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"Das Unbehagen in der Multi-Kultur"
Phenomenology of Discontent in a Multi-cultural Society, and How to Take Care of It

Keynote Lecture, by Sergio Caruso Ph.D.[1]

Dear friends and colleagues, thank you everybody for being here. Let me also thank the Scientific Committee for this honour they did me to open our XIV Joint Meeting "in the footsteps of Silvano Arieti" on «Multicultural Factors in Psychotherapy».

When charged with giving the OPIFER Keynote Lecture, such being the general subject of our Joint Meeting, I asked myself: how shall I contrive my lecture? And since, besides being a psychologist and a psychoanalyst, I am a philosopher of social sciences as well, I thought it useful to begin with some considerations on the very concept of multiculturalism and multicultural society, in the hope to clarify some aspects of what is becoming the new background of our lives and our work in a globalised world.

Afterwards, or even by the way, with the help of social psychology, ethno-psychiatry, cross-cultural psychiatry, and transcultural psychiatry (but please, do not expect anything more than a few hints), I will try to explain how those aspects challenge the theory of psychoanalysis, and the practice of psychotherapy, and some paths we could, or should, follow accordingly.

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On the title of this paper: culture/civilisation and their discontents.

One more remark about the title of my presentation. It is: «Das Unbehagen in der Multi-Kultur», clearly hinting at *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* [1930], the last book of Freud's social trilogy.[2]

Totem und Tabu [1913] had been an inquiry into the origin of culture. *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* [1921] may be considered an analysis of the way it works: a sort of physiology of social order. *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, on the contrary, offered a new view: culture is not only the source of social order, it is also the main source of internal disorder. In other words: beyond physiology, there is a pathology of culture as well.

As often, the English translation – *Civilisation and Its Discontents* - is not at all satisfying. In fact, Freud does *not* refer to "civilisation" in the sense of *modern* civilisation, that of highly "civilised" countries. Which in German would have been *Zivilisation*: a term that, in the German philosophical debate of the Twenties, is much to do with modernity, industrial growing, urban life-styles. The word he uses instead is *Kultur*, i.e. human culture in general as opposed to nature. And what we find *in der Kultur* is *das Unbehagen*, which is not "discontents" (plural), rather "discontent" (singular): a kind of uneasiness, a peculiar source of different anxieties.

So, *das Unbehagen* does not call for any nosology of modernity (something Freud had already done years before, analysing *die moderne Nervosität* [Freud 1908]; rather, it is the name of the price each of us is to pay to be human. No free lunch: insofar it requires repression of instinctual drives, culture has a cost in terms of anxieties. A price – be it clear – that Freud holds worthy paying: there is no looking back in nostalgia to some unlikely state of nature where nothing is forbidden. Few works of Freud's have been misunderstood more than this one: his worry was not at all about the cost of *Kultur*, rather about its fragility! And much more worried must he be that the subtle crust of culture might break, at least locally, if we think of the moment when he wrote and published this work: 1929-30, years of world crisis, both economic and moral, between the massacre of WW1 and the spread of totalitarianism being a prelude to WW2.

Nowadays we are in the middle of a new world crisis: undoubtedly the worst after the Great Depression of the Thirties; maybe the worst of all including that one, at least for Europe. And once again the subtle crust of *Kultur* is at risk of breaking and giving way to disruptive forces such as hatred and envy, malignant narcissism

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[2] I must confess: when asked to give this lecture on psychodynamic psychotherapy in a multicultural world, the paraphrase of Freud's title was the first thing that came to my mind; and for weeks, while writing, I have felt so childishly proud with inventing such a witty heading! Alas, a few days ago, on the internet I came across an essay by a German sociologist – Bernd Weiler (1971-2006) – whose title contained the same identical paraphrase [Weiler 2006]. Which therefore turned out to be not so original as I had hoped. Notwithstanding that, I decided to leave the title unchanged: as a tardy homage to a brilliant scholar prematurely deceased.

and, worst of all, stupidity. There must be a culprit, and once again the Stranger, the Foreigner, are the easiest scapegoats of our rage. Are not aggressive ethnocentrism and social prejudice the political transposition, respectively, of malignant narcissism and stupidity?

