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MODERN IDENTITIES BETWEEN AUTONOMY AND AUTHENCITY

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Man is the Encompassing that we are;
yet even as the Encompassing, man is split.
Jaspers, K. "On my Philosophy"1
In Walter Kaufmann (ed.) 1988. *Existentialism from Dostoyevsky to Sarte*. Meridian Books.

A transcendental philosophy comes to its actual and true beginning only when the philosopher has penetrated to a clear *understanding of himself as the subjectivity functioning as primal source* (Husserl 1992:137). This ambitious task is not the objective of this article. It has a more modest task: to introduce the problematique of identities.

Since Galileo, mathematics has been presumed to be the basis of an ideal world as the only real, known and knowable world – our everyday life-world. This world *abstracts* itself from the subjects as individuals with their own private life, from everything spiritual, from all cultural properties of things that are generated in human practice. This abstraction results in bare material things which, however, are perceived as concrete realities and thematized in their totality as one world.

Husserl defines the loss of the ontic meaning of science as "crisis" and notes the change that has been under way since the end of the 19th century: this change is not related to the scientific nature of science, but to what science might mean *for human existence*.

Objectivism addresses the world that is pre-given by experience as self-evident and inquires into its "objective truth." Attaining universal knowledge – that is the concern of the episteme of reason.

Transcendentalism says that the ontic meaning of the pre-given life-world is a *fiction*, an achievement of the knowing, pre-scientific life. It establishes the meaning and ontic validity of the world, of *this* world which is truly valid for the knower at a given time. As regards the objectively truthful world of science, it is a *higher-level formation* based on pre-scientific knowledge and thinking. Only an inquiry back into subjectivity, about the subjectivity that *ultimately* attains the entire validity of the world, as well as about What reason attains and How, may make the objective truth comprehensible and grasp the ultimate ontic meaning of the world. It is not the being of the world that is primary and important; *subjectivity in itself is primary* – at that, as subjectivity that pre-gives the being of the world naively and then rationalizes or, which is the same, objectivizes it (Husserl 1992:96)

The whole transcendental set of problems circles around the relation of *this*, my "I" - the "ego" – and around the relation of this ego and my conscious life to the world of which I am conscious and whose true being I know through my own cognitive structures (Husserl 1992:136).

The shift of focus from objectivity to subjectivity, from reality to the subject, is the first dimension of the theoretical horizon of this study.

The second dimension is the transition from a singular to a plural subject. In the philosophical promotion of the Self by Descartes, "*Cogito, ergo sum*" (I think, therefore I am), the identity of the thinking and existing subject asserts the principle of *cogito* and, therefore, of a *consistence* of the subject. Certain contemporary interpretations radically divide this identity. Lacan rewrites this classical thought in a new way: Je pense: *Donc je suis* (I think: *therefore I am*). The superficial punctuation changes and even inverts the thought. Instead of an identical subject in the two parts of the sentence, there are two different subjects: the subject of the expression "Therefore, *I* am," and of the statement "It is *I* who thinks." They are divided by a punctuation that stands for the time of the unconscious. According to Lacan, philosophical discourse strives to unite what is non-unitable. The subject in psychoanalysis is deeply divided – Freud's last, unfinished text is *Ichspaltung* (the division, split of the Self. The unconscious is the engine of this division. The subject is in internal exclusion from its object. The subject's object is an object of desire (Freud et Lacan 1964).

For the purpose of this study, it is the fact of Lacan's interpretation – not the details of his concept – that is relevant. An interpretation that radically divides the identity and consistence of the Cartesian subject.

Classical philosophy thinks the self as a basis and essence of subjectivity, and the latter, as something internal in regard to the externality of the world. For Freud, the Ego is between the Id and the Super-Ego: the subject is no longer in opposition to the world, as well as itself, the external world is internalized by the subject itself. Althusser sums up the evolution of the ideas of the Self: "After Copernicus we know that the Earth is not the centre of the universe. After Marx we know that the human subject, the economic, political

or philosophical Self, is not the centre of history. Freud shows us that the real subject, the individual in his singular essence, does not have the figure of an ego centred on 'Self,' 'consciousness' or 'existence', that the subject is decentred, constituted by a structure that itself has a centre only in the imaginary non-recognition of the Self i.e. in the ideological formations in which it is identified" (Freud et Lacan 1964).

