

Metaphysics Rationalized: Reconfirming the Law Socially Through Religious and Psychoanalytic Interpretations

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World system crisis boils down to individual imbalances tending to new constructions of subjectivity. Psychoanalysis appears as the secular substitute of religion exposing, in a metaphorical fashion, some of its main principles that aim at sustaining social order by restoring the notion of Law in a social environment characterized by radically incoherent forms of coexistence and rising social and political anomy. Hence, we become witnesses of a kind of secular sublimation that, on one hand, resists the original notion of transcendence in the face of God, but on the other, rescues the crucial item of metaphysics in the principle of Law as an instrument of an orderly arrangement of social relations. We claim that, this process of restoration takes place via a particular reading of Lacanian psychoanalysis that promotes the “Name of the Father” as a figure constructing the subjective identity to insert a new version of dominancy by means of a claimed emancipating exegesis of the individual. [*Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: http://www.transformativestudies.org ©2011 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.*]

KEYWORDS: World System Crisis, Mass Customization, Floating signifier, The Name of the Father, St. Paul, Generic Law.

INTRODUCTION

The condition of late modernity is characterized by phenomena of systemic imbalances in the form of economic reformations, structural rearrangements of the social output subsequently followed by philosophical testimonies that depict these radical alterations of the

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social foreground. Economic globalization, reconstructions in the mode of production and consumption, as well as theoretical post – structuralism define the landscape of our current times as a triangle that combines material and post – material aspects. Stirred by these background processes, modern societies face widespread youth delinquency and/or political dissidence in the rise of anti – authoritarian movements and their exploration of alternative forms of representation. While such incidents of questioning authority have been common in the post – war decades, we think that under the influence of the above multifaceted reality, the tendency for radical supersession of authority is signified by reactions in the cell of the family that carry a specific weight in the assessment of social relations.

Despite the systemic origins of current instability, in this paper, we incline to focus - for the current social imbalances - in the transformations within the family context. In order to indicate the crucial moment that describes the shift in social theory that distinguishes the element which is progressive from that which holds to the past, we choose the foreground of psychoanalysis as primarily significant compared with the systemic constituents of economic flows and supranational trends.

Therefore, in the first section of this paper, we will analyze the combining forces of economic transformations together with their theoretical rationalizations in order to describe the general picture by which our main procedures are created and evolved. We tend to assess these procedures as the pillars that engulf the individual factor and which are at a constant interrelation and mutual influence.

In the second section, we will attempt to theoretically specify the particular notion of delinquent crisis that attacks the inflated social sphere of our time. Our judgment acknowledges that some of the major attributions concerning fears for social configurations of a polemical kind are not really sustained from a forward point of view. Actually, it is precisely due to the augmentation of the notion of the public that the new, appears not as a menacing element but as a dilated tribune for multiplied expressions to be sustained only by the impetus of the dynamic young and new.

In the third section, we will focus on the main arguments in which we will discuss the Lacanian psychoanalytic version that we believe restores the notion of Law in the current context and wishes to answer the problem of the lack of social cohesion. We will attempt to articulate that this construing of the father figure reinserts the notion of Law in the face

of an old patriarchal dominancy that, in spite its declared intention, marks a significant recourse of the idea of individual emancipation to facets of the most archaic relations of coexistence.

Finally, in the conclusion, we will summarize our position about the tricky attempt to redefine the construction of the subject from the back door of old perspectives of dominance and we will evaluate our findings in the relevant context of modern social theory.

SECTION ONE

This section examines the systemic parameters of the social and psychological phenomena that will be analyzed in the two following ones. By indicating the causes of global destabilization that induce certain facets of behavior to the post – material subject, we are interested in displaying the parallels between structures and agents in their interplay.

At the dawn of the over accumulation crisis of the seventies (also marked as oil crisis that paved the way for the next environmentally sensitive movement), McLellan cited a crucial remark of Marx concerning the general trend of capital expansion:

“The contradictory form of capital is itself a transitory one, and produces the real conditions of its own termination. The result is the creation of a basis that consists in the tendency towards universal development of the productive forces...the basis offers the possibility of the universal development of individuals...man therefore becomes able to understand his own history as a PROCESS and to conceive of nature (involving also practical control over it) AS HIS OWN REAL BODY..[emphasis in the citation]” (McLellan, 1971:121)

Besides the secondary truth that man/woman relates its fate with the embodiment of nature’s appropriation, the primal truth lies in the paradox of a double bind condition in which capitalism is entangled: “production produces itself as the end – product of itself” (Wilden, 1980:394). This logic results in an inescapable paradox rephrased in the language of the mathematical syllogism of a Godelian type: “if (capitalism) stops producing for the sake of producing, it will destroy itself; if it goes on producing it will destroy us all” (ibid: 394). The exact function of this double bind is the creation of a “negative entropy” in nature which implies both the limits of nature exploitation as well as those of human societal organization. It reflects, also, our belief that we currently undergo the consequences of this paradox imposed by the

achieving of a capital expansion that endangers the existence of nature and societies in a whole. Behind the recent decades of environmental destructions and societal destabilization we recognize the implementation of the aforementioned double bind and the fearsome reality it ensues in collective conscience.

