To Flavio Baroncelli, a friend I met only too late,

whose lively intellect, critical sense, friendliness

and clever irony I just had time to appreciate.

The whole and the part*

In introducing his article "Il riconoscimento e i suoi sofismi"[1], Flavio Baroncelli identifies the difficulties experienced by philosophical debate when dealing with the relationship between the whole and the part. He states: "For centuries, philosophers have debated extensively on 'the whole and the part', and their debates might appear totally gratuitous to the layperson. Does the whole or the part come first? In which sense 'first'? Logical, axiological, temporal? What is meant is hardly ever clear."[2] The reference to the above-mentioned difficulties is to be taken seriously, since it takes us back to the origins of philosophical thinking, when Plato, in his *Sophist*, develops the theory of the *summa genera*[3] and originates a fundamental aspect of Western culture, still very relevant today, that is, comparative reasoning, comparing in particular what is the same and what is other. This type of reasoning considers the other as not-being, since it is a being that is other[4].

Referred back to human relationships and transferred from separate beings (individuals) to the whole − the community absorbing the parts making it up to the point that it cannot conceive of their independent existence − the definition of what unites us (same) and what divides us (other) is of great consequence on the anthropological, ethical and political plane. It originates the distinction between us (those who identify themselves as belonging to a given community) and them (those who are other than us)[5], which is based on comparison: they *do not* have some quality characterising us or, conversely, have some quality that *does not* belong to us. They are therefore immediately identifiable as *not* us.

The debate between political liberalism and communitarianism, which is the backdrop of Baroncelli's article, has much to do with the above-mentioned way of defining both in terms of the individual-community relationship and in terms of the relationship among different

communities. This is not the place to look into detail at the terms of the debate between liberals and communitarians and the specificities of the contributions by individual philosophers. To get an idea of its extent, suffice it to mention the priority issue characterising it: should we favour justice over good, as the former claim, or rather the opposite, as the latter say? Political liberalism is willing to acknowledge the pluralism of comprehensive notions of good life (characterising individuals or groups) and to extinguish possible conflicts through procedures based on the neutrality of the State, intended as a cooperative and voluntary association. For communitarians, on the other hand, good must prevail over justice lest society be disrupted and means instrumental to pursuing specific interests dominate. Hence it would not be possible to try to make a political community survive independent of the *telos* determined by a unitary and all-embracing notion of good and by objectives with which participants in the political community may identify. The community defines not only what they *have* as fellow citizens, but also what they *are*− not a relationship they choose (as a voluntary association would be), but a tie they uncover, not a mere attribute, but a constitutive element of their identity, so that the whole prevails over the part and makes it conceivable only in relation to the whole itself.

Since in the above-mentioned article Baroncelli posed the question of the whole and the part in relation to the recognition and interpretation of it provided by communitarian philosophers, I will focus on the following interconnected notions, which I believe to be crucial to deal with this topic: otherness, identity and recognition. The aim of this analysis is to identify a perspective that may overcome the most blatant limitations of political liberalism, also in the light of the issues posed by communitarianism, while adopting a liberal standpoint.

Otherness and translatability

At the dawn of modernity, with the discovery of America, Europe had to confront the "trauma" of otherness[6]. It was basically dealt with by reassuringly changing the other into the different, transforming "the non-relation of otherness into the relation of diversity, the incommensurable into the commensurable»[7]. It was on this basis that the debate on the nature of the *Indios*, and later on the savages, was developed[8]. Independent of what

they were considered to be, the yardstick for their assessment was what was in them the same as or different from Europeans, in terms of physical characteristics, culture, economic development.

Since otherness based on incommensurability between cultures[9] may provide reasons in favour of political liberalism and the principle of (political) neutrality, I find it necessary to make it explicit what it is and which its ethical and political implications are. According to P. Feyerabend, "[...]languages and the reaction patterns they involve are not merely instruments for describing events (facts, states of affair), but that they are also shapers of events (facts, states of affairs)[...]their 'grammar' contains a cosmology, a comprehensive view of the world, of society, of the situation of man which influences thought, behaviour, perception."[10]. This means that each linguistic universe represents a world of its own, its descriptions are a way – the way in that universe – of "seeing" the world, but also a construction of the world. In language, moreover, there can be *covert classifications*originating"[...] patterned resistances to widely divergent points of view'. If these resistances oppose not just the truth of the resisted alternatives but the presumption that an alternative has been presented, then we have an instance of incommensurability."[11].

It is therefore a question of distinguishing between possible alternatives within a linguistic universe or, in any case, between translations already put in place, classifying the latter as typical of a weak otherness (or diversity), and the non-existence of alternatives since other languages describe and determine other worlds. In the latter case, we might be facing an instance of strong otherness and, in particular cases, of absolute otherness. A distinction is made between strong and absolute otherness because the former is referred to realities which are used to be confronted with translation, although they do not presuppose the existence of alternatives, Whereas the latter concerns cultures which are the expression of groups of humans which have long been separated and are therefore not used to mutual translation. These considerations allow us to understand how our recognition of individuals or cultures depends on forming *standard* judgements, stereotypes and prejudice, developed according to a comparative criterion,within linguistic universes. In addition, they may shed some light on how we may intend the criterion of truth, which cannot be solely reduced to the correspondence between what is and what is affirmed, but which has to assume as fact also views of the world which, within a certain linguistic universe, may seem to be bizarre.

