appropriated for a feminist discourse that rejects essentialism and the stability of the identity 'woman'.)

5] *Spielfilm* is the German term for feature film. The title has been left in the original German version because it functions around a wordplay that is untranslatable. Namely, *Spiel* stands in for game and the verb *spielen* means play. Hence, a *Spielfilm* is a film literally meant to be played (*ein Film zum Spielen*). This already shows however a very important method in EXPORT's work, that of creating wordplays and literalization.

domination character of the screen as medium of manipulation more clearly than this: [regardless] how much the spectator comes in and plays with the screen, this changes little in his status as consumer. He is the one reacting, not the screen. The emancipation of the screen, which emancipates the spectator into a producer hasn't occurred. [...]. (EXPORT n.d.b.)[6]

Additionally, the audience at the second *Maraisiade* was informed that 'the game' was also available for purchase at a toy store and it was indeed displayed in a toy shop during the Christmas season, with two other editions planned: one in a 'luxury' format and the other in a 'popular' version, in Styrofoam (EXPORT n.d.e.). It thereby offered a rather amusing commentary not only on commodity production but on the status of the artwork as (luxury) merchandise as well. Moreover, the relation between the viewer and the screen assumes the form of training, implied even in the artist's statement on the film, under the guise of playful advertising – "if you think that mental and bodily training is fun, then PP [Ping Pong] is the right thing for you, pick up a ball and racket and try to use them to meet the points which appear on the screen."[7]

In order to properly situate this description and to inquire whether it suggests a capacity to structure a relation, may this be even that between the screen and the spectator, we have to go back to the practice of Expanded Cinema to which *Ping Pong* belongs. Namely, at the core of this practice, as we find it within the Austrian experimental film context, is a concern with the materiality of film and of image production. Furthermore, the materiality of film is not restricted solely to the celluloid here, but rather concerns the entire apparatus as productive of meaning. Hence, by shifting the line of questioning towards the system which is the apparatus – the unity constitutive of cinema: projector, celluloid, camera, audience, screen etc. – the concern with materiality is no longer confined to a particular element (thereby resulting in the static dual opposition between cinematic illusion and reality, itself duplicating and overlapping a rigid distinction between false and true), but also concerns the relation between the elements themselves (EXPORT 2003). It is rather in the in-between where the stakes are played and where

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6] "Ping Pong expliziert das herrschaftsverhältnis zwischen produzent/regisseur und konsument/zuschauer. was hier das auge dem hirn erzählt, ist anlaß zu motorischen reflexen und reaktionen, nicht zu intelligibilen oder emotionalen reflexe gleichwohl. zuschauer und leinwand sind partner eines spiels, dessen regeln der regisseur diktiert. nichts zeigt deutlicher den herrschaftscharakter der leinwand als manipulatives medium als dies: wie sehr der zuschauer auch ins spiel kommt und mit der leinwand spielt, an seinem konsumenten-status ändert dies wenig. wer reagiert ist er, nicht die leinwand. die emanzipation der leinwand, die den zuschauer zum produzenten emazipierte, ist noch nicht eingetreten. ein spielfilm – das heißt ein film zum spielen." (EXPORT n.d.b.) The English translation is my own but is also based on the existent English description of the artwork. I have however opted for translating the German text because the English version is not as comprehensive and leaves out some terms which are essential for my interpretation, such as 'emancipation'. I therefore felt the German description to be both closer to the artist's understanding of the work and more comprehensive. For the English description, please see (EXPORT n.d.f.).

7] The text is originally in German and is as follows: "wenn sie glauben, daß körper und geistetraining spaß machen dann ist PP das richtige für sie, nehmen sie ball und schläger, versuchen sie mit ball und schläger die punkte die auf der leinwand erscheinen zu treffen." The translation is my own. (EXPORT n.d.e.)

materiality is no longer confined to a status of inert matter upon which form is imposed but is itself productive. Compared to this larger consideration of materiality in Expanded Cinema, it is questionable, however, whether *Ping Pong* goes this far and doesn't restrict itself instead to make evident a particular ideological relation to the screen. However, another glance at the description complicates this interpretation – since it is clearly stated that the emancipation of the viewer does not take place, does not *Ping Pong* only exemplify in order to better make a certain theoretical point clearer?

The issue of image production and its connection to reality already puts the category of the imaginary into play, as constitutive and mediating between image and reality. We will therefore call the relation between the two as well as the one between the viewer and the screen, an *imaginary relation*. The status of the imaginary is here seen from a psychoanalytical point of view and is therefore analogous to Louis Althusser's definition of ideology in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses". Namely, ideology is defined as "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence." (Althusser 1971, 162) Thus, because of the shift presented in the Althusserian notion of ideology, the function of ideology can no longer be resolved by opposing a false representation to a real one, but concerns the very status this representation has, alongside its modes/forms of manifestation, for the constitution of the social sphere (the reproduction of the relations of production) and of the subject. Additionally, whereas ideology had been understood as a system of ideas, it now becomes manifest as an *apparatus* that regulates the relationship between what can be imaginable and what cannot, what can be thought and what cannot, as well as the line between the visible and non-visible (Žižek 1994, 1).

We can therefore draw an affinity between an understanding of ideology as apparatus and cinema as a machine producing and reproducing different modalities of the visible, which address subjects as spectators. *Ping Pong* lays bare this functioning of both ideology and cinema as an apparatus. And by returning to an interpretation of the relation between spectator/player and screen as one of training or of practice, the connection with Althusser will point us in the direction of the materiality of ideology and an understanding of subject formation as subjection. Thus, our current premise is that in *Ping Pong*, the spectator appears as an interpellated subject. It can appear so because the relation with the screen – the game – is already coded and lays bare a structural relation with power. Furthermore, within our current theoretical framework, the mechanism of ideology cannot be understood apart from its relation to the subject it forms – that is, neither subject nor ideology can be conceived outside of the relation itself, such that:

> […] *the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects.* In the interaction of this double constitution exists the functioning of all ideology, ideology being nothing but its functioning in the material forms of existence of that functioning. (Althusser 1971, 171)

Moreover, this constitutive connection between ideology and subjectivity is not dependent on an original foundation but is to be found in the repetitions and practices that continually address the subject. Put differently, we are once again dealing with a double relation – it is not the case of an idea that results or engenders a particular ritual, but the sustained relation between the two. If ideology is no longer solely a system of ideas, it then resides in the *coherence* of the social sphere as a whole, as that which ensures coherence between practices, rituals and beliefs, between subjects and the way they perceive themselves – it emerges as a structuring relation, which requires repetition (or practice, if we will) in order to maintain its coherence.