This ecological endangerment leads our articulation to the second argument about the systemic crisis of our times. It involves the critique of Immanuel Wallerstein against capitalism from the perspective of the *longue durée*. Wallerstein argues that the world system of capitalism has entered a final stage that may last from 25 to 50 years and grounds his thesis on three assumptions:

- 1) *the shift on power relations in the cost of labor*. The trend towards oligopolies through which the producers seek to control the prices in the market and the falling rate of profit, is gradually countered by the organized demands of workers because of their growing level of skill and education. The only way for the producers to tackle this phenomenon is to depart to countries with considerably lower levels of skill and trade union development and replenish the work force with rural populations. However, “the world becomes less and less rural...radically being shrunk in the second half of the twentieth century to the extent that, in the first half of the twentieth first the last notable segments are starting to vanish” (Wallerstein, 2009:147). Therefore, the rapid urbanization of a global workforce exhausts the deposits of spatial expansion of capitalism and enhances the overall tendency towards growth of labor cost.
- 2) *Growing trends in the incoming costs of production and the level of taxation*. The development of productive forces combined with the democratization of western societies in the second half of the twentieth century, has necessitated a new weight for the producers: *the internalization of costs*. Formerly hidden costs such as the processing and depositing of industrial (toxic) wastes, the growing difficulty in replenishing the natural resources (technology only partially can play this role), and the inevitable need to sustain the public infrastructure via taxation that burdens the privatized sectors, have come to the forefront of production pushing even lower the average rate of profit. While the environmentally aware societies were crucial for the first factor, the established level of welfare in the health, educational, income and security systems

continue to grow both in numbers and world surplus in the past five hundred and especially the last fifty years (ibid:150). This last acknowledgement leads us to the third parameter of systemic destabilization, that of the more and more influential cultural factor.

- 3) *The repercussions of the world cultural shock of 1968.* The revolt against the post war political and economic establishment that culminated in 1968 was more than a questioning of these two pillars of the capitalist system. It took the form of a rejection of politics on the basis of an insertion to the global scenery of issues such as race, gender, ethics and sexuality, that is, of an agenda pertaining not to the expansion of the liberties of the majority but those of the respective minorities. In that sense, it shook not only the classical terms of establishment in the face of systemic types of right wing governance, but those of their successors as well: the social democratic versions of reshuffling the socioeconomic output in general. Indeed, the twofold anti – dominance struggle against the bipolar world of USA and Soviet Union assisted by the timely effects of profits compression, led to the emergence of a radically new perception about the world view: the disillusionment of the masses about the ever growing potential in prosperity, in other words, the dubious fate of the ideal of eternal progress as inherited by the “Dialectics of Enlightenment” (Horkheimer – Adorno, 1996).

The reaction against this triple surge of new politics of the sixties was the unleashing of capital frontiers through globalization with the “Washington consensus” in order to restrain the falling rate of profits via the internationalization of competition. However, as Wallerstein observes, “the progress of this policy was much less successful than expected and much less than needed to end the compression of profits” (Wallerstein, 2009: 156). The result was the even more chaotic choice of stock market speculation which multiplied the societal costs of uncertainty and insecurity due to the abrupt changes in exchange rates and employment. Thus, the world system emerges out of the staggering of the cultural shock of 1968 more unstable and incapable to define the resolute fixity points in order to regain the confidence of the large populace. The whole scenery results in a rapid increase of violence which spreads in the globe and carries on with considerable endurance, the philosophical responding to which we will discuss in section three.

We have, so far in this section, referred to basic aspects of the systemic crisis in order to indicate macro scale causes behind shifts in the mental settings of the (post) modern individual. However, these systemic symptoms of crisis are not left without reasonable response, and this would be awkward for a societal organization with the flexibility of capitalism. We turn, thus, to the demonstration of a potential reform on the basis of the production system that aspires to become an ingenious method of overcoming the defects of over accumulation which is the endemic basis of capitalist crises. Stemming from the succession of the Fordist system of production, known for its capacity for mass production and consumption, *mass customization* appeared in the last fifteen years as something more than a new business strategy. It first appears as a term in the paper “Future Perfect” of Stan Davis (1997), and is defined five years later by Tseng and Jiao as: “producing goods and services to meet individual customer’s needs with near mass production efficiency” (2001: 10). Alexander Tsigkas further defines mass customization as “the emerging social system of production qualifying a human centric value driven world of open innovation that requires less energy for delivering goods and services than in the productivity driven social system governed by mass production” (2006: 17). Briefly then, mass customization signifies “the move from a closed society of mass production and closed innovation to an open society of mass customization and open innovation that changes the way of and simultaneously accelerates value creation” (2010:2).