When Cortés met Moteczuma[12], the latter was really convinced that a cosmic cycle was coming to an end and this represented a*fact* of fundamental importance for the conquest of the Aztec Empire by the Spaniards. Thanks to Malinche's[13] decisive help, Cortés very cleverly exploited Moteczuma's convictions to his advantage, since he could enter his linguistic universe and translate it. As is well known, the relationship between Cortés and Moteczuma ended tragically. We should therefore ask ourselves this question: is it possible to have tolerant confrontation and dialogue between culture, theories and comprehensive notions of good life that are mutually incommensurable? This opens up a further question: which relationship (if any) can we establish between incommensurability and translatability? According to H.G. Gadamer, translation of texts is an interpretation of them implying the activation of a hermeneutic circle[14]. But how far may interpretation go before it turns into misrepresentation when you move from texts to the even more problematic translation between linguistic universes finding themselves in a state of strong or absolute otherness?

A first step may be to "[…]recognize each other as a member of different language communities[…]"[15]**;** secondly, we should refer this recognition to cultures to become aware of the type of otherness involved. It should be borne in mind how translation does not concern individual words and their meanings nor formal logic understood as universal language. Confrontation pertains to such logics, that is, the inherent structures of languages. This is the confrontation making it possible to reshape ideas in one's own language. This does not mean that there is commensurability, but that languages "[…] can be *bent* in many directions and that understanding does not depend on any particular set of rules."[16]. As translation goes on, we could begin to understand why statements that to us are obscure, bizarre or even meaningless have an explanation within the linguistic universe in which they are located. Here a word of warning may be needed: "To translate a theory or worldview into one's own language in not to make it one's own."[17]; furthermore, translation will hardly be really complete.

Lastly, translation may make it possible to construct a new language. This may happen independent of an informed decision[18], but also, in my view, as a result of an intentional process. On an ethical and political plane, the idea that cultures are incommensurable, but that translation puts them in a relationship, allows for a conception of cultures as open systems that import and export culture, that co-evolve and that may hybridise and originate new cultures. If interculture is not to be dealt with in general and misleading terms, we

should deem the linguistic transition operated by translation the basis on which intercultural relations may be built. This may be carried out by maintaining the centrality of the crucial principle for establishing a real intercultural relationship: the awareness of the otherness at the heart of this process. Such awareness, like translation, refers back to the role of individuals. A process of dialogue and hybridisation between cultures may be constructed only thanks to their experiences, sensitivity, care, to their recognising themselves as bearers of a plurality of needs, interests, identities, to their recognising themselves as same and other at the same time, as belonging to the same species, and as situated individuals, with a history, a background, habits inherited by traditions. In other words, we should not consider communities from a holistic point of view as a homogeneous and cohesive whole on the basis of a single cultural identity, but as a hologram, a network of relations among individuals, groups, associations where communication, knowledge, different cultures and subcultures and their translations uninterruptedly flow within the system and out of it, opening it up to the innovation engendered by the combination of endogenous and exogenous factors.

Identity of the part or of the whole?

In the light of what has been said, I believe Baroncelli had good reasons for thinking that the recognition philosophies and politics proposed by communitarians were based on rhetorical patterns that may be summed up by two strategies: "[…] the former is providing a poor image of the liberal enemy; the latter is presenting oneself as the champions of the cultural minorities the enemy cannot or will not protect."[19]

Here is where two questions may be posed: which is the relationship between identity and recognition? Can we deal with individuals and communities in the same way, that is, moving from the recognition of individual rights characterising the liberal tradition to the recognition of cultural rights for each community? In this connection, Baroncelli emphasises a relevant feature: identity may be individual or collective (cultural, religious, etc.). Meditation on communitarianism, a holistic view holding that individuals are identifiable only as members of a community, as parts of a whole teleologically shaped by a comprehensive view of good life, implies coming to terms with the fact that

communitarianism seems to embrace solidaristic values and be posed as a moral and political philosophy not proposing a conservative and illiberal view based on the community prevailing over individuals, but as a philosophy which, by opposing individualism, the*homo economicus,*the preposterousness of cultural and e political majorities and Western modernity, defends, as Baroncelli says, the rights of the "parts that are also wholes", of the cultural communities struggling to survive[20].

*Individuals need other people to recognise what they are to perceive themselves as somebodies; what is more, individuals are mostly what other people recognise them to be; and they exist only within a culture, a set of shared values, hopes and fears, of life projects in common with others. [...] when different communities live on the same territory, they need mutual respect and recognition [...] For communitarians, this is tantamount to saying that the different value and sign systems we call cultures should be considered worthy of endless surviva*l[21].

Hence communitarianism poses itself as a philosophy and as politics able to defend the community and the individuals making them up as parts of a whole, a form of non-abstract individualism, since it considers individuals as concrete and situated. In his critique to the foundations of liberalism[22], Sandel refers to Kant's and Mill's philosophies as particularly influential also for later developments of liberalism and for contemporary liberalism. The "deontological liberalism" of the former, characterised by the prevalence of justice over moral and political ideals, connects the two different meanings that may be assigned to deontology: the moral and the founding meaning. The former proposes deontology as a first level ethics by which certain duties (and prohibitions) are categorical and therefore have unconditional priority over other moral or practical needs; the latter defines deontology as a form of justification the founding principles of which do not presuppose a final aim or purpose, thus, no specific notion of good life. To put it shortly, according to Sandel, the prevalence of justice over good characterising Kantianism and related contemporary philosophical approaches, such as Rawls' theory of justice[23], should have a foundation that precedes all empirical ends, including the pursuit of happiness.