Furthermore, the relation with the screen in *Ping Pong*, as a reaction to stimuli, parodies the one between the worker and the machine – in the ideological space opened up, it becomes a modality of learning. Althusser describes the reproduction of labour power as occurring through the process of mastering a practice, which happens alongside its submission to the ruling ideology: "for it is clear that *it is in the forms and under the forms of ideological subjection that provision is made for the reproduction of the skills of labour power.*" (Althusser 1971, 133) In other words, the reproduction of labour power as learning revolves around the reproduction of modalities of thinking and ways of being, which Althusser further indicates by stating that the agents of production are taught to "perform their tasks 'conscientiously'." (Althusser 1971, 133) If we are to take the affinity between the two apparatuses all the way, then it is possible to see that the spectator's interaction with the screen, dictated by the director, can also structure social identifications and ways of being, cinematic interpellation being able to reproduce the mechanism at the core of the formation of subjectivity. However, while *Ping Pong* does render this bare ideological functioning explicit, it is also quick to point out that the subject itself is reduced to the status of mere matter informed by an ideological machine, having no realm open other than that of simple reaction and no real agency. By contrast, in *I Am Beaten,* the constitution of the subject becomes more complex, and the artwork attempts to render an ambivalence plausible, a space that opens up within the mechanism of identification.

II. *I AM BEATEN*

In the description of *interpellation* or hailing as the mechanism through which ideology addresses the subject, this mechanism hinges on misrecognition. Thus, and according to Althusser's example, an individual will react to a hailing (by a police officer, in his example) by turning around, an act which implies that the individual has recognized her- or himself as possibly addressed. Additionally, the other aspect which Althusser's example brings out is the function of language or, rather, the apparent transparency of language, for "the 'obviousness' that you and I are subjects [...] is [...] the elementary ideological effect" (Althusser 1971, 172). As it can already be observed, both instances are clearly mapped in EXPORT's *I Am Beaten* (1973). What's more, I would

argue that the effectivity of language is doubly underlined both through the fact that the acoustic acts as the medium through which identification is affirmed, as well as the fact that the affirmation takes a passive form. Another aspect of subject formation through ideology is clearly outlined in the case of religious interpellation, where the function of the image is made explicit. We can summarize religious interpellation by underlining two aspects of its functioning. First, one is a subject insofar as one recognizes him – or herself as a subject of God (and, hence, as subjected) and, second, the relation between subject and instance of power is mediated by specular misrecognition (to be a subject is at the same time to recognize yourself as having been made in *the image* of the Other).[8]

Keeping this in mind, in Judith Butler's *The Psychic Life of Power*, the effect of interpellation "is not the creation of a subject fixed in place, but becomes the occasion for a further making" (1997, 99). The relation between ideology and subjectivity is then better expressed in the regulation of reproduction, for the process of subjection takes the form of "a certain kind of restriction in production, a restriction through which that production takes place" (Butler 1997, 84). What seems once again implicit here is the metaphor of 'turning around' (as a reaction to the hailing) for reflexivity or for the institution of consciousness. Thus, through interpellation, "the subject emerges as one for whom power has become voice and voice the regulatory instrument of the psyche." (Butler 1997, 197) Starting from this quote, I would like to offer a reading of *I Am Beaten*. The title is passive; the subject only appears through its status as an object of discourse and of the process of identification at play. Additionally, the relation between the performer, lying down, looking up, and her image is itself mediated by the repeated discourse and through the voice. Its regulatory function has a performative dimension insofar as the specular identification is supplemented and enforced through the repetition of the sentence "I am beaten". Perhaps, even more poignantly, identification also appears as a processual alignment – in this case, the way the two video cameras interact with the image of the performer, up until the point they are aligned with each other. There is, however, an aspect that has so far remained outside the discussion, namely the corporeal dimension. In this sense, the situation of passivity is part of an alignment or a distribution of roles itself part of the process of identification – the passive identity belongs to a feminine subject (also reinforced by the performer's position). Furthermore, the multiplication of the images of the body also speaks to a function of the role of woman as image, as regulated by an image of the body that responds to masculine desire and whose position in the sphere of labour has been mainly relegated to the private sphere of the household and of reproduction.

8] At this point, we would have the perfect opportunity to speak about the function of the mirror stage in Lacanian psychoanalysis. However, in order to avoid simplifying the mirror stage and considering its rather broad use in discourses on image and identification (particularly in the writings on cinema part of Apparatus Theory), I would like to simply stress the psychoanalytic premises of Althusser's famous essay on ideology and assume a basic familiarity of the reader with the mirror stage.

Nevertheless, there is room for ambivalence in the process of identification, which emerges precisely through the fragmentary multiplication of the image, as well as through the fact that the image reproduced through the video cameras is not the performer herself, but her mirrored image. Thus, the reproduced image is from the start that of an abstracted ideal Ego – perhaps the initial incongruence between the uttered speech "I am beaten", which follows the playback of the same words speaks to this existent division while making visible the repressive violence constitutive of the process itself. However, in the process of misrecognition that is presented in *I Am Beaten*, this ambivalence can be interpreted as the occasion for the exercise of *a weak power of refusal* (see Gush 2018, 42-43). In such an interpretation, the passive position is not so much the result of this process but a refusal of the terms in which subjectivation plays out. But isn't then this 'weak power of refusal' itself only possible if the process of subjectivation remains incomplete, if there is something which withdraws itself from it and remains outside of its power?

If, as stated above, the relation between power and subjectivity manifests itself as a restriction in production, then this restriction is itself productive, creating symptoms and effects which exceed the purpose of production (Butler 1997, 18). And if we are to refer to this relation in terms of an institution of consciousness, the metaphor of turning around is applied to power as well, determining the subject as "the effect of power in recoil" and consciousness as the effect of this repression, emerging alongside the unconscious (Butler 1997, 6). Between the power that institutes the subject and the subject's own actions, a discontinuity therefore appears – and this is the space where the possibility of resistance can be sought. Resistance emerges as a necessary correlate of regulatory power, as its own excess of production. The space of reflection opened up in *I Am Beaten* can therefore manifest itself as ambiguous because the process of misrecognition portrayed becomes the site of a divided self, as well as a site of excesses and irregularities that prevent a complete identification.

III. *MOVEMENT IMAGINATIONS*

My thesis is that we can find in *Movement Imaginations* the search from *passive refusal* to *active resistance* and the potential to turn the possibility of this refusal into a chance for self-emancipation. Within this line of interpretation, both *Ping Pong* and *I Am Beaten* make explicit an understanding of subjectivation as subjection, alongside a search for possible sites of struggle and without fully conceding to the terms of discussion.