Inspired by reforms on the basis of the production of goods through the technique of “lean management”, mass customization aims to introduce an alternative economic organization towards structures that could be coined as “meta – capitalistic”. To the extent that it seeks to abolish the economic model either of demand or supply for an equilibrium of them by being oriented towards a production based on the customized need of the consumer, it actually insinuates a radically new perception about production and consumption. Goods will only be produced on demand with the direct involvement of the consumer, who then acquires the traits of both and becomes a “procumer” (Tsigkas), and this facet covers the part of the “customization”. The contradiction with the term “mass” is resolved through new technical methods of lean production that offer efficiency to the system by producing not “many of one” but “few of many”. In this sense, mass customization suggests itself as a supersession of the Fordist system of mass production inaugurating a new era not just at the level of production but (as its predecessor) to that

of societal forms of existence and generally mental settings. Just like the post war dominant cultural forms were induced by Fordism creating the society of mass production and consumption, equally, the massively customized system promotes a certain perception regarding the “weltanschauung” of today’s world. This worldview will be based on the traits of the “lean”, the “customized need” and the absolute moderation between supply and demand. It follows that it entails a radical redefinition of the axiom of “value” since there will be a massive proliferation of judgements to coincide with the respective production of the “few of many”. It is implied that there will be an inevitable shift in the mentalities of the citizens (procumers), respectively driven from customized production to customized thought due to an osmosis of the “factory” with “society”.

Against these aspirations two main objections can be articulated. The first one refers to this system as a system of production. We know from Marx that for a system of production to become a mode of production it has to be accompanied by the part of the relations of production. In order for the world economic system to change there have to be examined the transformations in the production relations, which are still pending at the theoretical level, therefore the system still remains at the level of a method similar to Taylorism, an ingredient of Fordism. In the event that the “procumer” becomes the dominant subject in this perspective, we can possibly assume that the relationship between capital and labor is resolutely cracked and the emergence of a meta – capitalist economy may come to fruition. Before the quality of the relations of production, in terms of the creation of value, salary and employment are thoroughly examined in order to be transformed into a mode of production, the system remains suspended.

However, our second objection is stronger and more compatible with our argument about the configuration of an unsettled social environment. What mass customization causes in the production line is more fragmentation in an already fragmented framework. It dissolves the stable relation between two known poles (labor – capital with all their parallels) and subsumes it to the unique function of the “procumer”. Consequently, many essential contradictions stemming from this relationship are blurred and lost out of sight. The question of value is extremely relativized since it is subjected to the massive proliferation of items/goods according to taste. The isolated worker will quit seeking his supplement from his counterpart owner who, in turn, will cease mirroring the duality of a scheme tending to more or less equilibrium. We tend to

believe that the dual schema is more stable than the sole one. All these functions being absorbed into one entity, the system will be overused and overburdened with massive losses in stability and communication. But above all, it will drive individuation to extremes in an already problematic social sphere for this matter. The extreme personalization of products will definitely reflect to extreme forms of subjectivity removing even more cohesion from the social fabric. It all boils down to a totally new perception regarding the construction of identity and societies will enter a phase of more disorganization. And this latter admission brings us to the edge of our second strand of argumentation.

SECTION TWO

In the first section we located the macroscopic systemic influences that, we believe, are incriminated for symptoms in the subjective identity, for which, the proposed antidotes we will discuss in the third part of this essay. Meanwhile, we identify an area where this pathology is described with the tools of social and political theory and in this we shall turn now.

Referring to the passage to the post – modern era around the seventies, David Harvey phrases it, in the introduction of his seminal work “The Condition of Postmodernity”, as a change to human experience: “But its interest to me here is as a historical marker because it was written at a moment when a certain shifting can be detected in the way in which problems of urban life were being talked about in both popular and academic circles” (Harvey, 1990: 3). Although Harvey hints that something different happens at the level of emotions, he does not expand at this point and continues tracing the sociopolitical epiphenomena that start to appear at the time. Based on our previous analysis about the systemic crumbles of the sixties, we incline to two basic assumptions regarding the talked sentiment. The first one concerns resentment and frustration for the defeat of an immensely invested desire that was unexpectedly cancelled. It looked like huge amounts of political and psychological interest were thrown in a bottomless well generating disappointment and depression. The post revolt traumatic stress could only be outreached by means of liquidation, a kind of decompression that would relieve –at least temporarily – the unbearable affect of denial.

