A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY
NEEDS A RELATIONAL REASON

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Summary: 1. *The challenge of multiculturalism. 2. The root deficit. 3. Expanding the range of reason with "relational reason," as an alternative to multiculturalism and as a way of achieving a new "common world". 3.1. Which reason should be used to address differences/diversity? 3.2. The semantics of difference, relational reason, and the common world. 3.3 The emergence of a relational semantics. 4. Relational reason: expanding reason through social relationships.*

1. The challenge of multiculturalism

How can we approach the growing cultural differences and diversity that can be seen in society as a result of globalization? In other words: how can we treat those people who are bearers of relevant cultural differences or diversity?

The doctrine of multiculturalism is the answer that has gained the biggest foothold in the West, albeit in a variety of forms, for the simple fact that it seems to be the most consistent with the liberal premises of Western democracies. The doctrine of multiculturalism was, in fact, born to favor respect, tolerance, and the defense of different (minority) cultures. It later morphed into an imaginary collective, under which we would be "all different, all equal," in the sense that our differences/diversity are all placed on the same level and treated under rules which render them in-different – that is, in such a way as to maintain that the meaning and relevance of those differences make no difference. For instance, for a child to be raised in a single parent family, with heterosexual or homosexual parents, or any other family arrangement should be regarded as functionally equivalent. From this viewpoint, the doctrine of multiculturalism is a coherent consequence of pure neofunctionalism – as alleged 'scientific approach' – when applied to cultural dynamics. Differently from classic functionalism (e.g. Émile Durkheim conceived of culture as a 'moral fact'), neofunctionalism (e.g. Niklas Luhmann) legitimizes cultural anomie in a systemic way (it claims that "everything that is possible is allowed"; in other words, ethics and morality are wholly relativized).

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This multiculturalism produces a society characterized by a growing pluralization of all cultures, generated not only by migrations, but also by the internal dynamics of individual native cultures (national, regional or local). In particular, multiculturalism erodes the very modern Western culture that gave rise to it, which loses the rational bases that assured it a certain homogeneity for many centuries. Indeed, multicultural ideology justifies new, so-called post-modern cultures and lifestyles. The multiplication (systematic production) of cultural differences nourishes a social order in which the individuals individualize themselves by means of the search for an identity that refers to particular social circles that privatize the public sphere.

Our question is therefore as follows: does a solution of civil coexistence between different cultures exist which can avoid falling into the negative effects of ethnic-cultural relativism and political secularism that come with multiculturalism? The humanity of civilization hangs in the balance.

Since being adopted as official policy in several countries, the ideology of multiculturalism has generated more negative than positive effects (social fragmentation, separateness of minority groups, and cultural relativism in the public sphere).[1] As a political doctrine it seems ever more difficult to put into practice. Today, in its place, we speak of *inter-culturalism*. But this expression too seems more or less vague and uncertain. In this chapter I will discuss the possible alternatives to multiculturalism. We hear speak of interculturalism, but interculturalism today is subject to insurmountable deficiencies because it presents an insufficient internal reflectiveness to individual cultures and it lacks a relational interface between cultures (between the subjects that are bearers of culture).

To get beyond multiculturalism's shortcomings and the fragilities of interculturalism, a secular approach to the question of coexistence between cultures is needed – one that is capable of restoring life to reason through a new semantics of inter-human difference / diversity. Making reason more relational could be the best way to imagine a new configuration of society that will be able to humanize the processes of globalization and the growing migrations.