The world however has changed, it is a globalised world. And even more has Europe changed. European countries have become multicultural societies; something our American friends have known much before, yet more rapidly than in the USA. The "melting pot" metaphor is fascinating, but alas! there is no melting yet, here in Europe, and I am afraid the metaphor is not completely true in America either. Indeed, we come to grips to a double «discontent»: *das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, the eternal uneasiness of culture as such, and *das Unbehagen in der Multi-Kultur*, the specific uneasiness of our times and civilisations. The danger is that the latter, if not taken care of in due time, may drive the former beyond the threshold, to the point of breaking down into pieces. Like it happened for partly different reasons in the Thirties.

"Multiculturalism": three different meanings.

"Multiculturalism" [now on: MC] is a manifold word, to designate a manifold phenomenon. I suggest that we distinguish three different meanings – ontological, axiological, methodological – depending on how we look at it: as a fact, as a value, as an idea.

(1) *Ontological meaning*, i.e. MC as an emerging reality, and an actual transformation within our societies, we can describe and analyse; namely, the coexistence on the same territory of different collective identities. The French sociologist Michel Wieworka calls it the demographic-descriptive meaning of MC [Wieworka 2001, q. in Caniglia 2002].

(2) *Axiological meaning*, i.e. MC as a value or a set of values or even an ideology, having to do with: the growing of ethnic pluralism, the status and role of communities in front of (what we were used to call) the Nation-State, the policies all that requires on the grounds of rights and duties. By axiological MC we thus mean the practical philosophy by which those policies are inspired.

(3) *Methodological meaning*, i.e. MC as an idea to be given the rank it deserves: namely a sort of compass which has become essential not to lose one's orientation in today's world, and a point of view we had better adopt to better plan our decisions, and make them fitter and more effective. To be true, MC as a point of view is no "method" in itself, since the inquiries it inspires can and does rely on many different methods (those of social sciences). What is "methodological" however is connoting this perspective as something inescapable: the firm belief that

whatever the issue we may want to inquire into, if human relations are involved, it must be seen today in a multicultural perspective. Which is apparently the belief that gave rise to this meeting.

Let us go deeper into each of the three, and also begin to see some psychological implications.

"Ontological" multiculturalism, or: differences as a matter of fact.
Which tools from social psychology?

The fact that collective identities so different from one another coexist on the same territory obviously gives rise to problems of communication that go far beyond the language. In fact: all of us are used – better: were used – to interact on the basis of a widely shared «modal personality», i.e. the basic traits shared by the relative majority of one people: an idea we owe to Cora Du Bois [1944]. Or at least on the basis of the same BPS or «basic personality structure» as defined by Linton, an anthropologist, and Kardiner, a psychoanalyst [Kardiner/Linton 1939]. Or at least on the basis of the «national character»: an old, much disputed idea, which found new life thanks to the configurationalist approach of Edward Sapir and Ruth Benedict. Or at least on the basis of a «social character» (in the sense of Fromm's theory), shared in the same historical period by many a nation [Fromm 1941].

However, in a globalised world, where time and space undergo a peculiar contraction, the *Zeitgeist* can be hardly recognized, let alone followed as a source of values (no new Hegel on the horizon, and *pour cause*), and it can hardly vouch for one «social character»: limited to the Western and rapidly changing. Rainer Funk [2005] has tried to update Fromm's theory, introducing the type of *postmoderne Ich-Orientierung*, succeeding the type described by Fromm as «marketing orientation». His analysis has found some validation in Germany thanks to Gerhard Mayer's empirical research, but nothing, or too little, do we know about the type of social character in the nations outside the Western world.

As to national character, it implies a high degree of homogeneousness and some degree of national pride, such as Montesquieu's concept of *esprit général d'un peuple* and Hegel's concept of *Volksgeist*. But in a globalised multicultural world, where all differences move from outside the political borders to inside them, also the existence of one *Volksgeist* as mirror and warrant of the national character seems to decline (apart from China, maybe, whereof we still know too little).

