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Parekh and Dialogical Multiculturalism. An Analysis

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Come è evidente dal titolo, il lavoro che segue è incentrato sull'opera di Bhikhu Parekh – con un costante riferimento al contenuto di *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (RM), sua opera più significativa. Anzitutto, voglio sottolineare che l'analisi è prevalentemente di tipo concettuale. Non intende essere né un'apologia né una critica sistematica. Infatti, non credo che tali approcci possano valorizzare la proposta di dialogo avanzata da Parekh. Il concetto stesso di dialogo, ritengo opportuno chiarire, è esaltato e messo in discussione al punto definire l'andamento stesso dell'elaborato.

All'inizio del primo capitolo, riporto la definizione di multiculturalismo dialogico, affrontato da Parekh nei termini di convivenza fra comunità culturali. Fra le forme espressive in cui questi termini possono trovare spazio, possiamo pensare alla teoria politica liberale fondata sui principi di giustizia. Ad essa Parekh oppone un processo che porta a tali principi e norme attraverso l'instaurazione di un fruttuoso dialogo fra le parti.

Procederò ad esporre quelli che considererò come i due elementi determinanti la posizione di Parekh in merito alla concezione stessa di multiculturalismo. Il primo è l'adesione al pluralismo. Il secondo è l'atteggiamento dell'autore nei confronti del liberalismo. Il proposito è quello di chiarire l'ampia portata di tale discorso, al fine di esprimere una libera interpretazione. Chiaramente le implicazioni che derivano da tali posizioni sono molteplici e non possono essere approfondite in questa sede. Per Parekh, il pluralismo è, senza dubbio, la conditio sine qua non dell'incontro fra culture.

Il pluralismo al quale Parekh aderisce contiene due aspetti: uno derivante dalla tradizione della teoria morale pluralista, identificabile principalmente nel lavoro di Isaiah Berlin, e un altro che perviene come elaborazione dei presupposti della prima. La combinazione che risulta dal pluralismo morale e quello culturale è una ricerca di un "universalismo pluralista". Tale ricerca legittima e dà una forma alla proposizione dialogica. Analizzandola nel dettaglio, tale ricerca è la soluzione teoretica all'incontro fra valori egualmente importanti ma in conflitto fra loro.

La prima, in breve, non solo ci dice che il bene è pluridimensionale, come affermava Aristotele, ma anche che nessun valore cosituisce un "primato ontologico". Ciò non vale a dire che l'universalità non può essere pensata, il che porterà Parekh a individuare valori universali quali il rispetto per la vita umana.

Onde evitare di scadere nel relativismo, il pluralismo non può perdere di vista un'analisi valutativa delle culture volta al riconoscimento dei valori imprescindibili che, qualora minacciati, comporterebbero un'irrimediabile perdita di significato per chi a tali valori mostra piena aderenza. Ciò distingue il pluralismo culturale (qui in senso normativo, non empirico) dal relativismo, che, al contrario, si oppone all'idea che le culture possano ripensarsi attraverso il confronto. Dunque, come possiamo identificare i valori dai quali una comunità culturale non può prescindere? La domande confluisce in una questione più ampia, ovvero la concettualizzazione stessa di cultura. Parekh offre una concezione basata sulle pratiche culturali, dalle quali emergono le norme e i principi fondamentali. Il ruolo di queste pratiche è quello di porsi come metro interpretativo delle culture. Ciò conduce Parekh ad adottare i valori pubblici operativi (*Operative Public Values* o *OPVs*) come punto di riferimento del dialogo.

Prima di esporre i luoghi concettuali del dialogo interculturale – nella versione di Parekh e non – vi è una parte dedicata all'istanza "post-liberale" al quale Parekh si vota per affrontare la diversità culturale. Il proposito è sia quello di mostrare come, in Parekh, le principali implicazioni del pluralismo culturale sembrino portare a una critica del liberalismo come variante locale del monismo, sia quello di precisare che tale critica va confinata entro l'ambito del multiculturalismo.