Third, I would like to note different figures of the Self that have been constituted by philosophical questions ever since Descartes. In the Cartesian question "Who am I?" the Self is a single but *universal* and non-historical subject. Self is anybody, irrespective of time and place. The question posed by Kant is different: "Who are we, precisely and exactly at this instance of history?" (Foucault 1992:71). The subject becomes *historic*. Today the subject is *particular*: male or female, black or white, member of a minority or majority, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist…

Identity and Difference

Identity is usually defined by the formula A=A. What does that mean? According to Heidegger (1968), this formula represents the equality of A and A. The latter requires at least two terms, one A should be equal to another A. If someone says one and the same thing, i.e. a plant is a plant, this is tautology. One term is sufficient for tautology. Equality requires two terms.

The common formula of the principle of identity, A=A, actually conceals its deepest essence, Heidegger stresses. He thinks that this essence is expressed more adequately by A *is* A, and formulated best as "*any A is itself identical with itself*" (Heidegger 1968:258). "Identity presupposes a relation denoted by the preposition *with*, i.e. mediation, link, synthesis: interconnection in a unity" (Heidegger 1968:259). This expounded definition highlights the distinction between identical and equal. "All differences disappear in the equal, and appear in the identical" (Heidegger 1968:280). This distinction is of fundamental importance, it is a discovery that took long *time of thought*, slow and profound maturing.

Western thought thematizes identity as unity. It took a long time to come to the idea that identity does not necessarily have to be thought as simple uniformity and to formulate the principle of mediation. The latter shows the relation of the same to itself – which is at the very heart of identity. "Thought took more than two millennia to discover and understand such a simple relation as the internal mediation of identity" (Heidegger 1968:275).

The first philosopher who distinctly articulated identity, according to Heidegger, is Parmenides of Elea: the Parmenidean One is actually both thought and being. Two *different* things – thought and being - are perceived as *one*. "Thought and being are contained in identity, whose essence is co-belonging" (Heidegger 1968:273). Parmenides regards being as a basis and trait of identity. Later, metaphysics would take the opposite approach, presenting identity as a trait of being.

Heidegger does not attempt to explicate the Parmenidean concept fully. He admits that its centralconcept – *One* – remains unclear, but invites us "to let its non-transparency and unclarity be" (Heidegger 1968:262). What he keeps from the ancient philosopher's thought is the idea of co-belonging, of plurality in identity.

Identity is "unity *with* itself." Naturally, it is the unity that is important. The *with*-relation, mediation, is just as important. Mediation permeates identity, introduces difference in its very core.

Difference is conceptualized not simply as a central concept without which identity cannot be understood. Difference is conceptualized as a central concept in a certain type of philosophizing. Heidegger explains his distinction from Hegel's thought as follows: "For Hegel, thought refers to total thought as an absolute notion. For me thought refers to difference *as* difference" (Heidegger 1968:282).

Heidegger's position is characteristic of two important dimensions in the evolution of the concept of identity:

- argumentation of difference not simply as a correlative concept of identity, but as inherent to the latter;
- valuation of difference.

Classical philosophy accentuates *identity*, homogeneity. Differences are perceived as a specificity, as an exception that tends to confirm the rule. Leibniz is categorical: "in the natural order the statement that something is what it is precedes the statement that it is not something else" (Leibniz 1974:525-6).

Contemporary philosophy confers philosophical status on the concept of difference – it is a key notion in Derrida, Deleuze, Lyotard… Analyzing Nietzsche's genealogical method, Foucault notes that in the historical genealogy of things one will *not* find the inviolable *identity* of their primal source, but *discordance* with *difference*. This is *heterogeneity* (Foucault 1992).

Instead of the "smooth" dialectic between "same" and "other," "identical" and "different" in classical thought, contemporary science dares to talk of differences without identity: Saussure claims that there is

nothing but differences in language; Lévi-Strauss articulates propositions in the spirit of an incompatibility of cultures.