Indeed, we can still rely on the concept of BPS or «basic personality structure», which among them all seems to be the one best standing the test and is – not by chance – the one most referred to in the fields of cross-cultural psychiatry [Bastide 1965], ethno-psychiatry [Laplantine 1973] and ethno-psychoanalysis

[Devereux 1978]. However, in both social and clinical psychology, the use of this concept taken from Kardiner & Linton's psychoanalytically oriented anthropology is subject to two conditions:

(1) that we succeed in extending the exploration of BPS from the illitterate societies it was originally thought for, to potentially all cultures. Of course we are far from it, but I have found interesting analyses of the Algerian-Arab personality and useful observations regarding the Vietnamese personality; and many more must exist. I think a multicultural psychotherapist ought to know such literature, or at least the part regarding his/her patients.

(2) that we consider each ethnic personality model as an internally articulated set [Devereux 1985, p. 172], i.e. we are able to distinguish, within one type, certain sub-types: e.g. the Algerian urban wife vs. the Algerian urban husband, or the Vietnamese father vs. the Vietnamese mother, ando so on.

As to the idea of modal personality as a set of (measurable) traits shared by the relative majority, let me remember that "modal" is a statistical concept referring to the most frequent value, or range of values, of some variable. Now, in a segmented society more than ever, you may find many local norms: in other terms, a multicultural society is also a multimodal society, where many a norm exists. As consequence, an individual (particularly if a second-generation immigrant) may develop a bi-modal personality, obeying two different norms: that of his/her group and that of the hegemonic group. In psychoanalytic terms, we call it a dissociation. All of us psychotherapists know that a patient may simulate some kind of normalcy, to the point we hardly understand the reason why he/she came to consult us. Well, in the case of multicultural psychotherapy, there is no need for it to happen that the patient be suffering from a severe personality disorder: he/she is simply behaving with you like he/she does with all natives, like a well integrated person. I would not call it simulation (the person is simply doing his-her best), but there is a serious possibility that it does conceal a dissociation, and we should always keep it in our mind.

"Axiological" multiculturalism, or: differences as a matter of values.
Political philosophy and psychoanalysis can work together.

Needless to say, in Western political philosophy, and at liberal intellectuals' level particularly, axiological MC is more often meant in some *positive* sense, regarding "good practices" or good things we ought to do: ranging from

(a) simply tolerating what is different insofar it does not conflict with hegemonic values, to

(b) peaceful coexistence in a spirit of dialogue, to

(c) engaging the State itself in protecting, enhancing and enforcing the values, habits and life-styles of those communities.

In other terms, within axiological MC, we can further distinguish: a simply civic attitude, an ethical attitude, and a third one which is also political. This one, which I call «political MC», includes in its turn two sub-types: one top-down and another bottom-up. Wieworka calls them *multiculturalisme programmatique* (that inspiring public policies) and *multiculturalisme idéologique-normative* (giving rise to movements in the civil society, usually more exacting).

Of course, the planning of public policies, and the role of the State, does not pertain to the field of psychotherapy, if not for questions related to the NHS. All the less shall psychotherapy as such be interested in political movements. However, there are other questions on these grounds we cannot escape, neither as psychoanalysts nor as citizens. I will give three examples of political MC, where political theory may usefully call our attention to some "virtues" psychoanalysis should never forget: virtues to do with common sense, sensibleness, and reasonableness.

First. According to Will Kymlicka [1995], a Canadian political philosopher best known for his work on MC: in a liberal state (what Kant called *Republik* or *Rechtstaat*) all citizens shall be equal as individuals in front of the same law, but not necessarily all minorities shall be equal as groups. That may sound unfair, but just think of those ethnic and/or linguistic minorities who have *ab immemorabile*, or for many and many generations, lived within certain territories (where they may still constitute the relative majority) such as the French Canadians, or the Danish people in the German *Land* of Schleswig-Holstein, or the German-speaking people in the Italian province of Alto Adige/Südtirol. In all those cases, the community is bestowed the special status of «national minority», and is granted some *political* (not only *social*) rights such as self-government at local level, political representation at national level, which few of us would allow other minorities even larger.

Secondly, please note: while defining axiological MC as the practical philosophy inspiring the policies towards ethnic minorities, I said «on the grounds of rights and duties», *not only rights*. A good example is offered by the German legislation thereon, whose *motto* – said Wolfgang Schäuble (Federal Minister of Home Affairs, 2005-09) – is: *Fördern und Fordern*, meaning «help and expect», or even «finance and demand» [cf. Cerrina Feroni 2007, p. 7].