From a Kantian perspective, the reply to this objection, concerning its foundations, is the subject of practical reason as the subject of an independent will, able to make choices that are not empirically conditional. This, however, poses a problem: to justify this view of the

subject, a metaphysics of the transcendental moral subject would be needed, which, however, being noumenal, is not an unattainable object of knowledge, as it were. In this respect, what is also problematic is the particular version of the Kantian deontological approach provided by Rawls in *A Theory of Justice:* separating Kant's theory from its background based on transcendental idealism to repropose it within the canons of a sensible empiricism[24]. A Hume-like deontology, where basic principles are derived from a hypothetical situation of discernment, the original position[25] characterised by conditions bound to produce a certain result suitable for real human beings. According to Sandel, Rawls fails in his attempt: the original position, a highly abstract hypothesis, only revives the incorporeal and noumenal subject it is trying to avoid[26].

As far as Mill and utilitarianism are concerned, Sandel underlines how he reaffirms the primacy of justice starting from a vision according to which having a right means having something whose possession society must guarantee[27]. The reason of such duty on the part of society lies in general usefulness[28]. Justice is therefore considered by Mill as the most sacred and binding part of morals, because its requirements are at the top of social utility and are the most binding of all[29]. In addition, the principles of justice, like other moral principles, are teleologically oriented towards the pursuit of happiness, which is the only desirable thing in terms of ends. Hence justice is what utility requires and if, in some specific cases, another moral duty may prevail over some principles of justice, it is because it depends on happiness[30].The conclusion Sandel makes is, very shortly, that the primacy assigned to justice by liberalism, in its variety and in its presumption of neutrality with respect to notions of good life, lies in a particular conception of person and of the abstract and disembodied moral subject of the strictly deontological view by Kant and Kantians; this appears to be too focussed on a teleological view where justice maintains its primacy because it is useful to the pursuit of individual and social happiness in the utilitarian approach.

According to Sandel, both versions of liberalism fail to effectively answer the question on what type of subjects we should be in order to make sense of justice rather than reduce it, on the one hand, to pure proceduralism, and, on the other, to calculations of social (welfare) utility[31]. Since individuals are situated rather than abstract subjects the primacy assigned to justice by the various forms of liberalism is misleading. Hence the fundamental function he assigns to thecommunity. It defines not only what individuals have as fellow citizens, but

also what they are, not a relationship they choose (e.g., a voluntary partnership), but a bond they discover, not a mere attribute, but a constitutive part of their identity. In my opinion, the consequences of Sandel's critique of liberalism are the incapability of recognising differences and alterities. Based on the neutrality principle, on the one hand this would condemn us to moral undecidedness, on the other its concreteness would end up imposing – which is only seemingly a paradox – a particular vision coinciding, as mentioned above, with the values of Western modernity considered to be universal and neutral (a blatant example would be human rights in opposition to community cultural rights because of the former's abstract nature). In Sandel's account, the double caricature of liberalism mentioned by Baroncelli[32] emerges: the liberalism that is "too abstract" (by Kant and Kantians), the one that is "too concrete" (by Mill and utilitarians). What also emerges is an aspect he rightly emphasises: "Actually, there are liberalisms which are not neutral neither in practice (which is inevitable) nor programmatically (which is evitable) and which do not have any superior universality to counter the particularistic and separatist drives by which they are challenged."[33]. This concept is not elaborated in Baroncelli's paper; given its complexity, however, it is worthy of a few considerations I will make very briefly[34].

The question of neutrality is indeed crucial for answering the objections made by communitarianism and by Sandel in particular. First, this question needs to deal with the nature of politics and of its relationship with morals. I believe the following statement by Larmore provides a good summary of a liberal view I personally share:

[…]our political thinking should not rely on all the truth we believe we have at hand, at least when it concerns the aimsof politics. What I mean is our thinking on politics aiming to establish the rules and principles of political society in such a way that those entering this political partnership will be able to see, discuss and recognise these principles; in this sense I intend political aims.[35].

Thus, politics concerns a sphere of human relationships in which the aim of decisions is not answering the question "how should I behave to others?", but the definition of institutions, constitutions, rules and laws designed so as to make living together and cooperation possible among citizens expressing needs, interests, hierarchies in moral values, notions of good life which are mutually heterogeneous, incommensurable, sometimes openly conflictual, and wishing to act according to their needs and beliefs. More specifically, while

the result of a debate outside the political sphere may not necessarily be bounding, also because it is not to be taken for granted that agreement or shared views are reached, in politics decisions binding for all citizens and the latter consider it legitimate to have recourse to force, coertion and sanctions to ensure behaviours conform to rules decided on by politics. Coercion in specific and well-defined cases is usually acceptable for all citizens, as long as it does not compel dissenters to behaviours that are in contrast with their morals or renouncing options that are consistent with the latter, provided that the latter do not jeopardise social and fellow citizens' peace, or that dissenters, in case they would become a majority, are willing to accept the rules and practices characterising tolerance. This also takes into consideration that political decisions have *feedback* on our private lives and may influence them so much that our freedom may be significantly limited or increased. What has been said on the nature of political decision making allows for more clarity on the neutrality principle. It should not be intended in absolute terms, but as an exclusively political principle only related to controversial (reasonable) conceptions of good life[36].