Postmodernism sees one of the objectives of deconstruction as the *invention* of otherness. The purpose is to deconstruct closed structures, enabling acceptance of the Other. This other is neither superior to the same, nor entirely new and external. This other rearranges the very oppositions of same-different, internal-external, old-new (Derrida 1992:311). If we feel so tired, Derrida writes in the early 90s, that is because we are within the range of the same and the possible. In it even new things and inventions belong to the sphere of the familiar and the possible. Derrida wants to deconstruct precisely this type of invention because it makes the person subservient to the economy of the same with its techno-science, politics and institutions. His objective is to construct a new "us." The latter cannot be simply discovered, nor can it invent itself: "It can be invented only by the Other, who says 'come here,' the response to which by another 'come here' is the only desirable and worthy of interest invention" (Derrida 1992:342). Thus the polyphony of the same is replaced with a plurality of voices.

Classical thought regards identity as natural and even desirable: "The mind … loves unity in plurality…" (Leibniz 1974:544). Modern thought feels doomed to difference. Borges writes an essay called "Borges **and** I": "Spinoza thinks that every thing *strives* to *remain* what it is *forever*; the stone wants to be a stone and the tiger, a tiger, forever. I am *doomed* to remain Borges, and *not myself*" (Borges 1996:268).

Identity no longer has a "unit." If it once was a principle of explaining the world, today it cannot find refuge even in the individual. Since theory can no longer think identity, it has no choice but to concentrate on difference. J. Kristeva wonders, "What could identity mean … in a new theoretical and scientific space, where the very notion of identity is called into question? The only solution is in unravelling the problem of otherness" (Kristeva 1986:16).

Of the many concepts thematizing selfhood and identity from the perspective of difference, I will dwell briefly on two: on George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism and on Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic phenomenology.

George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interactionism

The main thesis of symbolic interactionism is that social interaction is the "natural" and only possible environment in which selfhood may be expounded. The Selves may exist only in definite interactions with other Selves. No distinct and insurmountable boundary may be drawn between our own Self and that of the others, because our Self exists and is imported as such in our experience only insofar as the Self of the others exists and is imported as such in our experience. The individual has an "Self" only in his relation with the "Self" of the other members of his social group or reflects the general behavioural model of the social group to which he belongs, and this applies to the Self of any of its other members (Mead 1997:249).

Mead identifies a three-tier structure of selfhood:

I – the active agent;

Me – myself as others see me; from a grammatical point of view, "me" presupposes passivity, life as an object;

Generalized Other – the ability to internalize the point of view of the others.

One starts experiencing oneself as "Self" or as an individual not directly, by becoming oneself's subject, but only insofar as one becomes oneself's object, just as the other individuals are objects for oneself. One becomes oneself's object only by internalizing the attitudes of the other individuals to oneself within the social environment in which they are all participants (Mead 1997:217-8). The attitudes of the others, organized and incorporated in "I" are conceptualized through "Me." Of course, if there was only "me" in the "Self", then the latter would have simply been a reflection of the social structure.

"I" is the principle of action and the impulse that the action of " I" changes the social structure: "the individual is not a captive of society. He constitutes society just as naturally as society constitutes the individual" (Mead 1997:29). "I" is not only active, but also self-reflexive. It faces the world and precisely because it detaches itself from the world since it is not simply an object among other objects, the "I" is capable of reflecting on the world. The Self may also confront itself – this ability is articulated in the distinction between *Me* and *I*.

Both aspects – "I" and "Me" – are equally relevant to the full-fledged realization of the individual. One must accept the attitudes of the others in the group in order to belong to the community, one must use this internalized external social world in order to think. Thanks to the person's relations with the others in the community and to the rational social processes in the latter, s/he is a *citizen*. On the other hand, the

individual constantly reacts to the social attitudes and, in the course of this process of cooperation, changes the very community to which s/he belongs. Those changes may be modest and trivial or radical and significant.

Someone is said to be *conventional* when his/her ideas are entirely identical with his/her neighbours': s/he is hardly superior to "Me." The attitude of the genius, the leader, the creator, who effect significant changes, is radically opposite. For them "I" is the more important part of experience (Mead 1997:293-294).

"I" gives a sense of freedom, of initiative. The situation and our presence in this situation are given, but our precise course of action in never becomes part of experience before the action has taken place (Mead 1997:266).

"Me" requires a definite "I," insofar as we fulfill the duties prescribed in behaviour itself, but "I" invariably differs from the requirement of the situation, therefore there is always a distinction between "I" and "Me."