Third. We should not forget that the same term of MC can also be used on the opposite side in some *negative* sense, to designate a sort of betrayal of all national and Western values, i.e. a dangerous ideology to be fought against at any level, both in theory and in practice, with a variety of means ranging from legitimate political action to ethnic cleansing, from press-campaigning to the manslaughter of all people in favour of MC. Like the Norwegian terrorist – Mr Breivik, do you remember – who, in the name of «anti-multiculturalism», killed 77 people in July 2011. By the way, I found it interesting and, as far as I know, correct that the Court reputed him legally capable of understanding the meaning of his misdeed (the final diagnosis was NPD), so avoiding to confuse psychology and ideology on the side of the accused, psychiatric help and law enforcement on the side of the Court itself.

Let me add that «legally capable of understanding» is not the same as mentally healthy. Ideological anti-MC can in fact be regarded as a sort of disease within the social organism: some kind of hyper-reactivity of the immune system, on the first time it comes across something foreign or, so to say, "stranger"; or even some kind of dysmetabolic intolerance, as though the social mind was not able to process and digest a certain food (Bion's thought would probably help us understand it better). Barbara Henry, a political philosopher, has drawn my attention on the fact that you have two words in English very close to each other, yet different: «tolerance», in the bio-medical sense, and «toleration» on the grounds of morals and politics (while in Italian one can only rely on one word: «tolleranza»). This is interesting, because – she says – in order to increase toleration, we should enhance people's tolerance. Which requires a great work on language and the symbolic systems in general, so as to make people able to translate and assimilate what seemed to them untranslatable and indigestible [Henry 2010].

"**Methodological" multiculturalism: new approaches, new attitudes.**

Getting back to MC in the positive sense, and to the middle-range variant in particular (peaceful coexistence in a spirit of dialogue), an interesting perspective is being proposed by Gianni Ferracuti, according to whom we should move from *multiculturalism* to *interculturalism* or, as he prefers, in Italian: «interculturalità». The transition from «cultural studies» to «intercultural studies» has already proved effective on the ground of history, for the history of literature particularly. Even more positive can it be on the social ground: as a praxis or a set of principles inspiring good practices aiming at mutual comprehension, at learning from each other and, say, common growth. «Interculturalità», adds Ferracuti, is an attitude *moving from one's own values*: it does not share the relativism of ideological MC, and is nothing to do with unlimited toleration (such things as excision shall not be tolerated); it is eager to listen and learn, but does not aim at any syncretic or synthetic resolution of differences into one position [Ferracuti 2012]. A good

example of this attitude might be – to my eyes – the good practices promoted along the years by the ICCJ (International Council for friendship between Christians and Jews), and the recent attempts to include also Muslim representatives into this dialogue wherein nobody wants to convert anybody.

The attitude said «interculturalità» seems to me the fittest for all of us working in the helping professions. And I believe I do not need too many words to argue this thesis. Of course we must respect the cultural identity of our patients, clients or whatever, and not try to convert anyone to our values; but respect is not enough. Only if we are also capable of manifesting a genuine curiosity and a real openness, only in that case, we can work as a good term of identification for persons whose main problem may be that of understanding the social environment they dropped in.

De Vos, Catellani, Palmonari: three psychologists in front of globalisation.

In the last years, many pages have been written on the psychological aspects of globalisation, the psychological problems emerging in multicultural society, and the psychological implications of MC. According to Jan De Vos, even too many. De Vos is a clinical psychologist and a researcher at Ghent University, Belgium, who recently authored a book, *Psychologisation in Times of Globalisation*. To his eyes, there is an «overflow of psychology», even on issues such as torture or underdevelopment that would be better delved by other disciplines, so risking to play an ideological role in shadowing the political responsibilities and the economic causes of those phenomena [De Vos 2012].