One of the main characteristics of liquidation in the sphere of human relations is ambivalence. Zygmunt Bauman surveys the side effects of systemic dissolution among modern man/woman emphasizing at the

inability to establish firm relationships due to extremely felt fragility and the sense of being expendable: “our coevals feeling in despair for being surrendered in their own capacities...eagerly desire a ‘relationship’ although they deal so warily with the idea of ‘being in a relationship’, particularly in a lasting one, for they fear that such a situation may entail obligations and create tensions that they are but able to confront, tightly constricting the freedom they need – yes, you guessed correctly – for a relationship” (Bauman, 2003:10,11). The paradox of eloping from a desirable condition due to an antecedent impotency to achieve this desire brings in mind the illogical double bind we noted about the inherent self destructive trends of capitalism. Bauman likens the post – modern individual with a prominent literary figure, the *man with no properties* by Robert Musil. He/she resembles him in that he/she constructs in void and finds himself constantly starting from null because he/she is constantly occupied by indecision. Nothing is adequately fitting to feed the urge for participation and reach anything ideal. Fatefully, then, the social world will have to be constructed with his/her own perception since the surrounding fabric is either dissolved or under constant criticism. In these conditions the man with no properties of our time lives in the periphery of relations because he can never abolish the motive of independence and can only experience loose and short lived relationships.

In a similar vein, Anthony Giddens compares the state of the emotional world with that of democracy. Noting that the internal self is at stake due to the unfolded strands of global capital he goes as far as to politicize the emotional life speaking of a “democracy of sentiments in everyday life” (Giddens, 2001:109). The emotional self, according to Giddens, suffers from the same disease that Bauman claims: a lack of trust that hollows the practice of attachment and deters people from truly relating to each other. There exists an immediate equivalence between a healthy emotional state and the norms of democracy, a remark which proves quite opportune with the recent wave of “indignados” around the globe and their massive appeal for “true democracy”. This interrelation allows us to perceive the political crisis of our times as a crisis of communication stemming from the inner individual psychological functions and extending to the public institutional structures. In the same way as mismatches in communication plague the private life on account of mistrust, equally miscommunication strikes the relations between citizens and state apparatus because of unevenness. Giddens designates the area between the private and the public in terms of mental and

psychological properties because he acknowledges the timely occurrence that dissolves the institutional into the individual, and there is no more preferable terminology for this operation than that of the “soft sciences”: “I believe that the democracy of sentiments is equally important as political democracy for the amelioration of our quality of life” (ibid: 109). We claim that this slippage of the institutional into the personal is mediated explicitly through functions of liquidation. The dissolution of the immutable into the ephemeral that, approximately, occurs between an apparatus and a person weakens the idea of duration and lays the individual prey in a sea of connotations where every steady meaning is lost and not found. Or at least, it has to be searched in countless plies of the same or, even harder, to be constructed via multiple subjective renditions of meaning.

This attitude is better realized in the light of liquidation as a political function, as a polity choice that supports the deconstruction of the social edifice, for which, the isolated individual stands embarrassed and uneasy. We can trace the theoretical depiction of this phenomenon in the post-structuralist theories of deconstruction where, under certain subversion of dominant meanings, alternative possibilities are offered to construct the individual. The most prominent of these narratives is the political and philosophical work of Ernesto Laclau. In his attempt to explicate the proliferation of discourses, Laclau embarks on a contest of discursive dominancy using the tools of semiotics. He, thus, enters into the core of the function of communication, at least to the degree that we confine the latter to the oral and written level. He locates the problem of potential mismatchings in a linguistic interplay between meanings, and deduces the phenomenon to a radical disentanglement of the sign with its denotation. Laclau coins the notion of “floating signifier” and heaves the meaning from its fixed connotation. The floating signifier states that in the duality between signifier and signified there exists something suspended in meaning, which definitely, is not fixed (moreover prefixed) because meaning underlies and is subjected to various interpretations. Any celebrated isomorphism between the two poles of constitution of meaning breaks and signifier acquires a degree of independence. For Laclau this partial autonomization reflects the undercurrent towards the subversion of hegemonic meanings/discourses and has a liberating significance. The road is open for *contingency*, that is, for potentiality of the hidden, oppressed, silenced or even distorted from hegemonic renditions of the existing. In search for the procedures that determine the creation of dominancy, Laclau recognizes the primacy of the signifier

over the signified otherwise the hegemonic displacements in meaning would not be feasible. However, it is due to a more complex underlying function that subversion occurs: “it was very quickly realized that such an isomorphism led to a contradiction with the principle that language is form, and not substance, which was the cornerstone of Saussureian linguistics. For if there was total isomorphism between the order of the signifier and the order of the signified, it was impossible to distinguish one from the other in purely formal terms, so that the only alternatives were either to maintain a strict formalism which would necessarily lead to the collapse of the distinction between signifier and signified (and the dissolution of the category of sign) or to smuggle – inconsistently – the substances (phonic and conceptual) into linguistic analysis” (Laclau, 2000: 69).