Thus, any exception to the principle of political neutrality dismisses the legitimate use of coercion and undermines an essential function of the State: guaranteeing the opportunity to pursue one's projects and lifestyles without harming others to all citizens, also independent of their community belonging, and allowing those who so wish to distance oneselves from it. The State being politically neutral with respect to what separates us from an ethical point of view, does not embrace a specific view – however mainstream – of good life in society, and provides everybody with a legalised space for dissenting in the form of conscientious objection. When it is not about abstaining from doing something, but acting in a certain way, if there is no danger for social peace, there should not be legal constraints[37].

It must be emphasised that, however specific political decision making is, it is based on deontological or consequentialist moral reasons. The political neutrality principle establishes itself as a deontological principle: when one is called to making political decisions they should take it as a duty to observe this principle as one of the foundations of political decision making. By the Seventeenth Century, it had become clear that those who are not willing to concede tolerance when they constitute a majority cannot claim tolerance for themselves and their own group when they constitute a minority[38]. In addition, those who are not willing to accept the principle of political neutrality as a deontological principle pave the way for those who have political recourse, at least on some topics, to all the truth

they think they are entrusted with, when they are enabled to do so. The duty of respecting the neutrality principle also makes it possible to preserve the moral principle by which we cannot demand that others do what we are not willing to accept for ourselves, that a given behaviour is imposed by force of law on me that I do not share in terms of deep moral loyalty. The interpretation of the neutrality principle I propose seems to me to respond to the objections made by Sandel on this principle, also because this way "[…]we can circumvent one of the damaging paradoxes of later liberal theory, namely, its defense of political neutrality by appeal to ideals of the persons that are themselves rightly controversial."[39], such as the Kantian one of the person as a transcendental moral subject or the perfectionist one by J.S. Mill of the person as a progressive subject perfecting themselves by having an opportunity to experiment life projects[40].

The recognition "leap": from individuals to communities

The second strategy enacted by communitarians,the one on which Baroncelli dwells the most,consists in a theory and practice defending the cultural minorities the liberal enemy cannot and will not defend. The immediate reference is to those cultures "[…] whose identity is objectively jeopardised by illegitimate external agents."[41] Such discourse is founded on the idea of cultures conceived as disadvantaged minorities. Baroncelli emphasises the weak points of communitarian rhetoric underlining how it avoids answering the question: "does this line of thought conceptually apply only to minorities, or are the same arguments just as sound if applied to majorities as well?"[42]

The answer is that communitarian arguments applying to minorities will then apply in the same way to majorities. This is because, from a communitarian perspective,every culture, even the most blatantly majority, may be conceived at all times by somebody within this culture as having the same urgencies as a minority. In other words, if the central reason is the defence and survival of cultures, communitarians do not have arguments against defending majority cultures. Thinking from within each culture, "[…] the arguments based on the need for envisaging a future for one's culture apply to the Eskimo culture in the same way as they apply to capitalism causing the extinction of the Eskimo culture."[43]. In so doing, communitarians interpret cultures as super-individuals: this is the only way of

dealing with the rights of cultures, but within each single culture, beyond the way it is described from the outside, there are a large number of reasons why it should be perceived as endangered, and in the name of "danger" intolerance may be rationally justified[44].

If the individualism and cosmopolitarianism typical of liberal thinking cannot but give up to this transformation – the death of cultures – the indefinite survival of a given culture implies the possibility of supporting arguments against tolerance by basing them on the right to survival and by presenting them rationally within that culture. The historical examples of higher tolerance than a liberal regime may ensure feature peaceful coexistence of religious communities such as the *millet* system in the Turkish Empire[45]. Without discussing in detail whether this is an actual case of tolerance, at least in the modern sense of the term, I would like to emphasise two aspects: the former, considered by Baroncelli too, states that both the examples made and the ideal proposed by communitarians takes it for granted that individuals outside the community to which they belong are nothing and have no rights. They do not exist because they are not allowed to, and have no *exit* rights:

[…] where there is no territorial state assigning rights and civil and criminal responsibility to the individual as such, it is by no means possible to give an individual the right to abandon their community any time. […] if the misty area of intellectual communitarianism is abandoned and attention is focussed on real communitarianism, by which I mean the "serious" one by extremists, it is to be immediately understood that the logic behind it is that of exclusion. Either the individual or the community.[46]

As a consequence, while the recognition of rights to individuals may grant to those who identify with a particular community some typical advantages of communitarian life, it is not possible to grant anything to individuals as such under a communitarian perspective.

In addition, systems such as the *millet* hold as long as a strong central authority imposes them and make sure that they are complied with. Examples from the Turkish Empire and Yugoslavia after Titus' death are quite telling. In short, with its sophistry, the rhetoric of communitarianism posing itself as a political theory and practice the aim of which is to defend weak, marginalised and neglected identities, ends up by making up arguments to the advantage of extremist, intolerant views in which the part (the individual) is subordinate to the whole. As A. Sen suggests, identity and, in particular, monoidentity, especially of a

religious nature, can kill – and kill with abandon[47].