This may be true, and we should keep it in our mind. Psychology and the theory of Human Relations have already been «the servants of power» within the Nation-State of the Sixties [Baritz 1965]. Nowadays, for both demographic and economic reasons, the composition of the working class has changed, a new typology of conflicts is emerging, and the risk that anew be psychology and human sciences utilised for purposes of political integration within today's multicultural societies is real. Nevertheless, the psychological aspects of globalisation, the psychological problems of multicultural societies, the psychological implications of MC *do* exist and, while paying attention not to be recruited as the new servants of the new powers, we had better try to understand them.

According to Patrizia Catellani [2012], the presence of different groups other than mine on the same territory can be either denied as something unimportant, wherein "I am not concerned", or else stressed and emphasised as "a problem to be solved", e.g. in terms of assimilation. But this is too a kind of denial (in the relational sense explored by Ferenczi, I would say), because, in so doing, differences are recognized on the ground of facts, but the affective value they assume in the Other's conscience is greatly underestimate and not at all acknowledged (if not stereotypically denied: as something that, once again, does not concern me). Which

never goes without consequences, because morally abused groups suffer as much as morally abused children, but their reaction may be much more violent. That is why peaceful coexistence among different groups capable of truly perceiving each other appears to Catellani the final goal to pursue: the most difficult politically, maybe; but in the end the most realistic and more stable psychologically.

Similarly, another social psychologist dealing with the same issue of immigrants, Augusto Palmonari [2012], has recently stressed the need for recognition as an inescapable dimension of collective identities. On this issue – the need for recognition, which is crucial to our work – I will come back at the end of my paper.

Specific experiences in multicultural psychotherapy

As to multicultural psychotherapy, much is to be explored and understood, but something is already at our disposal. Among the authors that have worked on it, I want to remember at least Manuel Ramírez (University of Texas at Austin) and Carmen Gonzales (Cambridge, Mass.).

To the former, Mr. Ramírez, we owe a book and an article. The book gives many examples of ongoing therapies that help the reader apply theoretical issues to clinical practice. Besides, it also includes measurement instruments meant to aid in determining baselines and therapy-based changes [Ramírez 1999a]. The article proposes the new concept of «multicultural personality» to describe an emerging figure of our times (Ramírez 1999b): a figure that can be dramatically suffering, like the «bi-modal personality» I told about before, but can also be richer than usual, like sometimes happens within the national minorities I also referred to. The question is whether and how it is possible to transform the sufferings of immigrant people, not belonging to any national minority, into some mental condition which is not only "healthy" but also innerly "wealthy".

The latter, Ms. Gonzales, is the founder of the Multicultural Psychotherapy Associates (since 1991) and a psychologist of Junghian orientation. The websites and the journals that host her contributions, however, seems to insist on counselling mainly.[3] And we should perhaps ask ourselves why this technique has come to grips with the problems of MC earlier than those of psychoanalytic origin. One answer might be that, in private practice at least, counselling is usually less expensive than psychoanalytic psychotherapies; but I am not sure this is all. Is there something else we may learn?

As to Europe, and Italy in particular, I want to remember al least two initiatives not too different from our meeting. One is the international seminar on

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[3] Particularly interesting, and indeed very useful to our aims, is the J*ournal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, whereof many articles can be found online: http://www.highbeam.com/publications/journal-of-multicultural-counseling-and-development-p3545.

the «Geographies of psychoanalysis», held at the University of Pavia on October 6 in collaboration with the International Psychoanalytic Association. The other initiative, still to come, is the national conference on «Psychotherapy in the global village», to be held in Rome (November 9-11). Wait and see.

Is there an ethnic Unconscious?

To be honest, we should credit Jung with early understanding that unconscious processes may speak different languages, depending not only on the subject's personality, but also on his/her nationality. I refer to his concept of «ethnic unconscious» as an intermediate layer between one's personal unconscious and the collective unconscious of mankind, as well as to the related concept of «ethnic shadow» as a kind of collective Other and, say, alternative personality: e.g. the *imago* of the Arab sometimes appearing in one's dreams as *other than us* rather than *other than I*.[4] Shame that too often, in interpreting his own dreams, does Jung give the impression of taking such images as natural symbols of modes of being that are not only different from ours but also dangerously primitive [Collins 2008]. Not to speak of the latter, the «ethnic unconscious», which Jung seems to consider a level of the psyche rooted in the biology of race.[5]

John Sommers-Flanagan, psychologist and University of Montana Professor, says so: «As you work towards multicultural competence, remember the concept of "multicultural humility"».[6] Well, it seems to me that Jung lacked precisely this humility. Well different the attitude of Géza Róheim, the father of psychoanalytic anthropology, at the origin of the line brought on by Devereux and Laplantine.