The different types of societies give priority to the first or second dimension of the self. In traditional society, individuality is built by the *attainment* of a particular social type, and in modern society, by the individual's *deviation* from a particular social type (Mead 1997:320).

"Me" is so important that mind itself is defined by Mead through its ability to internalize the social process in the individual. A person who is incapable of performing a definite amount of stereotype work is not a healthy individual. Both the health of the individual and the stability of society require a considerable amount of such activity (Mead 1997:309).

"I" is just as important, because it simultaneously challenges and reacts to "Me." "I" belongs to the occurring and is, in a sense, the most charming part of our experience. That is precisely where novelty emerges and where our most important values are localized. Realization of this "I" is what we are constantly in quest for. It is best expressed in the artist, the inventor, the scientist in his/her discovery, the statesman, the religious leader.

Together, they constitute the personality as it is manifested in social experience. The Self is the social process that occurs in those two distinguishable phases. If it did not have those two forms, conscious responsibility would have been impossible and there would have been nothing new in experience (Mead 1997:267).

The Generalized Other is our ability to identify with the other's position – a precondition for the universality of signs which, in turn, is a condition for communication and thinking.

Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Ricoeur's approach of hermeneutics of selfhood is equidistant from the apology of the Cartesian subject and from its dissolution. Ricoeur's comment on this irregular rhythm of overrating or underrating the subject is in the vein of the well-known psychoanalytic assessment of the father, "of whom there is either too much or too little" (Ricoeur 1990:15).

In the Cartesian *Cogito*, the "I" of "I think" is elevated to prime truth and fundamental cause. This subjectivity, which is posited through reflection on one's self-suspicion, is an unanchored subjectivity that is free of "psychology" and "autobiography". The Self is exalted, but at the price of a loss of the relation with the person, with the *I-you* of dialogue, with the identity of the historical figure, with the Self of responsibility (Ricoeur 1990:22). Is it worth paying such a price for the exaltation of *Cogito*, Ricoeur asks rhetorically.

The shattered *Cogito*: this is the main conclusion and message of the opposite tradition epitomized by Nietzsche. His attack on the fundamental claims of philosophy starts from language, showing how rhetorical strategies are hidden or forgotten in the name of the immediacy of thinking. The truth itself is presented as a dynamic plurality of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms – or, as a sum of human relations which, having been poetically and rhetorically embellished and used extensively, start appearing to be strict, canonical and compulsory. Truths are illusions that have been forgotten as such. To positivism, which believes in the "solidity" of facts, Nietzsche opposes the idea that there are no facts but only interpretations. He takes yet another radical step, postulating the phenomenality of the inner world too: everything that occurs consciously has been ordered, schematized, interpreted *a priori*. In Nietzsche's aporia, "the Self" is not intrinsic to Cogito, but an interpretation. "To posit substance *under* Cogito or a cause *behind* it, is simply the grammatical habit of ascribing an agent to any action" (Ricoeur 1990:27).

Ricoeur notes that Nietzsche's interpretation is not the opposite of the Cartesian one, it destroys the very question to which *Cogito* aims to give an absolute answer (Ricoeur 1990:25).

Ricoeur's epistemological distance from Descartes concerns two main aspects: the immediacy of *I am* and its claims to ultimate cause. In Ricoeur's interpretation the self is never separated from its other. "*The autonomy*

of self is intimately bound with *care* for the close one and with *justice* for all" (Ricoeur 1990:30). Contrary to the Cartesian subject, Ricoeur thematizes the human being as *acting* and *suffering*.

Ricoeur qualifies his own analysis as fragmentary. The epistemological arguments in favour of the chosen approach are that hermeneutics is immersed in the historicity of the inquiries into selfhood. Ricoeur, however, avoids the extremes of this approach, which leads to a dissolution of the self and reduces discourse to silence. Fragmentariness "is upheld by the *thematic unity* of *human action*" (Ricoeur 1990:31).

Ricoeur conceptualizes identity as a dialectic between two dimensions:

- *identity-idem* – permanence of the invariable substance unaffected by time – sameness (*mêmeté*);
- *identity-ipse* – the change, transformation – ipseity (*ipséité*). Ipseity does not presuppose any invariable core of the personality.