Parekh, come ci ricorda Melidoro, insiste molto sul carattere particolaristico del liberalismo (2015, 46). L'incompatibilità del pensiero liberale nel trattare in ambienti alieni allo sviluppo delle liberal-democrazie ha ragioni storiche. Le pretese liberali di universalismo sono in realtà, il più delle volte, un'espressione di monismo morale. La consolidazione di tale monismo è andata consolidandosi sempre più nell'arco evolutivo degli Stati-nazione. Il modo in cui le società liberali si pongono di fronte alle altre esprime al meglio l'idea. Questo è evidente dal momento che le tradizioni delle ultime sono troppo spesso accusate di essere illiberali o anti-liberali, anziché *non*-liberali. A dire il vero, l'idea che il liberalismo abbia una visione morale e politica etnocentrica va rilegata ai termini in cui esso pensa la società multiculturale. Lungi dal rifiutare lo Stato liberale, l'autore si pone l'obbiettivo di andare oltre il multiculturalismo liberale. La mia conclusione è che questo obbiettivo sia consone a una necessità storica. A tale

scopo, concludo riportando come, in questi anni, l'idea di multiculturalità assuma un nuovo significato.

A questa parte segue una trattazione del dialogo interculturale contenuto in RM. Il motivo per il quale il dialogo acquista senso politico è insito nell'interpretazione della diversità culturale quale patrimonio umano da riconoscere, promuovere e del quale servirsi. Gli argomenti di cui Parekh si avvale sostengono la tesi secondo la quale la come ha scritto Melidoro nella sua trattazione, "le culture si completano e si correggono a vicenda, e con ciò ampliano gli orizzonti della mente umana" (2015, 47). Di conseguenza, il dialogo interculturale arricchisce le nostre vite. Come punto di partenza e di riferimento, gli *OPVs* costituiscono l'asse portante di un dibattito che, sul nascere, si presenta come rottura con i suddetti valori. La funzione del dialogo è quella di mettere in discussione sia i valori della minoranza che quelli a cui fa appello la maggioranza, ovvero i valori operativi pubblici.

Emerge un'osservazione: il dialogo interculturale si presta a due interpretazioni. Una richiama la natura conciliatrice del dialogo e tende a identificarlo come processo fine a se stesso. Chiaramente, si tratta dell'aspetto idealizzante del dialogo. L'altra concerne la messa in atto del dialogo. Questa duplice lettura è il principale strumento di cui mi servo per condurre l'analisi comparativa – a supporto di quella concettuale – di cui mi avvalgo.

Successivamente, espongo l'opera del filosofo Raimon Panikkar partendo dalle fasi progressive di convergenza, indispensabili per stabilire la "relazione-dialogante". Egli conferisce al *dia-logos* qualità volte a esaltare l'apertura all'altro. L'oggetto della parte che segue il dialogo di Parekh, è il dialogo come postulato dell'interculturalità. Si può dire che il sostrato dell'interculturalità è la seguente tesi: "il pluralismo non porta al solipsismo, cioè all'incomunicazione, ma alla tolleranza e alla scoperta della terza dimensione" (Panikkar 2002, 57). La terza dimensione va ricercata nel "dialogo dialogico", unica interazione possibile, che "non cerca di con-vincere l'altro, cioè di vincere dialetticamente l'interlocutore" (Panikkar 2002, 44). Va specificato che il dialogo a cui fa riferimento Panikkar è prevalentemente di tipo interreligioso. Il quadro entro cui va analizzata l'interculturalità è quello della "filosofia interculturalità". Per arricchire il discorso, affianco all'opera di Panikkar l'esempio di altri fautori della filosofia interculturale. Ivi provo a estrarre ciò che li accomuna al multiculturalismo di Parekh. Cionondimeno, il principio di mutua conoscenza e successivo avvicinamento fra culture combatte l'erronea ambizione a considerare il proprio modello culturale come unico modello di convivenza.

Di qui passo all'interculturalismo, quale presunto superamento delle teorie e delle politiche multiculturali. Il dibattito è piuttosto recente. L'inadeguatezza del multiculturalismo, a detta di alcuni, è dovuta alla sua limitatezza nel far fronte ai problemi di inclusione e riconoscimento. In linea con il lavoro di Meer e Modood (2012), provo a dimostrare come il multiculturalismo, specie quello dialogico, per sue stessa natura, affronta e concepisce le culture e le identità con dinamismo e non si limita a promuove la coesistenza fra di esse.

Per concludere il capitolo, riprendo le considerazioni fatte a proposito della duplice lettura del dialogo. La lettura meno idealizzante, cioè quella che fa riferimento agli *OPVs,* per quanto offra soluzioni concrete, è meno coerente con il quadro concettuale stabilito fino a questo punto. Paul Kelly descrive l'enunciato di Parekh come segue: "le pratiche culturali sono sempre punti di partenza per la deliberazione, il dibattito e reinterpretazione". Se però proviamo a immaginare un dialogo istituzionalizzato, difficilmente possiamo immaginare che una reinterpretazione possa essere raggiunta. Il dialogo va avanti solamente se il carattere degli argomenti avanzati non è conclusivo.