Thus, the real game is played in terms of substance and not form. That is, the quest of meaning does not lie in the proliferation of interpretations, but the latter is only a step (form) towards the Real (substance) which is no other but the truth. It is truth not as an ultimate meaning that rescues the duality of signifier and signified from collapse. This is how meaning is really constructed: through the revealing of the underlying truths that are hushed by hegemonic discourses. Finally the meaning can be fixed and the system of communication is not totally in disarray. Contingency is only the key to the disclosure of truth and it does not coincide with chaos. It is just the antechamber, long and spacious as it may be, but finally (in Freudian terminology) the royal road to truth. This, however, does not imply a minor role in the negotiation of the real and true. On the contrary, contingency is always meaningful in itself, is always pregnant with meaning for it discloses perhaps the most eminent phenomenon of our times: the growingly inflated public sphere and the anarchic dispersion of voicing in every aspect of social life. A condition that brings us closer to the final part of our argumentation concerning the crisis of the individual.

With the term “inflation of the public sphere” we wish to subsume a broad range of social attitudes and phenomena that, generally, have one thing in common: the contest of established authority by adopting choices of life styles based on novel types of social extroversion among which most evident is an increased tendency of self – permissiveness. In other words, we enter the area of liberties in the individual and social level and the extent to which the exercise of this human ideal meets new applications or is distorted in meaning and practice. In this sense our previous analysis of systemic and existentialist crisis prepared the field to

indulge in the core matter: the redeployment of the various facets of Law under the menacing social extroversion.

Perhaps the more astute critique addressed against these attitudes is read in the lines of a famous sociological work. Cristopher Lash's "The Culture of Narcissism" contains the basic and essential motifs vis a vis the end of an era (sixties) and the rise of late modernism. He departs from a Freudian reading of society and is timely aligned with the transition of psychoanalysis from neuroses to narcissistic disorders and borderline psychopathologies. In order to challenge the narcissist identity of our time, Lash attacks a series of psychosocial types. From the downgrading of the traditional protestant work ethic at the expense of effortless success and the theatricality of politics, to the prevalence of spectacle in quotidian life, the ethics of antagonism and the new educational structures where emphasis is transposed from the historically absorbed knowledge to the mechanical use of large amounts of information. The sector of labor is reformed as a substitution of the collapsing family, the emotional attachments are unable to solidify and endure as they have become merciless and polemical, while eternal youth is worshiped and death and old age is consistently repulsed. People today "complain for their impotency to feel...they condemn the superego and praise the lost life of senses...the expansion of bureaucracy...corrodes all forms of patriarchal authority and weakens the social superego formerly represented by fathers, teachers and preachers. The decline of institutionalized authority to a supposedly permissive society does not lead to the 'dissolution of superego' in individuals...as the forms of authority in modern society lose their credibility, the superego in individuals derives all the more from the primary illusions of the child across his parents –laden with sadistic anger – and less from internalized ideal egos formed by the late experience with endearing and respectable standards of social behavior" (Lash, 1979:24).

The paragraph above, sums up clearly the indictment of Lash against the narcissist society. Instead of a potentially liberating riddance from oppressive superego he sees regression in the dark depths of human nature. When the individual is met with the actual perspective of psychological ablation from the auspices of authority figures, his very move towards it is suspect of involution to emotional and behavioral archaisms. In our account, Lash confuses the overprotective services of the welfare state which he attacks on the basis of its permissiveness, with the maternal like figure with which the "narcissistic" individual is more attached. He, thus, himself commits a regression in political theory

where he loses what he supposedly gains in terms of psychosocial analysis. There appears, also, a misuse of the critique of consumerism when it is related with inadequate socialization as implied with the move from adulthood to primitive sadistic instincts. Unless we endorse Lacan's theory that *jouissance* is compulsive because it is derived from social superego (Dor, 1985), we cannot possibly mingle the fakeness of consumerism (a sign of "welfare") with accusations on the basis of some ethical or behavioral perversion. Equating the individual with his desires when casted the supervisory auspices of his authorities, suggests an indirect appeal to the orderly operations of Law and Norm. The road opens for manipulation and possibly authoritarianism even if the political fold is temporarily lagged behind. Sooner or later what has been stigmatized at the psychological level will find its way to formal institutionalization. We will concentrate in the treatment of this initial misconception in the last section of our essay.

SECTION THREE

So far, we outlined the systemic and theoretical framework of a process of social liquidation that renders the individual insecure, uncertain and stripped of safety nets originally offered by systemic balance and stability. In our exploration we came across with some essential notions like "contingency" and "narcissist subject" which will link our analysis with further argumentation. It is reasonable to detect an eclectic affinity between contingency and the type of borderline pathology that follows from a widely open world of possibilities and identities. During the inexhaustible deployment of choices that the individual is called upon, one can hardly point out the particular object, the loss of which, enters it to the melancholic realm of narcissism. Narcissism is weaved around the impotency of the subject to be separated from a dear and beloved object. But with the multiplication of choices/objects, the initial premise of mourning starts to fade and eventually is cancelled. Via this procedure, the narcissist subject is somehow "cured", or better to say, transposes his pathogenic features to more detached areas of the self creating the kind of frail identity called "borderline type". In recent evaluations of cases in psychoanalysis, the borderline type seems to have prevailed over the narcissist one (Green, 1998).