An impossible synthesis

Provided that communitarian analyses on the limits of liberalism must be taken seriously and, as shown above, are important to make the limits of some liberal views comprehensible, I would look into some detail into a question, to which Baroncelli replies negatively in the light of the above-mentioned considerations, that is, the possible integration between the communitarian and the liberal logic to give birth to a new and improved synthesis. Under this perspective, a comparison with C. Taylor's elaborations appears to be interesting[48]. The key concepts at the heart of the Canadian philosopher's treatment are recognition, identity, authenticity and difference. His attempt consists in relating them to make the limits of liberalism apparent and proposing a new form of liberalism that may be able to overcome individualism and valorise belonging and, with it, cultural rights.

Although his appears to be the most serious effort to integrate liberalism and communitarianism, it is not convincing for two reasons: 1. It does not effectively counter criticism such as that advanced by Baroncelli; 2. It cannot utterly deal with the questions posed by otherness. According to Taylor, recognition is the central feature of multicultural societies and it poses more and more pressure because of the relationship between recognition and identity,the latter being "a vision a person has of what they are, of their fundamental characteristics defining them as a human being". Identity is partially shaped by recognition, but also by lack of recognition on the part of other people or groups.Recognition overcomes respect and appears as "a vital human need", since an individual or a group may be harmed if the people or societies around them construct a humiliating, limited or diminished image of them condemning them to low self-esteem.

Taylor underlines how recognition is a consequence of modernity in the light of two factors: 1. The collapse of social hierarchies made legitimate by *honour* as opposed to the universalist and egalitarian notion of *human dignity*; 2. The rise of individualised *identity*

which can be expressed as an ideal of authenticity and loyalty to oneself. (1) implies democratic culture's essential need for *equal recognition,*which today is posed a demand for cultural and gender equality; (2) refers back to the theory of moral sentiments (intended as means the aim of which is acting rightly), according to which we need to be in close touch with our sentiments if we want to become complete human beings. Referring explicitly to Herder and, more generally, to Romantic expressivism, Taylor highlights how each person has their own measure, and therefore not being faithful to oneself makes one lose their main reason for living, what being human is to them: every single voice of ours has something unique to say.

Herder's fundamental contribution to putting recognition politics at the centre of attention lies in extending that vision from individual to peoples. Everybody has their own *originality* and culture. A people, like an individual, should be *faithful to oneself*. Moreover, discovering one's own authenticity is not a monological process. We define our identity by negotiating with, and sometimes fighting against, what significant others want from us. Therefore *identity* connotes itself as the background against which our tastes, desires, opinions and wishes acquire a meaning. The rise of the modern notion of identity requires recognition of unrepeatable identity, different from everybody else's, either individual or group, and at the same time poses a paradox:we take note of the existence of something universal (everybody has their own identity) because we recognise something that is uniquely one's own for everybody. "The universal need promotes taking note of specificity". The politics of difference redefines *non–discrimination* as something that compels us to make of distinctions the basis for *different treatment.*

 The aim of these policies is not transient; rather, the aim is *preserving* and *cultivating* difference forever on the basis of the legitimate aspiration that one's identity may never be lost. Classical liberalism cannot cope with the politics of difference because, from an ethical point of view, its commitment is procedural: we are compelled to treat one another equally, independent of the idea we have of our aims; on the other hand, the substantive commitment regarding life aims and what we deem worthy of fighting together is neglected. Liberal neutrality would therefore consist in the lack of the State's and society's interference in the affirmation of individual dignity, based on independence,that is, the ability of individuals to figure out an idea of good life for themselves. But this proceduralist liberalism, pursuing politics of equal respect among individuals, would not welcome

difference, would impose a uniform application of rules defining rights, would view collective rights with suspicion and would not be able to accommodate the aspiration to survival of societies separated on the basis of the different conceptions of good life characterising them.

In addition, Taylor believes liberalism itself is not completely neutral: the separation of State and religion is incomprehensible in other contexts, such as the Islamic culture. A new kind of liberalism therefore becomes necessary, which he defines *Liberalism 2*, which maintains the *habeas corpus*, but distinguishes fundamental rights from the wide variety of immunities and presumptions of equal treatment. It is not a procedural liberalism, but one founded on judgments concerning good life, and in this sense these are judgments in which the *integrity* of cultures plays an important role. As a consequence, in a context where societies are increasingly multicultural and open to multinational migrations, what is needed is not only that cultures *survive*, but also that everybody recognise the *equal value* of different cultures and take note that they are *precious.*

The criterion for recognition refers to all those human cultures which have nurtured whole societies for a considerable lapse of time and have something important to say to each human being. Taylor highlights how this is a *presumptive thesis,* that is, an assumption with which we should approach the study of any other culture while aware that a real value judgment presupposes the *fusion of normative horizons*; it also presupposes that studying the other has transformed us so much that we do not judge by our original criteria any more. This transformation would be possible through the *presumption of value* of cultures. All cultures that have given a meaning horizon to a large number of human beings for a long time deserve respect and admiration. For this reason, we should become aware of the limits of our part in the entire history of humankind, also through comparative cultural studies.