Nel secondo capitolo passo al vaglio l'idea di dialogo basato sulle pratiche culturali alla luce della tensione fra teoria e pratica – fra ideazione e istituzionalizzazione. La pratica, intesa come azione o scelta – in una parola deliberazione – pone i pluralisti di fronte ai conflitti fra valori incommensurabili che questi riconoscono come legittimi. Come notato da Crowder (2013), una valida alternativa per affrontare situazioni di questo genere è riscontrabile nel modello etico Aristotelico. L'ethos, secondo tale modello, è quell'insieme di consuetudini e attività – in una parola, le pratiche – approvate da una comunità. "Le virtù sono disposizioni non solo ad agire, ma anche a sentire in modi particolari", come afferma MacIntyre in *After Virtue* (1981). Si può pensare quindi alle pratiche culturali come mezzi espressivi delle virtù etiche, dove la *phronesis* (saggezza) guida le ultime. Poiché la *phronesis* rappresenta la capacità di deliberare, ovvero di calcolare con la ragione, ci può indicare quali azioni compiere e quali evitare al fine di realizzare il bene. Alla base vi è il riconoscimento della filosofia pratica come disciplina autonoma della filosofia.

La scienza politica è la massima espressione della filosofia pratica. In essa, il possesso delle virtù etiche – derivanti cioè dalle pratiche - trova espressione e compimento. Essa è "la più autorevole e architettonica" fra le scienze pratiche (Berti 2004, 19).

Il suo metodo è *periastico*: esamina e mette alla prova le opinioni. Si tratta indubbiamente di un procedimento dialettico. I sillogismi dialettici che Aristotele si propone di non partono da "princìpi", cioè da premesse necessariamente vere, ma partono da premesse soltanto probabili, anzi, per usare il termine di Aristotele, *"endossali",* cioè appartenenti all'opinione *(endoxa,* il contrario di *paradoxa*) (Berti 2004, 23). Infine, giungono a una conclusione, decretando una scelta. Come le premesse endossali, anche gli *Operative Public Values* sono le premesse del procedimento.

Malgrado i contributi dell'approccio "virtuoso", dobbiamo riconoscere che molte problematiche rimangono irrisolte. La contingenza e la precarietà delle condizioni entro le quali si svolge il potenziale dialogo interculturale minacciano di radicare ulteriormente "il conflitto di valori" in atto fra le comunità culturali – specie quella musulmana, dove la disposizione al cambiamento, benché presente, non sembra prevalere – già aggravato dalla mancata riconciliazione con un'opinione pubblica marcata da crescente ansia e incertezza. Un dialogo trasformativo à la Parekh, specie nel quadro multiculturale Europeo, sembra un obbiettivo valido quanto difficile da realizzare.

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INTRODUCTION

Following the first publication of *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (RM) in 2002, Parekh could claim to have caused a regeneration in the political discourse surrounding issues of multiculturalism. There are several reasons why it is worth discussing Parekh's model as a challenging theory of multiculturalism. Its expression – intercultural dialogue – is meant to pursue, simultaneously, recognition of differences and inclusion of communities into the public life of the majority. Moreover, the way in which he conducted such elaboration was ground-breaking. It should be clear from the start, that we find its most comprehensive form in RM. Here, Parekh combines theoretical exploration and inquiry with value pluralism, bringing together a theory of recognition and a deliberative model of dialogue. While the book develops multicultural concerns at many levels, all appealing, the idea of engaging different cultural communities in an intercultural dialogue is its most significant, complex and indeed controversial proposal.

Since the beginning of RM, Parekh pledges his efforts and philosophical convictions to propose a new, "complex theory of multiculturalism". Its interpretative difficulty, therefore, comes naturally and should be accepted before any deeper examination. The viewpoint attempted henceforth is to consider such multiculturalism as dialogical. To understand why dialogue is a pivotal concept in his multiculturalism, I shall start by tracing what I believe to be the main elements underpinning it

At its most conventional interpretation, dialogue already suggests many positive qualities. It is widely regarded as a valid means to solve interpersonal confrontation. Hardly anyone would dismiss or disregard the notion of dialogue as a viable conflict resolution. The association of dialogue with a peaceful and mutually beneficial interaction, we can affirm, is quite straightforward. More broadly, we should appeal to dialogue when one or both claims n dispute were initially misunderstood. At that point, dialogue comes as a suggestion to the claim-maker not to draw other's standpoint because she did not come to the other's claim in a way as direct as dialogue provides it.