In borderline personalities "there is no clear divide: neither to the interior of drive, between body and psyche, nor to the interior of the

organ of psyche, concerning space and time. We, then, ought to perceive borderline as a mobile and floating boundary both in normality and pathology. The notion of borderline represents perhaps the most basic one in modern psychoanalysis. It should not be formulated in terms of imaginary representation, but in terms of energy conversion and symbolization (power and meaning)” (ibid: 156). The problem with the borderline personality is that he/she does not obey the typical rule of analysis according to which the analyst tries to rationalize the Ego of the analysand thinking like his/her subconscious desire. The reason is that the borderline type thinks according to a fundamental madness of his/her Ego: he/she speaks a double talk. The logic of the principle of pleasure is very simple compared with that of this type who seems to have invented a kind of *private madness* in order to eschew his/her adaptation to logic and reality, in other words, the Law. It seems that the borderline type exhausts the margins of concerting as he appears able to even deceive an experienced analyst. The ground of rational communication is undermined. The road for the crucial reduction looks open. Theological interventions interfere in order to restore the credibility of discourses endangered by the weakened, suspicious and cunning individual. It is time for the transcendental to be called upon before the most decisive plea for restabilization: the Law. The appeal to the generic term of Law is evident for it refers to the exact material that social cohesion is build upon. The proliferation of the various folds of anomy is reminiscent of a bare human condition that poses intriguing questions for social theory reinserting the problem of the necessary compliance to sustain social coexistence. Thus, St Paul stands as a resort for reconfirmation of the obvious: “where do we end up? That the law is a sin? Never! For without the law I would not know the power of sin. I would not know what sinful desire is unless the law said: *do not have sinful desires..therefore the law is sacred and same are his commands...*we, thus, know that the law is spiritual while I am a carnal man sold to sin” (Paul cited in Lipowatz, 2006: 50, 51).

In times where individual closure is felt so desperately, the critical concepts like freedom and law take a negative definition. In order to reestablish a firm meaning in Law, seems inevitable to recourse to the negative form in order to notify the positive. It is a definition adjacent to a fundamentalist perception to the degree that resorts to the roots of the notion. It reflects the confusion of the times and resembles the negative definition of freedom as an act of escaping from something instead of capturing it. Despite the fact that the generic notion of Law needs,

indeed, a renovation to encompass the growing propensity to voicing one's request, we find that the aforementioned version is rather naïve in its crudeness. Its essence has to be mediated in ways that the basic principle of authority must be endorsed by the many. We, thus, enter the realm of the sublime and the transcendental as they are evoked by themes of psychoanalysis. It becomes so because in a world so deeply penetrated by globalized interconnections even the transcendental has to be differentiated from its classical orientation. Instead of a bottom up trajectory, it follows an inverse direction. The icons and axioms of religion are undergoing novel interpretations regarding their mode of participation to human affairs. Religion and its motifs start playing an alternate role for the rendition of the transcendental. In two of these attempts we meet the innovative reassessment of Christianity by Slavoj Žižek.

Žižek offers a convincing variation of the grounding of the celestial to the earthly bound. Comparing Buddhism with Christianity in terms of their persuasiveness, he reserves an uplifting meaning for the latter. He claims Christianity as superior on the basis of a genuine reduplication. It is the only religion whose founder attracts his believers not because of an appeal to faith but of betrayal. This is an exalting act because the advocate of the transcendence appears frail and fragile. There is no more convincing a gesture for the sufferers because He is the embodied reminiscent of His followers passions. Reduplication is always to be evaluated as a higher level act to the extent that it suggests a self consciousness of the agent, it is not simply a face value deed but it carries the knowledge of the initial intention and outcome as well. Grace to this sublime act Christ determines the affects to the minds and psyches of people: "...betrayal was part of the plan...that is, the act of betrayal by Judas was the ultimate sacrifice, the highest devotion. However, the contrast between the death of Christ and the death of Caesar is of resolute importance: Caesar was first a name and had to die as a name (as a contingent singular individual) to emerge as a universal notion – title (caesar); Christ was first, before his death, a universal notion ("Jesus the Christ – Messiah") and, through his death emerged as the unique singularity, as 'Jesus Christ'. Here, universality is recanted in singularity and not the inverse" (Žižek, 2005:28).