Movement Imaginations (1974-75) is a video performance consisting of two parts. Within the first part, we are presented with a number of scenarios where the willpower of the subject is shown in opposition to external material forces. The role of the video medium is that of a tool aiding the investigation – all the actions are also shown in close-up on monitors placed in the foreground, giving the audience the possibility to see the

action as a whole, but at a distance, as well as up close (Mueller 1994, 61-64). The actions, in the description of the artist, are as follows:

> I am standing on tiptoe inside a circle woven of barbed wire. When my strength fails me the soles of my feet are hurt by the barbed wire. With my extended arm I hold a heavy weight high above my head, slowly the arm sinks down, through the video image./ I press a spiral spring with my hands until they reach the position of praying./ With my lips I hold a burning match./ With wide-open eyes I stare into the light of a lamp./ I am on the floor in front-support position, between my arms, below my face is a small pedestal covered with broken glass. I suck at a nail that is driven in wood until I have sucked it out. (EXPORT n.d.d.)

A number of the actions were performed by the artist while wearing a nightgown, further suggesting an emphasis on the modalities of resistance available to a feminine subject. Furthermore, Mueller describes the actions as an investigation of "the phenomenon of inertia […] for its potential to endure and also to overcome, given hostile forces." (1994, 61) Beginning with this description, it is then possible to suggest a continuity between *I Am Beaten* and *Movement Imaginations* as the passive refusal present in the former becomes metamorphosized into the capacity for endurance in the latter. Thus, both performances show a scenario whose final goal would be an overcoming of externally imposed limitations through different strategies. Additionally, what *Movement Imaginations* makes concrete is the body as a site of struggle or of resistance precisely through the point of view of its understanding as capacity. In the words of the artist, the actions are:

> […] bodily demonstrations of the passion of man to resist all extreme conditions as long as possible. [Movement Imaginations] are therefore concrete forms of the human imagination which turn against any kind of limitation. The test of the body has here no auto-destructive tendency but has to be understood as a demonstration of the human intention […]. (EXPORT n.d.e.)

The second part, also titled *Movement Imagination No.5*, concerns more directly the possibilities of the video medium, especially in its relation to the body. A video camera captures the upper part of a room and transmits the image to a monitor situated in the lower part – a split is thereby created. The performer jumps into the view of the video camera and appears on the monitor in the lower part of the room, thus being able to 'heal the split' (Mueller 1994, 61). The capacity of the body is here supplemented by that available through technology. In this case, the medium of video accompanies the passage from passive to active subject. And in contrast to *Ping Pong*, we are dealing with a different interaction between body and technology, no longer contained by the realm of training. By allowing the split to manifest itself spatially in the room, the subject emerges in the gap and occupies the space opened up. She furthermore arrives there through her own capacity or willpower. Consequently, if *Ping Pong* is the depiction of a case where emancipation cannot occur and if in *I Am Beaten,* the only power available is that of a *weak refusal*, then *Movement Imaginations* makes a case for endurance and willpower as

tools towards self-determination. In this scenario, self-determination is the only path open to emancipation. It is therefore also possible, I believe, to make the passage to another understanding of subjectification, which parallels this shift.

IV. THE EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL SUBJECTIVITY

In his *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, Jacques Rancière makes the distinction between politics and what he terms as the police. Namely, he defines the latter as:

> […] an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task; it is an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise. […] Policing is not so much the «disciplining» of bodies as a rule governing their appearing, a configuration of *occupations* and the properties of the spaces where these occupations are distributed. (Rancière 1999, 29)

In other words, we are not operating with an opposition between state apparatuses and individual subjects, but rather with a configuration that assumes a certain distribution of the visible and the way this visible becomes intelligible. It manifests itself in the configuration of the *who, what, where* and *how*. By contrast,

> [p]olitics is a matter of subjects or, rather, modes of subjectification. By *subjectification* I mean the production through a series of actions of a body and a capacity for enunciation not previously identifiable within a given field of experience, whose identification is thus part of the reconfiguration of the field of experience. (Rancière 1999, 35)

The manifestation of subjectification, therefore, takes the form of a dispute, the contestation of a certain regime of the perceptible and its recognition cannot take place outside of its reconfiguration. What this also entails is that politics as politics only occurs as a disagreement or a dispute with a certain distribution of roles, identities and corresponding fields of experience, and it does so by affirming the existence of a part that has no place. It, therefore, emerges as the affirmation of a gap, as a part that has been left uncounted and the manifestation of a wrong that needs to be addressed.

The notion of *disagreement* already hints at the important role played by language. The form through which a miscount or a wrong is addressed is such that language itself – the determination of who is seen as capable of speech – is the ground of contestation. Or, in other words, it is a matter of who is recognized as a speaking subject. Furthermore, the way subjectification takes place is not a simple assumption of a common identity but rather means making this identity into a stage for a dispute or a confrontation. It, therefore, entails a necessary moment of *disidentification*, a "removal from the naturalness of a place" and the assumption of an impossible and paradoxical identity because it affirms as existent something which is non-existent (Rancière 1999, 36). Finally, this mode of subjectification has as its basis the premise of equality which is to be verified

and exercised in practice. It cannot be something granted to the subject, but that which is the premise of her/his capacity for action and for speech, which is itself enacted in the act of disagreement. We are therefore dealing with a notion of equality that is radical because it presupposes a universal capacity. Staging identity as the locus of contestation means blocking the process of identification outlined above too. It's at the same time transforming the locus of identity into a place of anarchic availability since it can be occupied by anyone. The space of politics is thus the space of this radical opening where identity paradoxically becomes an affirmation of an impossible identification.

In VALIE EXPORT's "The Real and Its Double: The Body", the problem of identifying the experience of the subject 'woman' entails a problem of representation. By looking at the way this experience has been expressed in literary and artistic works, the place of the feminine subject reveals itself in a double bind of a sort. Traditionally, in her role as an object of desire, the image of the female body has been the place of painful contestation and refusal because it was at the same time the locus where a repressive identity was formed (as the identity woman has long been defined through recourse to corporeality or naturalness). On the other hand, the place towards culture or abstract theory was itself more often than not blocked, resulting in the impossibility of an actual path from identity towards subjectivity. Moreover, the strategies of insurrection that appear in the text, such as anorexia, the fragmentary and anagrammatic representation of the body or its transformation into a site of disease, locate feminine experience in the gap that emerges between the body as an expression of an external constraint and the self. This results in the elaboration of two strategies – either a complete refusal of this identity which results in an annihilation of the body, or the diffusion of the boundary between body and outside, which is at the same time a staging of the body's disappearance. However, in either case, the traditional representation of the body is the place where an impasse takes place, the place where the path to subjectivity as self-determination is blocked. Then is it not the case that an identification of feminine experience entails a contestation of a regime of the visible, or the intelligibility of a mode of representation? Are these not strategies of disidentification? Furthermore, is not Expanded Cinema's insistence on the productive capacity of materiality to displace meaning and thereby create new sensibilities, new modes of perceiving itself not part of a contestation of a perceptible configuration?