A non-liberal liberalism

The proposed integration of liberalism and communitarianism implied in *Liberalism 2* is based on the acceptance of two assumptions that are by no means to be taken for granted and should be demonstrated: 1. Individuals, like cultures, have an identity; 2. Cultures are

closed and impervious systems. Actually, the single-affiliation view is hardly justifiable: everybody belongs to a number of groups, nor it is demonstrable that a group has a natural primacy over others, which means we are not able to decide independently on the relative importance of the different categories of belonging. The importance we recognise to an identity depends on its social context and, in any case, not all identities necessarily have lasting importance. Finally, each individual not only does not possess a single or a predominant identity, but has to do with a plurality of identities that are, by the way, mobile.

We all constantly make choices on priorities to be given to our affiliations. In the light of these considerations, the argument on faithfulness to oneself is diminished, at least in the sense intended by Taylor. It is also questionable that the modern view of identity has created politics of difference. Communitarianism proposes two distinct but related lines of argumentation: 1. Individuals only have access to the notions of identity of the community they belong to: community and culture determine the reasoning and ethical models available to them; 2. Identity is something you discover. Particularly, community identity has an overwhelming importance and therefore ethical assessment is only possible within community values and norms. This is conflict with the modern idea that ethical pluralism is inherent in human rationality and cannot be reduced to the observance of traditions and community belonging.

As far as the view of cultures as closed and impervious systems is concerned, it does not take into account that cultures are not monolithic, but very complex (suffice it to mention subcultures) and, as it were, mobile and in constant coevolution. It is fact that cultures relate to one another when they get in contact, thus producing, in some cases, fully-fledged hybridizations – e.g. the relationship between Greek and Roman culture and between the latter cultures and the Judeo-Christian culture.

Cultures therefore cannot be treated as endangered animal or plant species, and cannot be "ecologically" defended as if they were protected species. There is a sharp distinction between cultural freedom and the importance of the preservation of cultures. In the end, also Taylor realises this when he introduces his *presumptive thesis*. Not all cultures would have a right to survival, but only those cultures which have given a meaning horizon to a large number of human beings, over a long period of time. How this sort of classification may be structured remains quite obscure. The only clue is reference to a comparative

method, but, as mentioned above, comparativism belongs to a specific cultural view and is not free from ethnocentrism. Thus Taylor's communitarian synthesis comes down to the far from democratic and respectful of differences idea that somebody (who?) may decide which culture is worthy of survival and which not. In this respect, I believe the most serious reply possible is taking note that the cultural richness of our world cannot be subdivided and categorised according to one single criterion.

Pursuing this view may cause conflict. On the contrary, imagining ourselves as differently different, to the point of realising cultural otherness, wherever the latter may emerge, and being willing to translate may allow us to understand the pluralities of human identity and lie at the basis of the recognition politics of a number of issues: these pluralities are cross-cultural; we are bound by our belonging to the same species; the ecosystem is our common home and we are all called to take care of it. If we value the heritage of modernity and focus our attention on freedom (including cultural freedom), then the importance of cultural diversity cannot be absolute, but must vary consistently with its causal linkages to human freedom and its weight in decision-making processes by single individuals. The relationship between cultural freedom and cultural diversity is not necessarily uniformly defined.

In the name of cultural diversity, should we support conservatism and any tradition? Violation of freedom may also be induced by the tyranny of conformism to tradition, the more so if it is legally protected on the basis of the recognition of community cultural rights.

Conclusions

The unveiling of the sophistry supporting the politics of recognition championed by communitarians does not eliminate the need for rethinking classical liberalism in the light the big questions we are confronted with today. The basic idea is that we are not necessarily bound to moral estrangement based on our views of good and on our ethnic and cultural belonging. The perspective is that of policies recognising pluralism and cultural plurality, making it possible not only to live together peacefully, but also to promote relations beyond nation States. In this connection, Sartori's words seem to be very important:

Pluralism will not identify with a multicultural descent, but rather with interculturalism [:::]. What does our European identity, our "feeling we are European", depend upon? What created it? Interculturalism. And the same goes for Western identity, for our "being Western"[…]. Multiculturalism leads to Bosnia and Balkanisation; it is interculturalism that leads to Europe. Let us be careful, then. The multicultural project is really disruptive, as it reverses the pluralistic direction substantialising liberal civilisation. And it is really striking that this disruption is affirmed and legitimated by philosophers proclaiming themselves liberals[49].

In my view, however, it is necessary to bear in mind that, to get a convincing reply, communitarian claims should envisage a clarification of the neutrality principle, its justification and its nature and should take into consideration the social imagination of Western modernity. As to neutrality and its justification, the matter has been discussed above while looking at Kant's and Mill's visions. As to its nature, it must be made clear that it is to be intended as exclusively political (not ethical) and related to controversial notions of good life. In this respect one may make sense of the separation between religion and politics that is accepted also in countries with an Islamic majority and represents a well-accepted guarantee to those who practise this religion in countries where they are a minority. In this connection, one should bear in mind that there is not only one Islam and that it is inappropriate to refer to the Islamic community as if it were a homogeneous entity.