Sameness corresponds to the question of *what*, and ipseity, to the question of *who* (Ricoeur 1996).

Sameness is a term for relation and for relation of relations. First comes *numerical* identity – we refer to two manifestations of one thing designated by an invariant name not as two different things, but as "one and the same" thing. Here identity means singularity – the opposite of plurality (one, not two or many things). This first dimension of identity corresponds to the operation of "identification," in terms of reidentification of the same, where to cognize means to recognize: one thing twice, *n* times (Ricoeur 1990:140-141).

Next comes qualitative identity: we say that X and Y, who wear the same suit, are so much alike that we might confuse them. This second dimension of identity corresponds to the operation of "substitution" without semantic loss.

The two dimensions of identity are not mutually reducible, as the categories of quantity and quality in Kant, but neither are they wholly unrelated. Insofar as time is involved in the series of manifestations of one thing, the new identification of the same may cause hesitation, doubt, denial: the ultimate identification of the defendant in court with the perpetrator of the crime is difficult – and, in some cases, impossible – in many trials.

If sameness is expressed best by the term *character*, the essence of ipseity is manifested in *the kept promise*. Here self-maintenance (*maintien de soi*) is of a different type. It does not allow itself to be incorporated into something general, but is related only to the question of *who*. "Continuity of character is one thing, and consistence in friendship, another" (Ricoeur 1990:148).

Ricoeur's dynamic concept of identity unites notions which Locke – along with many other philosophers – regards as opposites: identity and difference. Otherness is declared to be as important and primary as selfhood. The beginning is posited not just by the self, but by the other too.

Oneself as another – the emblematic title of Ricoeur's seminal work (1990) – raises the problem of the dialectic between *selfhood* and the other, who is different from *selfhood*. This otherness is of a specific type. "It is not just the difference of sameness. The latter is usually thought as an antonym of other, opposite, different, unequal, converse. This otherness is constitutive of ipseity itself. *Oneself as another* suggests that the ipseity of selfhood incorporates otherness in such an intimate way that the one cannot be thought without the other, that the one tends to converge with the other… I would like to lend strong meaning to *as* not only as a comparison – oneself similar to another, but as implication – oneself in its capacity as… another" (Ricoeur 1990:14).

I would single out two of the many ideas in Ricoeur's concept. The first is the avoidance of "the alternative of substantialism: either the invariance of a non-temporal core, or the dissolution in impressions, as in Hume and Nietzsche" (Ricoeur 1996:65). The latter is the dialectic of selfhood and otherness, the incorporation of otherness and difference in the very structure of identity.

Those main ideas are applicable both to individuals and communities. Many current debates on ethnic and national identities would acquire another character, notes Ricoeur, if they proceeded from the dialectic of change and self-preservation "through vow and promise": "Let us no longer seek fixed substance behind these communities; but neither should we deny them the ability to survive through creative loyalty to fundamental events which posit them in time" (Ricoeur 1996:66).

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Both concepts noted above perceive the relation of selfhood and otherness as positive. For G.H. Mead this relation is a natural dimension of social interactions, which express the very essence of the social. In P. Ricoeur's concept, the notion of *care for the other* is important. Even when the Other is not the one from the relationship of friendship but the faceless one from the relationships with institutions, the latter are thought in the perspective of the ideal of justice.

From this overview of certain concepts of identities, I would like to single out two of the latter's traits: their construed and their problematic character.

Construed Character of Identities

"If Man had a 'nature,' an invariable being such as that of minerals, plants and animals, we would have known once and for all what his actions meant; but since he does *not* have such a *nature*, in every age Man stakes his life on different, more or less new, objectives…" (Ortega y Gasset 1993:250-1).

This thought of Ortega y Gasset expresses the main trend in the thematization of identities – namely, their *desubstantialization*. The self is perceived as a process rather than as a substance. We have seen that for G.H. Mead this process is social interaction. According to Sartre, the person does not have a "nature," an "essence," s/he is what s/he makes from him/herself; *existence precedes essence.*

Not bondage but liberty is what Jaspers identifies as the ultimate specificity of man: "the essence of man is in perpetual motion. Every newborn is not only bound to a predestined course, but is also a new beginning. The animal only repeats what it has already been. Man cannot be as he has already been" (Jaspers 1995:54). "What man might be, remains hidden in his freedom. He will not cease to reveal himself through the manifestations of his freedom. As long as people live, they will be beings that will have to accomplish themselves" (ibid: 64).