2. The root deficit

Multiculturalism is a theory that is reductive of encounter and recognition. At the root of its reasoning, multiculturalism expresses the need to find new avenues for the recognition of the dignity of the human person when we meet each other and perceive the differences / diversity that exist between us. In this, multiculturalism reflects what is surely a good thing. The assertion that we must recognize «the value and the dignity of all citizens, independent of their

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[1] For a thorough treatment of this line of inquiry, see P. DONATI, *Oltre il multiculturalismo. La ragione relazionale per un mondo comune*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2008.

race, ethnicity, language, or religion»[2] recalls us to the Christian view of secularism in the early days of Christianity:[3] that is, the original dignity of every person, prior to and apart from every ethnic and cultural belonging, including the fact that the Christian is a citizen like the others. However, even if it is true that multiculturalism represents a motive to rethink the character, quality, and characteristics of recognition of what is truly human, on the other hand it does not provide a sufficient answer to these questions. The multicultural solution is lacking because it does not succeed in filling the gap between *citoyen* (citizen) and *homme* (person). To assert that the citizen achieves self-fulfillment in the public sphere by means of the policy of human dignity and the corresponding legal rights (the policy of universalism), while the person achieves fulfillment in his or her own cultural community (the policy of difference), leaves empty what exists *between* these two spheres.

Multiculturalism is ambiguous and ambivalent because, if on the one hand it underlines the uniqueness of the human person, on the other it renders the person incommunicable from the cultural point of view. Certainly its insistence on the *radical otherness* of the Other, which pushes toward a better understanding of what about recognition between human beings is different from the recognition that a human can give to a non-human entity. The point, however, is that multiculturalism promises a recognition that cannot be realized because it has a reduced and restricted conception of encounter and recognition. Multicultural recognition, in fact, is conceived as the unilateral act of a collective mentality that attributes an identity on the basis of an autocertification or an identity claim that satisfies neither a veritative criterion nor a criterion of recognition (appreciation). In social practices, on the other hand, we see that recognizing the Other (as an individual, but also as of another culture), is a human act if, and only if, it is an act of validation (that sees the truth of the Other) inscribed in a circuit of symbolic exchanges (gifts).

Multiculturalism fails to satisfy either of these two requirements. In multiculturalism, the act of recognition of an identity does not seek out the reasons that legitimate the difference, and does not establish that circuit of reciprocal gifts that is necessary to produce human civilization. To take this step, multiculturalism must adopt the reflectiveness necessary to the processes of recognition.[4] To go beyond the limits of multiculturalism requires the development of a reflexive reasoning that is not the technical or scientific reasoning that we have inherited from modernity. After deifying reason, the Enlighten-

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[2] See the website of *The Canadian Heritage.*
[3] Cfr. *Lettera a Diogneto* [Epistle to Diognetus].
[4] On the paradigms of recognition see P. DONATI, *Riconoscere la famiglia attraverso il suo valore aggiunto*, in editor P. DONATI, *Ri-conoscere la famiglia: quale valore aggiunto per la persona e la società?*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo 2007, pp. 25-62.

ment ran aground on the shoals of anti-humanism, in which reason appears mutilated and twisted. There are two alternatives: either we abandon reason as a veritative[5] criterion (of recognition), or we make an effort to «widen the range of reason».[6] I propose that we follow this second course.

3. Expanding the range of reason with "relational reason", as an alternative to multiculturalism and as a way of achieving a new "common world"

3. 1. *Which reason should be used to address differences / diversity?*

The search for a new rationality appropriate to encounter and recognition between different / diverse people / groups requires semantics adequate to understanding and dealing with what makes difference and diversity. It is a fact that difference / diversity is, in general a mix of faith and reason, of motives of faith and rational motives, woven together. In ancient societies, which continue to be the benchmark for what we call 'classic culture', this interweaving had a solidity, which materialized in a common *ethos* (and from here the natural law, and the doctrine of a common ethic, which was dispelled by the modern public ethic, which is no longer based on a shared *ethos*). Joseph Ratzinger[7] wrote that: «the original relational unity between reason and faith – although never unchallenged – has been torn […] Farewell to truth can never be definitive […]». In this expression is contained – in my view – the keystone of the issue. Nevertheless it must be noted that we are still very far from having understood what it means. I cannot pause here to discuss whether the laceration was produced (before or after, more or less) on the part of reason or on the part of faith. The question on which I focus my inquiry is this: what is meant by "relational unity" between faith and reason, and also between religion and culture? Certainly it is the unity of a difference. But how do we understand difference?