As far as the social imagination is concerned, we should take note of the crisis and the limits of what modernity has handed on to us. Here we will not look into detail at such a complex question concerning globalisation, the ethics-economics-politics relationship, inequalities, justice, citizenship, and many other topics. I will briefly look at the moral order acting as a backdrop for social imagination. Taylor has highlighted, and in my view rightly so, how the backdrop for social imagination in Western modernity is represented by the doctrine of natural law by Grotius and Locke. What Taylor fails to underline is that that vision was not meant to provide a moral order of the world with which the Western community could identify, but the principles on which the modern State was to be founded. These moral principles are certainly to be considered prepolitical, subtracted to contractual negotiation and constitutive of a shared *civil ethos*, but they acknowledged the discover of religious pluralism and of the notions of good life the State had to follow to guarantee the freedom, rights and private life of individuals.

The question might be asked how to envisage a shared *civil ethos* in a time of mobility, rapid obsolescence, uncertainty, plurality of decision makers beyond nation States? A promising view, worthy of study and elaboration, is E. Morin's. First, he states the need "to abandon the obsessive idea of a project perfectly encapsulating the form of society to be constructed, in favour of the idea that political action may make new possible forms of freedom and solidarity emerge"[50]. What seems to me to be relevant is that Morin thinks that a new planetary consciousness is necessary, that is based on solidarity in the relations among humans and between humans and nature. What should be developed is what he calls an "ethics of reliance"[51]. But which principles may provide the foundation of these relations and may at least potentially be accepted in universal terms? First of all, human rights as a background for an idea of citizenship no longer constrained by fragmentation, but supranational and, in perspective, planetary[52].

This perspective is all the more relevant nowadays since "For the first time in human history the universal has become a concrete reality: it is the objective inter-solidarity of humankind, in which the global fate of the planet decides the individual destinies of nations and in which the individual destinies of nations upset or change the global destiny.»[53]. The suggestions of Morin's "planetary ethics"[54] with its nine commandments[55] make it possible, on the one hand, to consider the emergencies of our time in unitary terms, on the other, to identify a possible pathway for further civilisation for the whole of humanity. In short, awareness that the earth is our home country and that the destiny of our species cannot be separated by the environment implies taking on ethical and political responsibility regarding the exploitation of resources, pollution, the development model to be used; the idea of world citizenship requires progressive liberation from national belonging to reach human belonging without this causing the disappearance of cultural pluralism which would rather become the basis for the development of intercultural relations.

This approach is therefore not holistic, but hologrammatic, because it valorises the relations network among all the components of the ecosystem, starting from human beings (as individuals and as a species). Thus, not only the whole does not prevail over parts and individuals, but is the ever changing result of the relations network existing among them. It is a way of providing a positive answer to Baroncelli's concerns about the holistic vision characterising communitarians:

Through the powerful philosophical machine that has made the argument for the concrete and primary existence of the Whole prestigious as opposed to the secondary and abstract existence of the part, we are used to taking the metaphors of cultures as individuals seriously. There is, however, a fatal difference: while the claim that an individual's life should be earthly and eternal at one time is usually considered foolish, thus very little popular, the claim that a culture should be at once earthly and eternal seems much more reasonable at a first glance; it is therefore much more infectious and dangerous[56].

*Translated from Italian into English by Ilaria Rizzato, University of Genoa

References

[1] See F. Baroncelli, Il riconoscimento e i suoi sofismi, inF. Manti (ed.), *La tolleranza e le sue ragioni. Un approccio pluridisciplinare a un principio controverso*, Macro Edizioni, Cesena, 1997, pp. 147-160.

[2] Ibid, p. 147.

[3] See Plato, *Sophist,* XL, 254b-255e. The *summa genera* are five: being, motion, rest, same and other. Not-being may therefore be defined as other (cfr. ibid, XLI 254b – 255e) and coextensive with being (see ibid, XLII, 257c-258c).

[4] In the light of the *summa genera* theory, not-being may be defined as other (see ibid, XLI 254b-255e) and coextensive with being at the same time (ibid, XLII, 257c-258c).

[5] See. A.N. Balslev *Cultural Otherness. Correspondence with Richard Rorty*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study in collaboration with Munshiram Manohar Lal, New Delhi, 1991.

[6] See N. Wachtel, *La vision des vaincus: les Indiens du Pérou devant la conquête espagnole, 1530-1570,* Gallimard, Paris 1992; T. Todorov, *The Conquest of America. The question of the Other*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman Oklahoma, 1999; G. Bocchi,

M. Ceruti, *Origini di storie*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1993.

[7] D.A. Conci, L'invenzione della differenza. Fenomenologia di un latente motivo ideologico e metodologico, in F. Manti (a cura di) *La tolleranza e le sue ragioni*, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

[8] See B. de Las Casas, J.G. de Sepúlveda, *La controversia sugli indios*, a cura e con introduzione di S. di Liso, Edizioni di Pagina, Bari 2006; cf. also, F. De Vitoria, *Relectio de Indis o libertad de los indios*. Edición critica bilingue por L. Perenay J. Pérez Prendes, CSIC, Madrid 1967; on the debate on *savages,* see G. Gliozzi, *La scoperta dei selvaggi,* Principato, 1971; S. Landucci, *I filosofi e i selvaggi (1580-1780)*. Laterza, Bari, 1972; F. Cipriani, Un Dibattito Socioantropologico nel Settecento. Il Mito del Buon Selvaggio, in *International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology*, n.8, 2007, pp. 37-49.