Psychoanalysis and the art of translation. About China and Japan.

Multicultural humility also means that psychoanalysis, not to be ethnocentric, must learn the art of translation. I use this term in the wide variety of its meanings, beginning from the literal one: translating from one language into another.

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[4] On the stereotypical *imago* of "the Arab" widely and deeply shared in the collective imagery of the West, let me refer to two articles of mine (pretty old but, alas, still valid): Caruso [1973, 1998].

[5] Just think of the barbaric youthfulness of «Aryan Unconscious», in his own words «having a higher potential than the Jewish». For which reason, he writes in the same article, «it has been a grave error in medical psychology up till now to apply Jewish categories [...] indiscriminately to Germanic and Slavonic Christendom» [Jung 1934]. How sad to remember that this article was published on the *Zentralblatt für Psychotherapie*, soon after the Journal had fallen under the control of Matthias H. Göring (cousin of Hermann Göring, and he himself actively engaged in the nazification of German psychiatry: cf. Wolin 2004). One should honestly admit, however, that Jung's attitude towards Nazism, although initially ambiguous if not sympathetic, was much more complex than this, and that he later brought an interesting contribution to the understanding of Nazism as a kind of collective psychosis. To go deeper into Jung's contribution to psycho-history, see Livorsi [1991].

[6] See: Sommers-Flanagan [2012], Pt. 5.

First task: translating our theory. Second task: translating into our theory.

Translate the Western concepts of psychoanalysis into Eastern languages is difficult. So much more difficult when you deal with a non-alphabetic language. Think of the present difficulties the Freud Chinese Translation Project is coming across [Campanile/Capitanio 2012], beginning with the difficulty to choose words that clearly distinguish "preconscious" and "unconscious" [Plänkers 2012, p. 91].

The second task however (translating *into* our theory) is even more difficult. Think of Japanese psychology. Certain concepts seem almost untranslatable. Just two examples.

Amae means leaning on a person's good will. A form, we would say, of dependent attachment. Much more than this, in reality. The term was introduced by the Japanese psychoanalyst Takeo Doi. According to Doi [1971], *amae* consists in «depending and presuming upon another's benevolence», while exhibiting a certain «helplessness and the desire to be loved», indulged and, if necessary, forgiven. *Amaeru* (the verbal form) means behaving like a fondled or even spoiled child, not only towards maternal figures, also with your boss or even with a senior friend or colleague – and entails avoiding overt conflict, while longing for unanimous agreement.[7]

In Western countries such a behaviour would be immediately classified as childish, suspectedly unmanly and undoubtedly connoted as immature, while in Japan it is culturally coded as a quite normal ingredient of various social relation.

Second example. We are used to distinguish between guilt and shame: two feelings that are experienced and manifested pretty differently. While guilt is felt over one's actions, and is ordinarily due to violating some norms; shame is felt over who and how one *is*, and is rather to do with other people's expectations. Depending on which of two is more effective in regulating moral behaviours, anthropology distinguishes between guilt-cultures and shame-cultures. Besides, we also have in anthropology ego-cultic societies or "I-cultures", and socio-cultic societies or "We-cultures" (another dimension, not necessarily coinciding with the former).

Well: according to the definitions given above, the sense of inadequacy for not being able to achieve some goal assigned to me by someone else should be experienced and manifested as a kind of shame. And that is what happens in our societies. However, in a shame-culture such as Japan, that kind of inadequacy, though entailing no transgressions, is paradoxically experienced and manifested as guilt, due to the fact that Japan is also a socio-cultic culture, where the damage inflicted to the collective I belong to, personified as We, always shadows that inflicted on one's self-image [T.S. Lebra 1974, T.S. Lebra & W.P. Lebra 1988, quoted in Bedford/Hwang 2003]. And that is not all. We also find there a peculiar feeling which is perfectly midway between shame and guilt, self and other, namely: feeling

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[7] To know more, see the really well done entry, also giving some critical references, in *English Wikipedia*: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Anatomy_of_Dependence

guilty for obliging the other on whose benevolence I depend to be ashamed of himself/herself for what I did, or did not. Which is what happens when the linking affection is *amae*. But how could we say all that in one word, in Italian or English?