3. 2. *The semantics of difference, relational reason, and the common world*

We must come up with a new theory of difference (in personal and social identity) which allows us to understand and handle it in a relational way. Since the

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[5] The adjective 'veritative' can be referred to M. Heidegger's phrase 'veritative synthesis', which constitutes the essence of finite knowledge. It is a synthesis because all knowledge is a union of knower and known and it is veritative because, by reason of this union, the being-to-be-known becomes manifest, i.e. true, simply because it reveals itself as it is; see: M. HEIDEGGER, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Indiana University Press, Indiana 1997.

[6] Let me recall that this expression is the title of a book by J. MARITAIN, *The Range of Reason*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York 1952.

[7] Cfr. J. RATZINGER, *Fede, verità, tolleranza. Il cristianesimo e le religioni del mondo*, Cantagalli, Siena 2003, p. 166 (English translation: *Faith, Truth, and Tolerance: Christian Belief and World Religions*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2003).

distinction is a reflexive operation, we are directed back to the ways in which reflexivity removes and judges differences. I will make three fundamental distinctions: *dialogical* reflexivity, *binary* reflexivity, and *relational* reflexivity.[8]

I) The dialectic and dialogical semantics: conceives of difference as a margin, a distance, as a point of continuous conflict and negotiation, which can find an agreement or not. The cultural encounter between Ego and Alter is represented as a relationship at the border of their identities where they meet, discuss and try to accommodate their differences. The border is a real space, where negotiations can take place between Ego and Alter (differently from a binary semantics in which the border is conceived as a sharp separation, without any chance of successful communication). What is "in between" the people who meet is a sort of externality for one another. At the point of conflict, Ego and Alter remain estranged one from the other. The border is polemogenous by definition (i.e. it is susceptible to "generate war", or, if not war, at least moral strife), because it is the object of the will to appropriate it by one or the other, the field where one tries to assimilate the other. It has to do with seeing which of the two can take possession of it, or, alternatively, in what way they can share it or at least turn it into a place of exchanges that are the outputs and inputs of one to the other. Between Ego and Alter there is no real mutual exchange; rather, there is assertion of two identities that stand each facing the other. The two may dialogue, but the agreement they may reach is entirely fleeting (in sociological terms, it is highly contingent, which means that it depends upon many variables and can be always possible 'otherwise', i.e. possible in many different ways, including not to be). Here, reciprocity does not require the recognition of a common identity. A clear example of this semantics is given by Jurgen Habermas, according to which the common border is defined ('constituted') by civic values and a dialogue around them (what he calls 'constitutional patriotism').

II) The binary semantics: conceives of difference as discrimination and incommunicability. The border between Ego and Alter is a sharp distinction (division), is a separation, an irreconcilability, an impossibility of exchanging reciprocal inputs and outputs. This semantics stems from the theory of autopoietic and autoreferential systems, of mechanical, functional, and automatic character.[9] According to it, culture is a mere by-product of the communication among people, which consists of messages which are disturbances (noise) the one for the other. There is no possibility for a common world. What is common is the pure and simple common problematization of the world (to love one another simply means to recognize that the problems of

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[8] For more details on the different types of reflexivity, see: P. DONATI, *Sociologia della riflessività*, il Mulino, Bologna 2011.