Transition, movement, change are fundamental to understanding identities. Deleuze thematizes them not only as "human nature," but as "becoming": what is actual is not what we are but, rather, what we become, i.e. the Other, our *becoming-other*. We must distinguish between what we are (what we no longer are) and what we are becoming right now: *the part that is history and the part that is actual*. History is the archive, the contour of what we are and what we cease to be, whereas the actual is the outline of what we are becoming. History or archive – this, precisely, still distinguishes us from ourselves; whereas the *actual* is the Other with which we now coincide (Deleuze 1997:121).

M. Foucault's normative individualization fits into this perspective too. It occurs without reference to any essence of the subjects and does not aim to reveal qualities which the individual has *per se* and which are typical of his/her species or nature. This is "individualization *without substance*, to some extent as in the system of language the opposition of signifiers invariably refers only to some kind of differences, without being possible to reach some sort of substance of the signifier. Pure relation. A relation without basis""(Eswald 1997:150-151).

Desubstantialization does not mean that "essence," "nature," "substance" are rejected. What is rejected is their determinism, their determinant power over the person. They are limited in order to "expand" the realm of freedom so that the latter could be something more than a "recognized necessity," so that its law could be formulated not only beyond, but also within the person.

Proceeding from literature, Ricoeur points out two extreme cases of consistence and change of identities:

- *permanent identity* – in fairy-tales, folklore, the early classic novel;
- *dissolution of identity* – the character in the novels of Kafka, Joyce, Musil, in the post-classical novel in general. Does this mean that all identity has disappeared? No: would we have been concerned with the drama of the disintegration of the *identity-ipse* if it did not stress the pervasive nature of the question of who am I? In this case, *who* am I is deprived of the reference point of the question *what* am I. Ipseity has dissolved in sameness.

Contemporary literature and human studies focus mainly on the second case, but everyday life moves *between* the two poles of almost complete *overlapping* of ipseity and sameness, and their almost complete *dissolution*.

I would say that everyday life is much more attached to sameness. The concern of human studies with ipseity sounds like a counterpoint, like an aspiration of culture to broaden horizons that are not sufficiently articulate in everyday life.

Problematic Identity

"I often feel a powerful *longing for myself*. I know, the road is quite long, but in my best dreams I picture the day I will welcome myself" (Rilke 1993:11).

"We are *wedged to the self*, to its *poison*. If the belief that you are *unique* stems from an illusion, the illusion is so universal and powerful that we could well ask ourselves if we still have the right to call it such. How could we spurn something which we never discover, this unheard of and wretched thing that bears our name? The said illusion is so deeply anchored in each one of us that we could defeat it only in an unexpected whirlpool that carries off the self and leaves us alone, without anybody, without ourselves" (Cioran 1996:171).

Those two quotes reveal the contradictory and dramatic attitude of modern culture to identity: as an existential need and as predestination; as a yearning for self-attainment and an impossibility of avoiding the pitfalls of selfhood.

Paradoxically – and indicatively - the problemization of identities comes from two sources that are different to the point of opposites. They are related to the two notions that are crucial to the understanding of modern identity: *autonomy* and *authenticity*.

Autonomy is the crucial concept that characterizes the subject of modern society: if the *archaic* person is an *imitator*, the modern person is a *constructor*, an actor, an agent. M. Eliade notes that in the "primitive" ontological conception a certain object or action become real only to the extent to which they *imitate* or *repeat* an archetype. Thus reality is attained only through *repetition* or *commitment*; anything that does not have a role model is "deprived of meaning," i.e. lacks reality. Consequently, the person from traditional culture is perceived as real only to the extent to which s/he stops being him/herself (for a contemporary observer) and is content to *imitate* and repeat the gestures of someone *else*. S/he is not perceived as real, i.e. as really him/herself, except to the extent to which s/he truly ceases to be such… (Eliade 1994).

Hume proposes a brilliant theoretical model of the modern perception of the world: in the very essence of things, there is no compulsory relation between anything. The true relations in the world may be established by:

a) thinking things separately, reducing them mentally to their pure elements;

b) establishing empirically what is related in reality and with what.