V. CONCLUSION

The end of the 1960s also saw the emergence of the video medium on the market, an accessible medium situated outside traditional forms of artistic production. Thus, "video enabled women to create their own representational spaces where they could transcend the dichotomy between private and public – regardless of whether they were addressing issues related to the body, domesticity or women's place within the social and/or political sphere." (Sichel 2010, 209) Within *Movement Imagination No. 5*, the use of video hints

at the possibilities offered by this medium to investigate the spatial and temporal coordinates of experience. The split created with the help of the video camera addresses the modalities through which information is communicated in a certain representation, acting as a tool for investigating a partitioning of the visible. By the same means, it can stage the very issue of partitioning, of configuring: the split is not only visible but permits the emergence of a subject.

Moreover, in the video performance *Silent Language*, developed between 1972 and 1976, video is used as a tool for investigating the intelligibility underlying traditional representations of women in painting (Mueller 1994, 59). With the use of the medium, a retracing of female postures is staged: a female performer dressed in contemporary clothes and at times holding kitchen utensils copies the exact posture of a traditional female figure. At the beginning of the video, the image of the performer and of the painting are superimposed, but as the painting slowly fades away, it reveals the contemporary performer enacting the same posture and gesture in a contemporary setting. Both representation and body are here treated as mediums capable of transmitting information, and their investigation reveals the partitioning of a social structure corresponding to the intelligibility of representation. Video stood out as a medium because of its ability to reveal and distort traditional forms of representation, its real-time ability to intervene in space and time and to manipulate images (something which was already perceptible in *I Am Beaten*).

VALIE EXPORT's use of technology, her emphasis on its capacity to produce distortions of existent meaning and thus create new modes of perception and understanding has at its core an interrogation of subjectivity that takes its cue from determining the coordinates of feminine experience. Determining the path open for this subject and her modes of existence suggests then an analysis of the social structure as a whole and a testing or trying out for possible areas open to contestation. At the beginning of this paper, *Ping Pong* was also understood as an interrogation of some forms of democratic participation, which needed to take into account the determining role of new media. It is then possible to see in the availability of the video medium the chance to invent new forms of democratic participation and to redefine the configuration between public and private, to investigate and re-invent modes of appearance. And in Rancière's conceptualization in terms of the distinction between the police and politics, a way to think of the constitution of subjectivity, not as subjection but as an assertion of radical equality. The path then open has to imply thinking emancipation as self-emancipation, alongside a reconfiguration of the space of experience and an understanding of resistance as refusal of a given order and as disidentification.

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Inherited Identities and the Concept of Boundary.
Mapping the Multicultural Public Space

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Abstract. Cohabitation of cultures in today's world is no longer just an issue of the domestic politics of multi-ethnic states or an item on the agenda of international relations. Now, when groups of migrants and refugees complicate the landscape of an increasingly unstable and mixed-up world, the problem of cohabitation should be solved urgently. In the multicultural public space of the great western metropolises, the rights and the obligations, the citizenship or the civic virtues of the individuals have a different meaning than they had in the public space of traditional homogeneous societies. The imperative of tolerance in the sense of classical liberalism can no longer regulate the infinite interactions between individuals with different identities, histories and affiliations. Those who meet and live together are not only free agents, defined by the ability to deliberately choose and build their common destiny, but also bearers of inherited collective identities that demand public expression. Ignoring the cultural differences or "exiling" them in the private sphere, as deontological liberalism proposes, would impede the exercise of a fundamental right, the freedom of expression. The meeting of cultures and the realization of a *modus vivendi* depends on the reactivation of a perennial function of the public space, that of making distinct, visible what otherwise would have been consumed in the shade and anonymity of the private, domestic life. This study intends to demonstrate how the coexistence of the inherited collective identities also depends on the recognition of the notion of *boundary* associated with the cultural identity, given that the ethnic cultures manifest in the new public space at least a symbolic territoriality. For the distinctive identity of the ethnic communities is built on the recognition of *the Other*, therefore of a certain demarcation, not only on the fidelity to the inherited values and traditions.

Key words: cultural identity, politics of recognition, symbolic boundary, multicultural citizenship, cultural rights.

The coexistence of cultures in today's society is no longer realized in the traditional frameworks of stable social arrangements and political relations. The unprecedented dynamics of individuals and groups, the labour migration and intensive tourism, the improvement of communication and transport technologies have created situations of multicultural cohabitation, especially in the large and crowded cities. Individuals, belonging to different races, ethnicities, religions try to adapt to these new configurations. The open society, when we are referring to identities, is an inclusive society, with porous boundaries, which makes possible the acculturation, the mixture of races, cultures and traditions. At the same time, there is a resistance of the old community relations, of the inherited identities and a competition between them for the assimilation of the public culture and for the instrumentalization of the public space. The clash of civilizations, as predicted by Huntington (1996), has turned out to be a surprisingly prescient description of many of the social problems that I will treat here: tensions between the culture of the majority population of a state and its historical minorities or recent immigrants; the constant struggle for recognition of the distinctive identity of these minorities; the cultural rights of these groups in the public space."

All these issues raise difficulties in the field of normativity: what could be the principles, norms and rules to be followed by public policies for social inclusion or strategies for multicultural coexistence? The neutrality proposed by deontological liberalism proves insufficient. That is because, together with rational individuals, guided by the imperative of maximizing their own benefits, in the public space of democratic and pluralistic societies appear diverse cultures, traditions, confessions, that is to say, the inherited identities as political actors.

The mere toleration of these groups is no longer sufficient, and can be criticized as arrogant ethnocentrism. Ignoring them for the benefit of an abstract citizenship and sending them along with the inherited cultural ties in the private sphere couldn't be accepted, given the nature of these identities, their cardinal importance for the dignity and integrity of human persons.

That's why they demand public expression, first of all as recognition of their distinctive identity, of their face circumscribed by a symbolic *boundary*, marking the area of contact with other groups, and then as recognition of certain collective rights that allow them a progressive cultural self-determination. Since all of these claims can be politically manipulated, they are a potential threat against the rule of law, the current legal order and the individual rights and freedoms.