[9] Cfr. N. LUHMANN, *Social Systems*, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto CA 1995.

ego are also the problems of alter, and vice versa), seeking to confront the paradoxes generated by the functional rationality of the system (in which Ego and Alter act without any chance to influence its operating structures). Society here is a paradox because becoming fellow (*socius*) does not mean to share something, but, on the contrary, it means to draw binary distinctions that divide some people (the in-group) *from* and *against* other people (the out-group).

iii) The relational semantics: understands difference (the distance that separates Ego from Alter) as a social relationship (neither a simple border, nor a slash). The relationship is never just any, generic relationship, but is always qualified in some way. It is not a free interaction in the void. Nor is it a mere communication. It emerges from a context, and it has a structure whose shape is based upon the terms of the relationship, and can only come from it. Always under determinate conditions. The relationship is constitutive of *Ego* and *Alter's identities*, in the sense that the identity of Ego is formed through the relationship with Alter, and the identity of Alter is formed through the relationship with Ego. The border is an area of conflict, struggle, negotiation, but also of a reciprocal belonging, which is constitutive of them both. The unity of the difference is a relational unity, that is, it is the unity of a real differentiation that exists because of reciprocal reference to a common belonging with respect to which Ego and Alter differentiate their own Selves. From here begins the recognition of a *real* otherness (and not – as many scholars claim – the recognition of an Alter-Ego, which is an Alter as imagined, represented, depicted by Ego).

The recognition of authentic otherness does not coincide with total strangeness toward the other, because relationship bespeaks *distance*, and even separation in some respects, but at the same time bespeaks *sharing*. The sharing is not between two mirror images, but between two distinct, unique entities. These entities, while they maintain their impenetrability without synthesis, reveal themselves by reference to a reality that joins them, their humanity, for example. The otherness is not irreconcilable contradiction, in the degree to which the Other is perceived as another Self and "Oneself (is perceived) as Another" (as Ricoeur says).[10] But this other Self is not the same (*idem*); rather

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[10] Cfr. P. RICOEUR, *Oneself as Another*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1992. According to Ricoeur, selfhood implies otherness to such an extent that selfhood and otherness cannot be separated. The self implies a relation between the same and the other. This dialectic of the Self and Other contradicts Descartes' cogito ("I think, therefore I am"), which posits a subject in the first person (an "I," or an ego) without reference to an Other. The dialectic of Self and Other may lead us to recognize that the self may refer to itself as not only itself, but as other than itself. This dialectic may be revealed as not only that of self and not-self, but as that of oneself as another, oneself and not another, another and not oneself, another as oneself. The dialectic of self and other may be dynamically changing.

it is unique (*ipse*). If Ego and Alter coincided and could be assimilated one with the other (*idem*), the relationship would vanish. If, on the other hand, the relationship was entirely external to Ego and Alter, the result would fall into the two prior cases (semantics I and II). Cultural confrontation must therefore look at the relationship that is constitutive of Ego and Alter, though differently for each. The cultural difference can and must be seen as a different way to understand and configure this relationship, without being able to conceive of it as destined to a dialectical synthesis after the manner of Hegel.

3. 3. *The emergence of a relational semantics*

Western culture has, until today, used the first two semantics, oscillating between the two. My conviction is that, in the climate of globalization, and in the wake of the flawed experience of multiculturalism, the third semantics is emerging. The third semantics, that of relational difference, interprets and understands cultural differences insofar as they are generated in reference to a "common world" (that which includes both Ego and Alter). The common world differentiates itself and is re-generated (re-differentiated) through forms of "relational differentiation," that is, of differences that are generated by different ways of articulating the founding relationships shared by the people involved in a context[11] (not the functions, the roles – that which is institutionally prescribed, as a specialization of actors and performances).

Secularism is the motive that justifies cultural pluralism, when it springs from the social relationships amongst human beings. Properly speaking, the secularity of the state does not consist in the fact that the state authorizes religious freedom, let alone rules based on political principles, like that of the juridical equality of religious denominations (this is entirely different from the equality of persons under the law, which is a fundamental principle). The state can be called secular in so far as it limits itself to recognizing the original liberty of persons in professing their faith, and it claims for its own those values and rules that emerge in a shared way from the public debated between the religions on the basis of rational argument. To go deeper into this point it is necessary to recall the relational semantics that allows us to see the unexplored aspects of human rationality: *relational reason*. What does it consist of?