Final remarks: 1. on multicultural competence.

Having to work within multicultural societies, we must achieve a «multicultural competence». What do I mean by that? As always in the field of helping professions, the new competence of multicultural psychotherapists entails a threefold knowledge: we need to know: *what* is to do, *how to do* and, last not least, *how to be*. Knowing what and knowing how respectively regard theory and the theory of technique. The questions here are: what is to be changed in the inherited theory, and/or what is to be modified in the standard technique, to treat this case?

The first question challenges the scientific community, but of course it also engages the single therapist too. I mean: studying and bringing up to date one's knowledge has never been so necessary as nowadays, when psychology and psychoanalysis are continuously confronted with biology on the one hand and human sciences, cultural anthropology in particular, on the other.

The second question is under the responsibility of the single therapist, but I am afraid that the old concept of «parameter» as proposed by Kurt Eissler [1953] in relation to the psychoanalytic psychotherapy of hard-to-treat patients is no more sufficient. Eissler's parameter was in fact a provisional modification of the standard technique, bound to be later dispelled when the patient's Ego would no longer need it. In multicultural psychotherapies, however, what we come across – I mean: the patient's structure unable to stand some ingredient of the psychoanalytic situation – is not the patient's Ego "not yet" tolerating some kind of frustration, but the patient's social Self as rooted in his/her culture. And the patient's Self may be not at all resisting the analytic work *as such*, rather resisting what is European or American or "Western" in it. Which is particularly true for first/second-generation immigrants, much less for the third generation.

Please, note: I am not saying that this kind of resistance cannot disappear in the long run. It will probably do, as a result of the re-socialisation imposed by life out there (that is, in this sense, much more powerful than our psychotherapy). I am saying that we have no rights to expect that it *must* change. And I am also saying that unconsciously or preconsciously conveying such an expectation would be disrespectful and counter-effective: as though we too deny recognition.

The third point, how to be, regards what Sommers-Flanagan calls «multicultural humility». We have already talked about. But we will never talk enough!

Final remarks: 2. on identity and recognition.

All that I have said until now, all that we are to discuss within our Joint Meeting, regards people's identity. Identity is not an originally psychoanalytic concept. It comes to psychoanalysis from philosophy and the social sciences, and it is Erikson's and Kernberg's merit to have introduced it into our theoretic field, and contributed to develop it in psychoanalytic terms.

Last year OPIFER devoted a number of seminars, both local and national, to the issue of identity. I will try to sum up my contribution thereto.

One's identity must be seen and tackled at three levels. There is a universal layer of each of us as a human being, calling for *respect*. Mental health at this level means the certainty of *being like all others*, and goes along with expecting the basic kind of moral competence the Italian philosopher Roberta De Monticelli calls «primary normativity» [De Monticelli 2012]. Then we have an intermediate layer, calling for *recognition*. Health is here the possibility of *being like some others* (those of my group, or the groups I belong to), and goes along with what she calls «primary normativity». Finally we have a strictly individual layer, calling for *acknowledgement*. Health is here the possibility of *being unique, like nobody else*, and goes along with what I would call «tertiary normativity».[8]

So, whatever the model we follow in theory and the technique we use in practice, it is our job as professionals of mental health to provide our patients all the respect, recognition and acknowledgement they had not yet found and longed for.

As to recognition in particular. When our societies were homogeneous, recognition was much easier. It was implicit in shared practices, or even in good manners: something not worthy speaking, simply alluded to; something invisible yet vitally present. Like the air we breathe: something we can forget about. In multicultural societies, the situation is quite another: manners and practices are not necessarily shared, and the air is filled with different perfumes from different foods. We are not obliged to like them all, but let them arouse our curiosity. And let us feel free to smell and taste. Instead of immediately concealing our face behind the surgeon's mask.

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[8] I first proposed this scheme of a three-level identy within an interview with the American political philosopher Michel Walzer, held at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies and then published in Italian [Caruso 1994].

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