I. CULTURAL DIVERSITY AS A FACT AND VALUE

Late modernity offers us the social landscape of an unprecedented cultural diversity. The phenomenon of migration has determined people representing ethnic communities to leave their original place of formation and come into contact with customs and traditions of completely unknown societies until then. The social spaces where the meeting of cultures takes place have no longer the profile of the anthropological places of cultural formation. They don't depend so much on the geographical and natural environment of the location and can no longer count on a territorial delimitation. Multicultural social spaces, operating on the principle of integration, are dynamic, interactive communities, capable of indefinite expansion. They no longer know stable vicinities, the emplacement into an ethno-cultural context with foreseeable evolution that confirms their distinct cultural identity, but they tend to incorporate these vicinities.

As an expression of globalization, the city transforms the way we perceive the environments. As an intersection of the flow of people and things, the western metropolis replaces many of the familiar places, to which we had in the past different expectations and different experiences, with *non-places* (Augé 1995, 78). This also means a certain porosity of the borders, a basic political culture built on the principles of integration and inclusion, the configuration of new, short-term, flexible and unstable neighbourhoods, due to the contact of the new groups and communities. The great metropolises create the unprecedented possibility that the ethno-cultural groups of remote homelands become neighbours and have to learn to live together.

If the villages and the ethnographic regions could provide a certain security and cultural homogeneity to the traditional communities, by a rigorous delimitation of the foreign, allogeneic elements, by solidarity and the interweaving of the relations of kinship and neighbourhood, the city is welcoming with strangers, celebrating dynamism, interaction and diversity. The communities of traditional villages, obeying to traditions, customs and ancient rhythms of life, were those *Gemeinschaften* in which cultural identity and homogeneity were based on relationships of solidarity and mutual personal knowledge of their members (Tönnies 1963). The social space of the urban areas establishes a new horizon of normativity, which is no longer legitimized by local traditions and identities and offers particular cultures the possibility of meeting and a suitable framework for their coexistence.

> At the core of interculturalism as a daily political practice are two rights: the right to difference and the right to the city. The right to difference means recognizing the legitimacy and specific needs of minority or subaltern cultures. The right to the city is the right to presence, to occupy public space, and to participate as an equal in public affairs. (Sandercock 2009, 219-20)

Belonging to a multicultural society implies, however, a commitment of all members, beyond their inherited identities, to the political community and to the principles of justice that make possible the non-conflictual coexistence of different ethnic groups. According to Bhikhu Parekh, at least three major forms of cultural diversity can be distinguished in modern societies (2000, 3). The first, in which the members of the society share the attachment to the system of values and beliefs of the common, official culture, implicitly to the principles of justice and public reason that support them, but they carve out within this culture their own, unconventional beliefs and practices which determine them to discover their affinities, common interests and to associate in groups. Gays, lesbians or some professional categories, for example, do not represent an alternative culture, but seek to diversify the existing one. Parekh calls it *the subcultural diversity.*

A second form of cultural diversity is represented by the members who adopt a critical attitude towards some of the fundamental principles and values of the society with the intention to rebuild it, to improve it. This is what feminists do when they attack patriarchal tendencies, religious groups when they protest against secular tendencies, or environmentalists who disapprove the anthropocentrism and technocracy of certain practices and institutions. This is called *perspectival diversity.*

But cultural diversity *stricto sensu* applies only to ethnocultural communities, historical minorities of the national states or groups of migrants, who continue to live according to inherited value systems and traditions, or to religious communities that profess coherent, self-founded lifestyles by virtue of a comprehensive vision on life. Parekh calls it *communal diversity* (2000, 4). The differences between individuals, those based on the uniqueness of each destiny, of each personal history, do not represent authentic anthropological diversity, because they don't establish yet a symbolic demarcation between *us* and *them*, or the sense of belonging offered by ethno-cultural membership.

Multiculturalism is not about difference and identity *per se* but about those that are embedded in and sustained by culture; that is a body of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of people understand themselves and the world and organize their individual and collective lives. Unlike differences that spring from individual choices, culturally derived differences carry a measure of authority and are patterned and structured by virtue of being embedded in a shared and historically inherited system of meaning and significance. (Parekh 2000, 2-3)

Individual identity is also the result of personal choices or of the way in which each reacts to the social context and inherited identities, the way in which they recognize and interpret them. But individual identities, the result of the intersection of countless belongings and choices, don't inherit, are not transmitted and don't create group solidarity.

Cultural diversity is an undeniable fact. This is a common-sense empirical finding, starting from which we can situate ourselves later, affirmatively or disapprovingly. In a study prepared at the request of UNESCO, Claude Lévi-Strauss compares cultural diversity with natural diversity: it is good to protect cultures and their specificities, even if the pressure of globalization pushes things towards uniformity, as it is good to maintain diversity of natural species and ecosystems. The preservation of cultural diversity is good, so it could be a norm, a regulative principle for national policies and for international politics. (Lévi-Strauss 1987, 12-7)

II. INHERITED IDENTITIES AND THE CONCEPT OF BOUNDARY

According to Giddens, „modernity is inherently globalizing" (1990, 63). The seemingly irreversible process of globalization produces remarkable effects in the morphodynamics of traditional communities and on the anthropological sites that once housed them. Exposed to the incontinent flow of people and goods, to significant demographic movements, the places of birth and flowering of traditional cultures open their borders, becoming more permissive and more dynamic, receptive to change. The immemorial village is transformed from an enclosure, which used to house the peasant community and to preserve its way of life transmitted from generation to generation along with the cultural heritage, into a crossroads, becoming in many respects just a place of passage. At the same time, extensive tourism transforms picturesque places into holiday destinations, natural wonders and local cultural products into consumer goods.

Modernity supposes the loss of a type of face-to-face interaction characteristic for pre-modern societies, for the purely local existence of man. "Globalisation can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa."(Giddens 1990, 64) From day to day, cultural identity, which is an intrinsic value, is interpreted as an instrumental or exchange value (a transactional one). The symbolic goods that form the hoard of a particular spiritual culture has been transformed by modern social reality into a banal spectacle, either through excessive musealization or by marketing. The feeling of familiarity that humans nourish for the local context of

their daily existence is accompanied by the increasing awareness of the integration of the cultural place in global socio-economic and institutional processes. The corner store where we do our everyday shopping is also one belonging to the chain of stores spread all over the world, with the same specificity and even a similar design. But this is just an example of globalization of capital. People continue to live concretely in real localities, but which are affected, disturbed, and/or modified. The cultural places, the landscapes, the familiar and comfortable cultural environments, favourable to life, are imperceptibly affected by influences, events and distant social processes.