4. RELATIONAL REASON: EXPANDING REASON THROUGH SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Relational rationality is the faculty by which the human person sees the reasons (the good motives) inherent to inter-human social relationships (not to

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[11] On the founding relationship see P. DONATI, *Sociologia della relazione* [Sociology of relationship], il Mulino, Bologna 2013, p. 124.

individuals as individuals, nor to social or cultural systems). Certainly the be-ing-together of different cultures stimulates the deepening of rational (axi-ological) individual choices, within individual reflexivity. But this does not suffice to configure the '*inter*' (what lies in between different cultures) as a social relationship. To turn the *inter* into a common world, the public sphere requires a rationality that takes into account the differentiation between cul-tures as a *relational differentiation*.[12] In other words, cultural identities are dif-ferent for the different ways in which they interpret and live their relationship to values that are common to the human beings. The way refers to the instru-mental and normative dimensions of reason, as well as concrete aims, while the values refer to the axiological (or teleological) dimensions of reason. The so-called policies of equality of differences, that neutralize relationships or render them indifferent, can only generate new differences, which find no ra-tional solution, but only new forms of dialectic or separation.

The example of marriage speaks very well to this. If marriage is considered from the perspective of equality of individual opportunities, gender identi-ties (male and female) are rendered indifferent, because their relationship (the male-female relationship) has no reasons of its own to affirm and foster. It no longer makes sense to speak of male (e.g. paternal) or female (e.g. maternal) symbolic codes, because their relationship has been cancelled out. The same goes for the difference between monogamous and polygamous marriage. For those who support policies of equal opportunity (*lib/lab* policies),[13] this only involves two relationships that offer different opportunities to the individuals involved – nothing more. They do not touch on the meaning and form of the marital relationship itself. From the relational perspective, on the other hand, only if we assert rights to differences (of relationships!) can we find human values (and rights).

To make social relationships indifferent, canceling out the discrete reasons that inhere in the identity of each specific kind of relationship, is to annihilate the value of relationships as *sui generis* reality. It is to nullify the principle of appreciation that the relationship contains.

Relationship is what – at the same time – joins, differentiates, and diversifies. For example, the conjugal relationship joins a man and a woman in one flesh, but differentiates them in their roles and diversifies them in their identities with respect to the same relationship. The relationship of friendship joins two

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[12] On the concept of 'relational differentiation' see P. DONATI, *Relational Sociology. A New Paradigm for the Social Sciences,* Routledge, London 2011.

[13] I call *lib/lab* policies those policy measures which are a compromise between liberal-ism (*lib* side) and socialism (*lab* side), or, in other words, a bargaining between the capitalist market and the state (see P. DONATI, *Beyond the Market/State Binary Code: The Common Good as a Relational Good*, in M. SCHLAG, J.A. MERCADO (eds.), *Free Markets and the Culture of Com-mon Good*, Springer, New York 2012, pp. 61-81).

persons in a circle of symbolic exchanges, while it differentiates them with re-spect to what they can reciprocally give themselves to, and it diversifies them with regard to the quality of the friendship. In this way, different relationships are involved.

The reasons that are inherent to human relationships correspond to the dig-nity of the human person. They are latent and have morphogenetic potential. For this reason they can develop a critique of cultural deviations, be it of anti-humanism, or traditionalist fundamentalism.

To sustain an interculturalism capable of creating consensus on fundamen-tal human values it is necessary to adopt a relational paradigm able to see and *articulate the reasons* that give shape to the inter-human, to that which is "between" individuals. The field of bioethics in a multicultural society offers many examples: the right to life, the rights of the human embryo, the right of a child to a family, the right to an education worthy of a human being, the right to a good death, to a healthy environment, and so on, are all *rela-tional rights*, because they are rights to relationships (rather than to things or performances). Relationships have their own reasons, which the individuals involved may not even be explicitly (linguistically, conversationally) aware of, but which they comprehend to the extent of the type and degree of reflexiv-ity they have; that is, to the extent to which they manage to see the reasons behind the relationships that human realities imply in the eternal dialogue between nature and culture.