In this excerpt, we witness the primal act of the descent of the transcendental into the earthy sphere of perception. Through this primordial act of desublimation Christianity acquires its authentic meaning as a landing of the celestial to the terrestrial, and offers a notion

of the suprasensible tied with the lived personal experience. Desublimation is the specific operation of Christianity that detaches the Beyond from its metaphysical destinations and familiarizes it with the quotidian world. The real transcendental lies in the impossibility to discern the difference between the sublime and the ordinary. God resides in the potency of humans to assert the hues that tell good from bad: “Christianity, however, renounces this God of Beyond, this real behind the curtain of the phenomena...desire is always caught in the logic of ‘this is not that’...while love FULLY ACCEPTS that ‘this IS that’..that Christ, this wretched man, IS the living God...the point is not that we should ‘renounce transcendence’ and fully accept the limited human person as our love object, since ‘this is all there is’: transcendence is not abolished, but rendered ACCESSIBLE – it shines through in this very clumsy and miserable being that I love” (Zizek, 2001: 89, 90).

Zizek shifts the operations of the transcendental to the physical level. It is embodied in the everyday exchange where real sublimation takes place. This realization of the transcendental reminds us of an earlier remark we made about the shift in common mentality that occurred with the advent of post 68 era. In the light of these explications, of the relationship between the sublime and the really transcendental, we can estimate those times as an inadequate transposition instead of a socially determined sublimation that could cure the crisis of the individual. We tend to endorse the view that the postponed sublimation of that period takes the form of an appeal to crude versions of legitimizations that take place today. We consider one of these the theorization of Lacan’s “Name of The Father” as adjacent to broader religious themes, expressed in the work of professor Thanos Lipowatz “The Name of The Father and the Discontent of Civilization”

In order to better display Lipowatz’s argument about the function of Law stemming from the Lacanian theory “The Name of the Father”, we have to explain its background, its theoretical premises. As a starting point, we will incorporate the whole explication under one essential label. It pertains to none other than the classical term of Freud’s “discontent in civilization” (Freud: 1994). Everything that follows can be read as an adequate answer to the problem of internal inquietude that scourges our species. Lipowatz traces the primordial discontent in the incest principle. The first socially tamed organization, the family, is derived out of the necessity to know the father contrary to the former communal system of conceiving and upbringing children. The social condition that confirms this reality comes with the advent of monotheism

(and consequently patriarchy) that plays a progressive role in history as far as it entails the rule of self – constraint against the pagan matriarchy which is culprit of human sacrifices. Monotheism, through the lesson of Abraham’s suspension of sacrifice, constitutes an idea of freedom based on self – constraint against the unrestraint pagan deities of matriarchy connected with death. Here, we recognize the contribution of the notion of Otherness as a supportive entity for a negative definition of freedom, that is, freedom by avoidance of doing than proceeding to liberation.

Having ensured the father figure as dominant in the societal function, we move to definitions regarding his cultural significance from the aforementioned perspective. The notion of father we just met corresponds to traditional societies for he is defined as he who brings close a child and says: “I am the father” (Lipowatz, 2007:76). However, in modernity the notion of father identifies with the right of the child to have a descent. The father is a pedagogue and a role, but gradually he is substituted by the “welfare state” which acquires a range of maternal, social and legal knowledge. Here, we come across with Lash’s attributions of the advanced state to the narcissist personality that we criticized earlier. Lipowatz extends the protective welfare function of the state to resemble the maternal traits seeing in this function a beginning phase of father’s marginalization. The argument moves further on with the assessment of father in late modernity. In this phase, he retrogresses to the equivalent of a biological “truth” (ibid: 76). He is defined, as the one whose role is confined in the biological functions of conception. This actually signifies the current threat for the societal eclipse of the father. It follows that this imminent disappearance unilaterally reinforces the maternal role. The downgrading of father to merely a biological factor suggests a fall from his symbolical dimension as a carrier of truth, trustworthiness, confidence and cohesion. The symbolic father is differentiated from the imaginary in that, the latter, is produced out of the fears and the illusionary grandiosity he exerts to the child. Let’s examine closer the properties of each level of fatherhood according to Lipowatz’s argument.

In the symbolical level the father is a “name” for the child and is introduced with the consent of the mother (ibid: 77). The signifier of the name donates a meaning that constitutes the lack of mother and the Other. The name of the father substitutes for the child the bad possibility to be the phallus of the mother, and thus it is a metaphor, donating life, spirituality and desire. Thus, The Name of the Father does not coincide with the exact person but with his symbolism, actually it is a metaphor of

the biological self. In the real level, the father represents the impossibility of the subject to prove all things, to connect all truths. He represents “uncertainty”, the real ingredient of life which occurs from the obvious lack of biological reasoning. This action is synonymous with the “progress in spirituality” (ibid: 79) because it is based in the essential indifference for the logic of biological sequence. It expresses the rational placement towards the irrelevance about the pragmatic relation with the mother which confirms the chain of succession. Finally, the imaginary level begins as a creation of illusionary power attributed by the child to the father. This power results from the inability (or negligence or sadistic purpose) of the father to convince the child for the impossibility of the real, it means his failure to introduce the child to the non feasible. The imaginary father cannot guarantee the real as impossible, thus, he feeds the child with illusionary ideas about reality provoking all sorts of fears and insecurity to it. In this way, the father becomes the Law himself instead the representative of Law (like in the symbolic level). It is due to the excess exertion of *jouissance* on behalf of the father that this is allowed to happen and this renders the imaginary father close to feelings of distortion.