[9] See F. Manti, *Bios e polis. Etica, politica, responsabilità per la vita,* Genova UP, Genova 2012, pp.126-145.

[10] P.K. Feyerabend, *Against Method. Outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge*, New Left Books, London- New York City 1975, third edition published by Verso London-New York City 1993, p.164; see B.L. Whorff, *Language, Thought and Reality*, MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 1956, p. 121.

[11] *Ibid*, p. 186.

[12] Motēcuhzōma in the nahuatl language.

[13] Malinche was an Aztec woman, a slave of the Mayans, offered as a gift to Cortés. According to Todorov, her role went much beyond that of the interpreter since she succeeded in translation, adopting and adapting the Spaniards' values and objectives. In short, an example of cultural hybridization (see T. Todorov, *op. cit.,* pp. 100-103).

[14] See H.G. Gadamer*, Hermeneutic I. Wahrheit und Methode*, J.C.B Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen 1990, pp. 270-276.

[15] T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, University of Chicago Press, third

edition, Chicago 1996, p. 202.

[16] P. Feyerabend, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

[17] T. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

[18] See *ibidem.*

[19] F. Baroncelli, *op.cit.*, p. 150.

[20] Cfr. F. Baroncelli, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

[21] Ibid, p.149.

[22] See M. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, Cambridge UP, second edition, Cambridge 1998, pp.1-14.

[23] See J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Revised Edition, Oxford UP, Oxford New York, pp. 1-10.

[24] See J. Rawls, The basic structure as subject, in American Philosophical Quarterly, 1077, p.14.

[25] See J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, *op. cit.*, p. 11, pp.15-19.

[26] See M. Sandel, *op. cit.*, p.14.

[27] See J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, in *The Utilitarians,* Anchor Books Garden City. NY, 1973, p. 459.

[28] See ibidem.

[29] See ibid, p. 465 e p. 469; cfr., also, J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, in *The Utilitarians*, *op. cit.,* p. 14.

[30] See ibid, p. 469.

[31] See J. Harsanyi, *Rational behavior and bargaining equilibrium in games and social situations*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge 1977, pp. 48-84.

[32] See F. Baroncelli, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

[33] Ibid, p. 151.

[34] For a closer examination, see F. Manti La neutralità politica come principio deontologico, in *Etica e politica/Ethics and politics,* vol. 17, n. 3, 2015, pp. 247-261.

[35] C. Larmore, *Dare ragioni. Il soggetto, l'etica, la politica*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino 2008, p. 99. In this regard, Rawls states that we should accept the imperfection of laws and institutions and "[…] it is only in this way, and by accepting that politics in a democratic society can never be guided by what we see as the whole truth, that we can realize the ideal expressed by the principle of legitimacy: to live politically with others in the light of reasons all might reasonably be expected to endorse." (J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism,* Columbia UP, 2005, p. 243).

[36] By reasonable conceptions I mean conceptions that are willing to recognise the principle and the pratices of tolerance.

[37] Looking only at Italian laws, see L. n. 194 del 22 maggio 1978 *Norme per la tutela sociale della maternità e sull'interruzione volontaria della gravidanza, op. cit.,* esp. art. 9 e L.n. 413 del 12ottobre 1993, *Norme sull'obiezione di coscienza alla sperimentazione animale.*

[38] See J. Locke, *Saggio sulla tolleranza*, It. transl., in Id. *Sulla tolleranza*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

[39] C. Larmore, *Patterns of Moral Complexity,* Preface, Cambridge UP, New York 1992,p. xiii.

[40]See J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, in *The Utilitarians*, *op. cit.*, p.14.

[41] F. Baroncelli, *op. cit.,*p. 151.

[42] *Ibidem.*

[43] Ibid, p. 153.

[44] See ibid, pp. 154-155.

[45] On *millets* and tolerance in multinational empires, see M. Walzer, *On Toleration*, Yale UP; Revised Edition, Yale 1997, pp. 14-18.

[46] F. Baroncelli, op. cit., p.157.

[47] See A. Sen, *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny,*W.W. Norton & Co, New York 2006.

[48] See C. Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition,* Princeton UP, Princeton 1992.

[49] G. Sartori, *Pluralismo, multiculturalismo ed estranei,* Rizzoli, Milano 1999, p. 112.

[50] G. Bocchi, M. Ceruti, E. Morin, *L'Europa nell'era planetaria*, Sperling & Kupfer, Milano 1991, p. 182.

[51] See E. Morin, *La Méthod VI*, *Éthique*, Le Seuil, Paris 2004, pp. 113-120. The term *reliance* was coined by M. Bolle de Bal and refers to the blending of *relier* (to tie) and *alliance* (alliance); see *La tentation communitaire. Les paradoxes de la reliance et de la contre-culture*, Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1985 and Id., Reliance, déliance, liance? Emergence de trois notions sociologique?, *Sociétés*, n. 80, 2003, pp. 99-131.

[52] European citizenship is seen by Morin as an important element in this sense.

[53] E. Morin, *Éthique, op. cit.,* p. 204.

[54] Ibid, pp. 210-212

[55] See *ibid,* pp. 206-209.

[56] F. Baroncelli, op. cit., p. 160.