Globalization doesn't destroy localities, it just transforms the way we experience them. Due to the internet and television, we feel this not only in the public space, but also in the private life. Events from the farthest corners of the world become at least as important as those that happen in our neighbourhood, they affect our lives and make us supportive of people and of their problems everywhere. Through these processes of universal connectedness, the experience mediated by communication overlaps the immediate experience. The local universe of small communities acquires transparency, a certain availability to resonate with informational flows and with representations from distant areas. Due to international relations, the capitalist economic system and the internet, localities are exposed to a phenomenon of cultural synchronization.

This reinterpretation of local cultural experience under the pressure of globalization processes was inspired by Arjun Appadurai who conceived the term *ethnoscape* (1990). It's a term whose ambiguity properly translates the situation in societies of late modernity, whose public space is disputed by contradictory, normative exigencies. The claim to the right of sovereign nation in the inhabited territory, made by ethnic majorities in national states, the claims to recognition of a relative cultural, even political and territorial autonomy and self-determination coming from historical minorities, the identity claims of ethnic groups, migrants' communities from the diaspora oppose the norms of democratic, national, regional citizenship (the European, for instance) or the cosmopolitan ones formulated in the name of respect for universal human rights. To nations and historical minorities, the ties with the inhabited territory are essential for the awareness of their own identity. It is the first meaning of the term *ethnoscape*:

> The attachment to specific places and the drawing of spatial boundaries to designate "home" from "outside" are, nevertheless, processes that have become characteristic of ethnicity, and more particularly nationhood. In the form of "territorialization of memories", they have proved crucial to the creation of *ethnoscapes* and the emergence of nations. One can see this particularly in the processes by which the memories and history of a community are linked to specific places, namely, the "naturalization of community" and the "historicization of nature". (Smith 2008, 35)

At the same time, the term designates the social landscape produced by human groups in motion in the conditions of today's economic migration or tourism and points rather to the emancipation, detachment from the limiting constraints of a territory and of an ethno-cultural specificity: "*ethnoscapes* produced by flows of people: tourists,

immigrants, refugees, exiles and guest workers." (Appadurai 1990, 296) In the term *ethnoscape,* Appadurai refers to the growing movement of peoples into one another due to immigration which changes the global dynamics. In *technoscape*, Appadurai addresses the growing spread of technology. *Mediascapes* are narrative or visual representations of parts of reality which shape the perception of the other, fantasies, ambitions etc. *Ideoscape* relates to the ideological dimension of states and other environments.

Social identity involves a constitutive ambiguity, whether it's a constructed or a chosen identity, or it's an inherited one. It can be thought both in terms of similarity and of difference. Anthropology as a research of other cultures can be considered as the study of diversity *par excellence*. Anthropologically, the concept of *ethnicity* can be characterized as a boundary-concept, first of all when it raises the question of how members of a cultural community perceive themselves. For social identity depends on its awareness and how it is perceived and imagined. The ambivalent character of social identity is associated in the minds of members of the ethnic groups with the dichotomies *us/them, inside/outside*. Thus, individuals depend on how they determine symbolically the aporia of social identity at the level of collective representations. The boundaries of the ethnic group are the symbolic limits imagined by its members, which they attribute to the group they belong to. It remains to be seen whether these are imagined in relation to the content (the ethnic determinations) of the group or to other groups.

Ethnicity can be regarded as a fundamental fact, as an extension of kinship, as an expression of common interests or as an imaginary/symbolic construction resulting from the interaction with other groups. Sometimes the term doesn't describe the ethnic belonging, but the feelings associated with it, those of loyalty to the group. According to the interactionist interpretation, the ethnic identity is constructed starting from the difference that the members of one group find when they meet the members of another group. The attraction and solidarity between those who feel they belong to the same group is indissociable from the rejection of those who are perceived as different, as not belonging to the group, as *strangers*. An isolated group could not acquire the consciousness of its own identity and could not provide its members with the sense of belonging. The interactionist interpretation of ethnicity puts on the second plane the possession of certain cultural features by the members of the community or the evocation of a common past. The invocation of a boundary (Barth 1969) is related to the idea that ethnicity is only contrastive. Also in this perspective ethnicity is nothing but politicized cultural identity.

The social space of the multicultural community creates the possibility of meeting for ethnic groups, for different traditions and inherited identities. All these social structures express a certain distinctive identity. Unlike consensual associations, interest groups, clubs or parties, which express first of all a conjunctural convergence of options and interests, cultural communities or religious traditions, have greater persistence and a certain resistance to influences and interferences. Within the paradigm of interactionist interpretation, one could say that fidelity to formative cultural values and principles, in the case of inherited identities, is counterbalanced by a reaction of resistance to the influences

that ethno-cultural or religious groups feel in the area of contact with other groups and traditions. The boundary is not only the area of transit and exchange of cultural values and forms, the area of borrowings, contamination and creative mixtures, it is also the area where each of the cultural fronts resists the other, striving to remain identical to itself.

Frederick Barth's contribution to research on ethnicity, by contrast, stands the interactionist thesis on its head. He considers that the identity of a group is not given by some inherent features of the group, but is generated by its very *boundary* (Barth 1969). The contact enables the exchange of people, cultural elements, social practices and values through the acculturation process; that's why it is surprising that the contact area contributes to the preservation of the ethnic groups, by maintaining the boundary and thus *the delimitation*. The boundary is not only the area of symbolic interaction and social exchange with the otherness, but also the area where the identity is symbolically constructed, as reflected by the finding of alterity, of difference. The contact between heterogeneous elements allows for the construction of a group identity through the observed differences – the *ipse identity* (Ricœur 1993). However, the content of the internal features - values and practices – shouldn't be underestimated, as they are invoked to proclaim the difference from the group with which the community comes into contact. Therefore, it is possible to postulate an interdependence between the inherited character of the cultural identity and the limit it presupposes. In the multicultural public space, ethnic or religious memberships will emerge as distinct identities, more persistent than the chosen or arbitrary constructed identities and will not melt into the social anonymity of the political culture that ensures the normative framework of their coexistence and recognition. The distinctive identity of ethnic or religious communities, founded on the assertion of a cultural heritage, is intimately related with a limit and a certain symbolic territoriality in order to be recognized in the public space.