The position – of both the researcher and of the entrepreneur – has one and the same premises. To be one of the actors Of the world of infinite discoveries, the researcher should not be restricted by the natural tendency of *a priori* relations between things. Neither does the entrepreneur want tradition to prescribe him/her ways of linking labour, machinery and land, to force a particular social rhythm on him/her, but to be free to choose the means in the name of profit. This is the position of the autonomous individual.

J. Rawls defines autonomy as the ability to form, revise and rationally pursue a particular notion of good. The individual might not even be precisely aware of this notion of good, but knows that s/he is him/herself capable of deciding how to live. G. Dworkin notes that autonomy is people's ability of the second order to reflect on their first-order preferences, desires, etc., as well as the ability to accept or strive to change them in the light of preferences of a higher order (Dworkin 1996:360).

If the pole of activity and freedom is thematized through the notion of autonomy, the pole of introspection is thematized through authenticity.

As autonomy, authenticity is a modern notion. Both were asserted at approximately the same time, in the late 18th century, but their essence is opposite. Authenticity expresses the strong subjective turn in modern culture, the new form of introversion in which we think ourselves as beings with inner depth.

The first philosopher to articulate this cultural turn is Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He sees moral salvation in the rediscovery of the authentic moral contact with ourselves. He calls this profound intimate contact with the self – more fundamental than any moral concept – "sense of existence ".

The *ethics of authenticity* is opposed to disengaged rationality (since Descartes) and social atomism, which ignores the relations of community. It rejects the concept that the knowledge of good and evil is a question of calculating the consequences, including those relevant to divine reward or retribution. The idea that the notion of good and evil is a question of cool calculation is countered by the idea that it is anchored in our feelings and intuitions. Morality becomes "a voice within."

To understand the novelty of this concept, let us recall where the source of good was sought earlier – in God or the Idea of Good. A relation with something "external" was sought. Now a relation is sought with something "internal." This "internal" is deep within us ourselves (Taylor 1991).

There is an external-internal opposition in the case of autonomy too, but it is thought in a different way. In the case of authenticity "internal" is thematized as *activity*, an ability for autonomous decisions and rational choice, whereas here it is *depth*, compliance with internal impulses. This does not rule out the relation with God or Ideas, but it is interpreted as our own way of addressing them. The path followed is the one outlined by St Augustine, who believes that the path to God runs through our self-awareness.

Christian civilization offers a whole series of spiritual techniques of individual introversion. If Greek culture interpreted dreams in terms of their relevance to the future, Vernant cites 3rd-4th century texts from monasteries instructing young monks, who are telling their dreams to their superiors, to interpret those dreams in view of the (im)purity within themselves. Greek culture is not familiar with this introversion (Vernant 1998:14).

One of the first and best theoreticians of authenticity, Herder, expounds the idea that each one of us has one's own original way of being human: every human being has his/her own "measure." Herder applies this concept at two levels:
- the individual;
- the people. As every individual, the people ought to be true to itself, to its culture.

Prior to the 18th century no one attributed such great moral meaning to the differences between human beings. This new concept of the person has become a new moral duty: to be loyal to oneself and to one's own way of being. Lionel Trilling calls this *ideal of authenticity*. I am destined to live my life in my own specific way. If I fail, I am inferior (Taylor 1991).

Sartre talks of an authentic and non-authentic freedom of the individual in a particular situation. Authenticity is the clear and truthful recognition of the situation, acceptance of the responsibilities and risks it entails, the requirement that it be maintained in pride and humiliation and, sometimes, in horror and hatred. Authenticity requires great courage and even more than courage (Sartre 1954).

This powerful moral idea attributes great significance to the contact with the self, to the relation with my internal essence. There is heightened sensitivity to the danger of its loss due to *conformism*, as well as an *instrumental attitude to myself*.

The principle of *originality* – each one of us has something unique to say - acquires greater importance. The archetype of this notion of the person is the *artist*.

Autonomy and authenticity make identities problematic in a different way. The former, by depriving the person of transcendental mainstays and of the comfort of shared meanings guaranteed by communities. The ideal of authenticity expresses the need of constant self-achievement. It is synonymous with the problematic, because it does not offer any guarantees of identities, but requires their constant confirmation.

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