The cultural mediation which is often talked about can only overcome the obstacles of prejudice and intolerance if people succeed in reasonably bring-ing values together, and giving them relational rationales.

Relational reason validates, rather than hides, differences. Precisely in this way it is capable of moving beyond the ancient configurations of relations between cultures (that is, the segmented differentiation in primitive societies, the stratified differentiation of cultures in premodern societies, and the func-tional differentiation of early modernity), which are all forms of differentia-tion incapable of arriving at shared public reason in a globalized society.

Relational reason gives us an alternative to relational differentiation, which in application signifies the creation of a public sphere that is religiously quali-fied, in that religions have a role in defining public reason, because they orient people toward a reflexive understanding of their cultural elaborations in their life-worlds.

This reflexive understanding supports and nourishes an expansion of reason. It is a way to get beyond modern Western rationality, which stopped at the threshold of the distinction between instrumental and substantial reasoning.[14]

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[14] Instrumental rationality is what, given certain ends, focuses on the means for achiev-ing those ends; the means are technical instruments to pursue the ends which cannot be

According to this distinction, the relationship to value (*Wertbeziehung* in Max Weber's theory) is non-rational, because values themselves are non-rational (from the Weberian viewpoint). Relational reason tells us the opposite. It indicates the different ways in which it is possible for Ego to relate to values, as it relates to the Other, not on the basis of purely subjective factors (sentiments, mood, emotions, irrational preferences) or acquired habits, but on that of reasons that are neither *things*, nor rules of exchange, but are goods (*values*) connected to the quality of present and future relationships. These are what I call "relational goods".[15] I propose that we take a new and radical look at the theory of rationality proposed by Max Weber, which profoundly (and negatively) conditioned the social thought of the twentieth century.[16]

Rationality cannot be reduced to the two modalities put forward by Max Weber – that is means-end, or instrumental rationality (*Zweckrationalität*) and value/belief-oriented rationality (*Wertrationalität*). To reduce human rationality to these two concepts is an operation dense with ambiguity and can be a source of great confusion. *Zweckrationalität* deals with the calculation of means to achieve an end, but ends can also become means, until it is no longer possible to distinguish what is a means and what is an end. The concept is unusable. *Wertrationalität* refers to a value subjectively understood by the social actor, but that value may be a good in itself, or a personal taste/preference. The reformulation of the Weberian distinction between instrumental and value-oriented rationality undertaken by various authors (for example Parsons and Alexander, which translated them respectively as *instrumental* and *normative* rationality), has been unsatisfying and insufficient.

I propose a redefinition of rationality as a faculty of human behavior that has four components or modalities.

(I) first, instrumental rationality deals with efficiency, and involves the means, therefore the adaptive dimension of thinking and acting (rationality of efficiency); its analytic counterpart is the economic sphere, and its empirical, macrostructural counterpart is the market.

(II) Second, goal-oriented rationality refers to situated objectives, and regards the achievement of defined goals and goal-attainment (rationality of

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discussed or communicated (the polytheism of values of Max Weber). While instrumental rationality seeks convenience, utility, efficiency, axiological rationality focuses on values, that is, on *ultimate concerns* for the truth, the good, and the just.

[15] Cfr. P. Donati and R. Solci, *I beni relazionali. Che cosa sono e quali effetti producono* [Relational Goods. What they are and what they produce], Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2011.

[16] It is well known that Max Weber, notwithstanding his studies of rationality, did not hesitate to assert the absolute impossibility of scientific analysis of values, in this way helping to pave the way for the worst forms of irrationalism and other true monstrosities that afflicted the first half of the last century, and which today deeply wound social thought, modern epistemology, and afflict the life of many populations.

efficacy); its analytic counterpart is the sphere of power, and its empirical, macrostructural counterpart is the political system (the State).