Just like anthropological "places" (i.e. cultural identities), traditions represent a preservation of the structure in motion (transformation and conservation as well). Group cohesion, homogeneity, go hand in hand with the assertion of the border; the more defined the border (demarcation of alterity), the more homogeneous (culturally speaking) the group. People tend to behave according to the representations they have of each other. In fact, the social imaginary contains the totality of conceptions of the group: the way group members perceive themselves within the group, the way they perceive the group in relation to the world, the way the group is perceived by others. The intra-community space of an ethnic group is a space of reciprocity which the awareness of belonging and thus solidarity derive from. It is true, no culture is homogeneous, but what is unique about it *makes us represent it* as homogeneous. However, imagination acts essentialistically when articulating collective representations. Group solidarity is first and foremost an effect of imaginative processes which isolate certain representative cultural elements and attribute them to the entire community, ignoring internal bio-anthropological differences: it is those elements which emerged from interaction with other groups, communities.

Therefore, cohabitation is possible when not only the difference of interacting groups is mutually recognized, but also their homogeneity.

We might consider that the imaginative process which determines collective representations as an identity through difference, starts from the symbolically postulated boundary. However, such a collective representation also requires the invocation of a content, of an *inside* that ensures the intra-communitary cohesion. Although Barth emphasizes the boundaries, the areas of contact with *the Other*, as a decisive factor in defining the identity of a group, he remains wedded to an essentialist and static vision of the ethno-cultural identity. Instead, Richard Jenkins argues that communities are more than observable social facts, which in a functionalist interpretation should be treated as things, that is, as passive, relatively persistent, observable entities. Rather, communities should be seen as relationships and as processes, as permanent redefinition of borders and contents. Due to social interaction, the boundaries of the groups are flexible, they constantly reproduce and reconfigure. Further, it should be noted that there is a risk to interpreting cultural identity in the Jenkins manner: to consider the interactions within the group as significant as those between groups. Ethnic collectivities are symbolic systems that emerge in social interaction, are generated through shared knowledge, common behaviour and established and acknowledged ways of doing things. And through the way their members perceive themselves symbolically *inside* in order to dissociate from *outsiders*, who don't belong to the community, or culture (Jenkins 1997, 19).

The great metropolises offer the disconcerting spectacle of the de-regulated contact of individuals and groups of different belonging, they represent the exemplary expression of an interconnected world that brings the difference in proximity. Paradoxically, the individual is the bearer of the identity of the community from which it comes. Individual identities are, however, the intersection of certain collective identities. Human individuals are trapped in kin relations, are fathers, spouses, belong to professional communities, are loyal to communities of origin, belong to churches, parties, etc. The individual identity is part in the fabric of all these collective identities. That's why individuals are unique. But, paradoxically, it is precisely because they are unique, that they are similar, that they are so many instances of uniqueness. The differences between them become visible only when they invoke their belonging to the different collective identities, that is, they are different precisely under the collective aspects, which concern the belonging, of their identity. Nevertheless, certain memberships depend on initial choices, are reducible to options, preferences, interests and have an instrumental significance. This is the case of the interest groups that break down as soon as the objective that held their members together has been reached.

> Communal diversity is quite different. It springs from and is sustained by a plurality of long-established communities, each with its own long history and way of life which it wishes to preserve and transmit. The diversity involved here is robust and tenacious, has well-organized social bearers, and is both easier and more difficult to accommodate depending on its depth and demands. (Parekh 2000, 4)

The inherited collective identities, as in the case of belonging to an ethnic community of origin or to a religious tradition, have a greater persistence and a greater cohesion, because they are based on non-instrumental values and meanings. These meanings are a social regulator that expresses itself in terms of resistance to influences and which becomes operative only through the social imaginary and collective representations. In the act of identification, whether it is about groups or individuals, it doesn't matter how we perceive ourselves, but how others perceive us or how we would like to be perceived by them. In all these hypostases of perception, projection or self-awareness, the imaginary is actively involved. The social imaginary is an efficient operator which shapes normativity, defines preference, option, adhesion to certain regulations or to certain framework and language of negotiation of identity relations in societies within national or multi-ethnic states. The social imaginary is active, creative and supports social reality. It has a regulative function (in the Kantian sense) and hence a constitutive function (it establishes social reality) which makes certain norms, regulations necessary by requiring them as social life needs and then imposing, supporting, legitimising them.

In the real world, there are no homogeneous ethnic communities, as there are no consistent traditions, without heresies or apostasy. But the imaginary is the active social element that corrects reality at the level of collective perceptions or projections, a regulatory landmark that shapes norms and behaviour. It is the one who projects homogeneity where there is but heterogeneity, organic solidarity where people have only interested cooperation. Even if in reality, the nation, as interpreted by Ernest Renan (1982) in the 19th century, is a voluntary association reconfirmed by a tacitly assumed daily plebiscite, it appears as a coherent community at the level of collective representations. On the model of ethnicity construction, it can be assumed that the national identity was in the same way projected, as a community that, although diverse and numerous, appears supportive, coherent, homogeneous. The nation is an imagined community (Anderson 1991), in the sense that the social imaginary is the one that creates and maintains the impression of strong, quasi-personal connection between its current members and between the succeeding generations; that's why it establishes norms and values, determines behaviours, creates social reality and history.

III. NORMS OF COHABITATION IN THE MULTICULTURAL PUBLIC SPACE

Based on these considerations, we can conclude a close connection between the social imaginary and the emergence of norms and rules. They must regulate not only the relationships between individuals, but also between groups. Therefore, collective identities can be considered as moral agents that can reconfigure the arena of normative landmarks in the social space.

Multiculturalism is not an *ex nihilo* creation of the postmodern world, but it appears even in pre-modern societies. In the era of Ottoman Empire's expansion, there was the so-called *millet* system, in which the religious communities had the right to self-govern

each according to their own jurisdiction. This means that religious pluralism can work in non-democratic societies as well. However, in pre-modern societies, ethnic or religious minorities had a subordinate status. They governed themselves in internal matters, meant to preserve their cultural identity, but not in relations with the imperial authority. They had, so to speak, cultural rights, but not political rights. For example, in the Ottoman Empire, only Muslims had full citizenship. In modern societies, ethnic and religious communities claim equal political rights.

Ethnic multiculturalism appears in countries that are faced with the following issue: a *de facto* diversity of ethnic groups and only one (public) national culture in which all citizens, members of these groups, have to assimilate each other. The "American Creed", meaning one public culture only, that was passed on by the founding fathers of America, led to a counter-reaction of the migrants' groups or of the Black population, who did not find themselves in this national culture: thus, multiculturalism made its mark in America (Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, natives, i.e. indigenous groups). Canada and Australia were faced with the same situation. Therefore, multiculturalism emerges as a (plausible) answer to multicultural cohabitation situations in multi-ethnic states, being the normative answer to this state of fact, which can be expressed in the form of public discourse, of official policies or of explicitly formulated law.