The type of “imaginary father” resembles the logic of the “discontent in civilization”. Like the latter starts with the self – destructive drive of the Oedipus complex, similarly, the imaginary father is created from the inability to transpose the *jouissance*, to find a bearable substitution for the inability to reach the Thing, in other words, to proceed to formal sublimation. Thus, the excessive pleasure unconsciously attaches to desire with Oedipal like tendencies who try to be satisfied with violence and deception. The individual, then, falls into primal sexuality and sins as he/she is driven by “unclean” desire and is prone to games of power and violence. The initial inability to regularize via sublimation turns against the Other seeing him/her as an enemy. The Other becomes victim of the disability to recognize the lack and sublimate it via symbolization. Anger towards Otherness is nothing but the imaginary projection of the individual to the neighbor in order to rebalance him/herself and regain harmony. Projecting this individual mechanism to the social terrain, as well as the prior logic behind the imaginary father, we infer the causes around phenomena of diffused social violence from political factions, hooliganism, youth delinquency and generally anomy. We can assess these phenomena as an attack against the symbolic representations of our societies stemming from inadequate sublimation.

Having analyzed the mechanism that produces the real discontent in civilization, following the Lacanian exegesis of Lipowatz, we now turn to our riposte.

There is a term in Lacanian analysis that expresses the idea of excessiveness, and its wrongness is that it is attached to the feeling of pleasure. In our account, *jouissance* (pleasure) is problematic because it connects the positively connoted affect of pleasure with the drive of death. Thereafter, starts a misconception about the original orientation of human with the stigmatization of hedonism, an essential drive for man – woman. This conception of pleasure builds a defensive mentality to people because all volition that tends to fulfillment is abandoned. The liberating feeling of transgressing the limits of the self through hedonistic release is condemned. Instead of focusing at the distinction between primary and secondary enjoyment (need or over consumption) that would rescue the notion of pleasure with evaluation of its real and pseudo facets, the elimination between them inscribes “evil” into sexuality. Thereby, sexuality connects with the Judaic – Christian tradition of sin with the incrimination of desire which is thought of as an individual inherent impasse. The mechanism of targeting the Other is, according to this view, owed to this symptom because it is the Other who produces anxiety to the subject. Having cited the superego on the side of destabilizing enjoyment (contrary to Freud who cites it on the side of the internalized Law), it is consequent that the blame falls wholly to the person not the structures.

Contrary to this aspect, we stress that violence is due to the repressed drives of social effectiveness that transpose the primal and innocent drive to destructive urges, and project them against substitute targets (people) instead of hitting the source of repression. We believe that in conditions of great antagonism like the ones under globalization, the immensely increased demand for reaching the goals of economy is the major factor to which the events of social and political anomy can be attributed. For Lacan (Lipowatz), the hate against the father starts with the dissolution of the Oedipus complex, when the child replaces the real with the imaginary father accusing him that he donated him very few gifts, capacities and chances. But this analysis credits the reasonable hate against the father (in patriarchal societies) to the interplay between imagination and desire rather than the actual violence that the father possibly exerts. This is the way by which the Father figure as emblematic of Law is rescued. Irrelevantly of the fact that we can always assume a

non identical relation between Law and positive laws, the “idea” of Law is never independent from its accrues.

CONCLUSION

In order to locate the real “discontent in civilization” we followed the trajectory from systemic causes and theoretical evaluations to the crisis of the subject. Our inquiry led us to the firm assumption that the systemic turmoil of economy and society boil down to the individual of our times rendering it imbalanced, unsafe and existentially troubled. We attributed this kind of pathology to the extreme personification, where the subject is led today, and granted the assumption that various aspects of social violence today are attributed to this phenomenon. We examined the twofold attempt to rationalize it through the mediation of religious and psychoanalytic themes that try to decrease the impact of their transcendental orientation either through reintroductions of theological motifs or reductions of the transcendental to the lived perception. With the utter scope to focus on the (re) determination of the meaning of Law as a classic social norm, being at stake from increased anomy, we examined the affinity of the Father figure with the Law term via the influential theory of Lacan, “The Name of The Father”. We concluded that Law as a generic concept is reintroduced through typical patterns of patriarchy, and the theoretical justification of this move is owed to a basic misconception about the human ontology: the confusion of pleasure with misery and the corresponding problems of regression. Therefore, answering the question of the choice between the primacy of Father as representative of the past we chose the openness of the Son’s impetus to overcome the multifaceted crisis of today.

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