(III) Third, the properly values-oriented dimension of reason, which corresponds to the distinction-guideline that points toward what is good in itself, what is an end in itself, what has worth in itself (that which lies at the depths of the *ultimate concerns* of the actor, which some call *ultimate values* in the sense of *ultimate realities*). That is, the rationality of value as good in itself; the rationality of that which has a dignity that is neither instrumental nor goal-oriented (*value rationality* or *axiological rationality*, or *Würderationalität*, or the rationality of dignity). It is important here to understand clearly that, in what I call *value-oriented rationality*, the value is not a situated goal that has a price, but is a "good without price," that no money can buy. Value-oriented rationality is not dependent upon the situation. It is inherent to the dignity of all which deserves respect and recognition, because it is distinctively human (as opposed to the non-human or in-human). Therefore, it regards in the first place the human person as such (and not because an individual behaves in a particular way). As an analytic counterpart it has the sphere of good in itself or for itself, the symbolic reference – and what is non-negotiable – to that which characterizes the good or a person and distinguishes that person from all the others. The empirical, macrostructural correlate of value-oriented rationality is the religious system – religion understood as a cultural fact distinct from faith (which transcends culture).

(IV) Fourth, the integrative dimension of reason, which integrates among themselves the other dimensions of rationality (value, goal-attainment, and means) through ethical and moral normativity, and assures the autonomy of rationality against other kinds of actions and social relationships; I call this *relational rationality* (or *Beziehungsrationalität*), or *nomic rationality* (what is rational in the *nomos*, that is) in the norms of division and distribution, which at the same time divide and connect the parts in relation. Social relationships have reasons that belong neither to individuals nor to social systems. Reasons which the individuals and the systems may not know about, and in fact do not possess. As an analytic correlate, this dimension takes the sphere of social bonds, and as an empirical, macrostructural correlate, civil society inasmuch as it is an associational world.

The four dimensions of reason (instrumental, goal-oriented, values-oriented, and relational) make up a *complex of reason*, or human reason as a complex faculty. From this angle, every component is essential so that human reason emerges in its fullness, be it as a theoretical faculty or a practical one. The actions of recognizing, understanding, explaining and seeking what is rational are all needs of the complex faculty of human reason, as seen from the relational perspective.

From the sociological perspective, reason is a faculty that exists as an emerg-

ing social phenomenon. There is no such thing as a purely individual rationality, in the sense of a faculty cut off from social relationships. Reason is a faculty that emerges from the workings of its constitutive elements, each of which has its own characteristics. The faculty which we call "human reason" is generated as an emergent effect of the togetherness, interaction, and interchange between the four fundamental dimensions that comprise it. Encounter and recognition are relational goods[17] not because, as some believe, they carry with them a particular "human warmth," or a feeling of good will, or a special *pathos* (elements that in any event have their own weight and importance), but because they realize a relationship upon which depend the goods of those who participate in the relationship. And this dependence is rational, or at least reasonable.

ABSTRACT: *Recent sociological research has shown that the ideology of multiculturalism has generated more negative than positive effects (fragmentation of the society, separation of minorities, cultural relativism). The idea of interculturality has the advantage to stress the 'inter', namely what lies in between different cultures. But it does not possess yet the conceptual and effective means to understand and handle the problems of the public sphere. To go over the failures of multiculturalism and the fragilities of interculturality, a new approach to the coexistence of cultures is required, being able to give strength back to Reason, through new semantics of the inter-human diversity. The Author suggests the development of the "relational reason", beyond the forms already known of rationality. To make human reason relational might be the best way to imagine a social order being able to humanize the globalizing processes and the growing migrations.*

KEYWORDS: *Multiculturalism, recognition, cultural difference, relational reason, civil society.*

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[17] Cfr. P. DONATI, *La cittadinanza societaria*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2000, ch. 2; IDEM, *Different cultures, different citizenships? The challenge of a universal citizenship in a multicultural postmodern society*, «The Annals of the International Institute of Sociology», New Series Volume V, 1996, pp. 245-263.