In the multicultural public space, the issues of cohabitation get complicated. Multiple, unpredictable interactions, mixtures, miscegenation and naturalizations are counterbalanced by an equally natural tendency to preserve the identities of origin. Resistance to the alienating effects of the mixture of races, cultures and traditions (*melting pot*) is sometimes expressed by segregation or ghettoization. Communities (the frequently underprivileged ones) group in neighbourhoods based on religion, origin, traditions, norms, values. In order to preserve the inherited collective identity, they look for ethnic homogeneity, which makes the mixture difficult or even impossible. Such isolated communities ensure a certain solidarity and security of their members. Other times, ghettoization is the effect of state policy, being imposed, as in the case of the apartheid which the black population of South Africa was subjected to.

But how to maintain the egalitarian ethos of the modern world, when at stake are no longer individuals, but cultural groups, who demand public recognition, equal respect, and the right to self-determination and self-government in internal affairs? The recognition of cultural rights for ethnic groups of migrants or for historical minorities entails an inequality against the majority population of a national state or the dominant community. Why should one be afraid that people are concerned about asserting their collective identity and why is this fear so persistent? Because any identification means delimitation, distinction, separation and can be the source of hierarchy, injustice and inequity, even in the form of positive discrimination. Also, because inherited collective identities have a greater capacity for survival and can undermine the chosen or constructed ones. For modern societies, whose institutions reflect the egalitarian ethos, any normative model (legal or moral)

will rely on the distinction between public and private and on an individualistic social anthropology.

At the same time, the claim of the members of the cultural communities to receive the public recognition of their distinct collective identity is legitimate. Starting from the example of ancient Greek cities, Hannah Arendt acknowledged the importance of public space as a favourite *locus* of visibility and affirmation of each unmistakable individual face:

> For though the common world is the common meeting ground of all, those who are present have different locations in it, and the location of one can no more coincide with the location of another than the location of two objects. Being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position. (Arendt 1998, 57)

In the multicultural public space, the situation is much more complicated than in the homogeneous public space of the ancient polis. The normative requirements of the recognition politics contradict the individual natural rights, especially when for their realization they invoke the so-called cultural rights. For the supporters of methodological individualism, any society is regarded as a consensual association. Ethno-cultural groups are no exception either. Society is a sum of individuals; only individuals have full ontological reality. Consequently, they are the source of any normative theory. So, cultural rights as collective rights cannot be recognized. John Rawls's theory of justice is a normative theory that, like any contractualist theory, strives to legitimize that political order that protects individual rights. Rawls proposes a thought experiment according to which the constitutive principles of a just society are freely chosen by human individuals as rational agents behind the veil of ignorance, that is, when the benefits and social position arising from social competition after the entry of people into society remain unknown. The two principles are:

> First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others. Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all. (Rawls 1971, 60)

The individuals' belonging to ethnic groups cannot be invoked alongside the principles of justice (as stipulated by deontological liberalism) for the regulation of public space. It is that society which derives its rules, procedures and institutions from certain principles not resulting from a particular view of the world or good that will be just (and equitable). That is why they are sent to the private sphere of individual existence or of elective affinities and tastes that the civil society members share. Cultural identity shares, according to Rawls' deontological liberalism, the same fate as the substantive values, beliefs, views of the world and of the good. What Rawls means is that ethno-cultural membership (just like values, moral beliefs, ideals) should not influence the choice of the principles of justice, of the rational, deontological way in which cohabitation must be regulated.

Human individuals as rational agents are conceived not only as selfish, mercantile beings capable of making, based on a deductive calculation, voluntary, consensual

decisions regarding the best form of social beneficial cooperation. They are also conceived as beings that are defined mainly by the ability to choose and not by what they choose or by the context of choice.

Procedural liberalism assumes, *a priori*, that moral doctrines, worldviews are necessarily particular, that they cannot be the subject of a disinterested and objective rational consensus. Values, beliefs, convictions, which can be freely professed in the private sphere and can be publicly expressed as long as they do not prejudice the existence of the other members of society, have the same fate. But instrumental reasoning subordinates the values of interests, deconstructs traditions, loyalties, affiliations, the entire identitary ethos. Sandel criticizes the simplifying anthropological model of deontological liberalism in which man as a rational agent is defined only by his ability to choose:

> The priority of the self over its ends means that I am not merely the passive receptacle of the accumulated aims, attributes and purposes thrown up by experience, not simply a product of the vagaries of circumstance, but always, irreducibly, an active, willing agent, distinguishable from my surroundings, and capable of choice. (Sandel 1982, 19)

The ultimate consequence of this vision is the reduction of all identities and affiliations to the choices made by the individual. Therefore, traditions and affiliations can no longer have a constitutive role in shaping the human individual, but are mere contingent determinations, which can be changed by free decision.

The political reality of coexistence of cultural groups in today's world requires the rethinking of political theory. The pluralism of values and life forms has made it clear that looking for a consensus is impossible not only with regard to values, but even to principles. That is why even Rawls finds himself compelled to reformulate the initial version of his liberal theory so as to acknowledge the right to existence of various ways and styles of life, hence of traditions and cultures with their specific features. The compromise solution is to abandon the ideal of a universal, rationally abstract consensus and accept some forms of *overlapping consensus* (Rawls 1993, 141-2). Such an overlapping consensus becomes required when cultures and lifestyles, grounded on radically different/incompatible experiences, fundamental values, world views and conceptions, come to coexist.

In that event, multicultural public space should not rely on the ideal of *consensus*, but on the pragmatic exigency of *coexistence*, negotiated by taking into account the cardinal values which guide specific lifestyles and behaviour elements which best express ethnic groups. The rules of cohabitation should be adapted to the context and should involve mutual recognition, the importance of cultural difference in addition to equality of rights. The principles of cohabitation and cooperation should express a *modus vivendi* and not abstract principles (Gray 2000, 105-140). The rules of cohabitation should be adopted in the presence of values and not disregarding them, behind a symbolic veil of ignorance. This entails a rethinking of the relationship between public space and private sphere.

Regarding the relations between fundamentally incommensurable cultures, one cannot speak of a consensual agreement on the model of the social contract. There is a

temptation to solve the problem of coexistence of ethnic groups by invoking a surrogate identity, a constructed one – *citizenship* – instead of inherited cultural identities.

Cultural affiliations are not necessarily an obstacle to citizenship. *Multicultural citizenship* does not abandon the doctrinal foundation of human rights, but, at the same time, is a much more nuanced institution because it takes into account the ethno-cultural differences among individuals; it supports a unitary politico-administrative, though not uniform, identity; it is a form of differentiated citizenship which is sensitive to values and the collective identities of affiliation of individuals (Kymlicka, 1995).

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