Parekh's political theory rests on his pluralist convictions. These provide backing for an ethical inquiry gives much significance to dialogue. His critique on liberalism too has its innovatory

thrust and fosters the debate on how to frame a multicultural state within liberal democracies. However contentious my arguments have been in some cases, the possibility to distance from liberalism, and favour a new, multiculturally oriented account of liberalism proves defensible. The method attempted by Parekh is valuable primarily because its key objective is to endow the latter with "a dialogical openness it has long lacked" (2006, 370).

A good grasp of cultural pluralism grants new attitudinal virtues. We are more apt to discover the character of our interlocutor, however different her origins and beliefs are from ours. We may want to know what she deems worthwhile, or why hers and her family's marginalisation have prevailed over adherence to the public values of their new country.

Forging Dialogical Models

Dialogical processes differ at the interpersonal level and, more importantly, at the intercultural level. From different dialogical processes, we can conclude there are also different dialogical models. However, some of these models reveal practical weaknesses and are do not offer proactive political solutions.

I shall start by unfolding the structure of Parekh's political theory in relation to his dialogical proposition. The foremost is pluralism, a value theory that, for its scope, cannot be subject to any thorough analysis. Thereby, I shall outline the theory of value pluralism as endorsed by Parekh and, as just said, in relation to what I consider thereafter. Conversely, Parekh's attitude towards liberalism, which I shall attempt to elucidate, is much clearer and accessible. Due to the historical consolidation of moral monism within the liberal tradition, Parekh contends, the latter is not equipped to deal with contemporary diversity. Crowder (2013) defined this criticism as an allegation of "ethnocentrism". This explains the case rightly but partially. Rather, Parekh's charge becomes a point of reference to envisage a dialogical multiculturalism that is, at its inception, "post-liberal" (Mancina 2013, 92).

Far from dismissing liberal philosophy or its values, the incompatibility between liberalism and multicultural recognition lies between a theory that is mostly limited to preservation of neutrality in public realm, and an actively promoted dialogue between the multicultural actors.

The latter, as we shall see, is deemed to be true to the multicultural challenge because it is premised – most importantly – on the appraisal of cultural diversity. Hence, the tenet of dialogical multiculturalism is that cultural pluralism (recognised cultural diversity) for its very nature, must sustain a wide array of dialogical options. Indeed, the worth of diversity is convincingly articulated by Parekh and inspires the whole theory. Yet, however important it may be, it only provides a normative basis to a broader dialogical formulation.

I will not centre on definitive categories of dialogue. To be accurate, the purpose is to consider the potential of some of the features attributed to intercultural dialogue. In fact, while I am aware that dialogical engagement, in any field including politics, is a multifarious idea, I try to concentrate on Parekh's notion and compare it with other conceptions of dialogue. Amongst them, the one offered by the late Catalonian-Indian philosopher and theologian Raimon Panikkar (2002) was a chief source of rumination. The author comes from a plurality of traditions: Indian and European, he was a Catholic who made extensive use of Hindu and Buddhist notions. Through his works, he developed a unique interreligious philosophical theology. This version of intercultural encounter is quite distant from theories of multiculturalism. Nonetheless, it provides indispensable insights to develop the discussion. The central claim is that intercultural dialogue is transformative as it offers the opportunity to experience otherness and authentic self-reflection and self-transcendence.

A Constructive Attempt

His dialogical proposition came as a novelty. He pioneered the idea of dialogue as an indispensable dimension of multiculturalism. This certainly offers an insight for new theories of multiculturalism because it succeeds in giving substance and political significance to a concept, which *per se* would be too simplistic.

The upshot envisaged by dialogical multiculturalism – mainly, not uniquely, found in Parekh's writings – is that intercultural relations can be brought into a "creative interplay" in pursuance of a mutually beneficial dialogue.. As we move in the realm of difference, cultural pluralism is

the legitimising tenet of dialogical multiculturalism. However, the closer you stick to a pluralist core of values, the harder it will be to provide a satisfactory account of morality. The nature of human relations, with its unpredictability, renders the task sensibly harder.

The patterns of intercultural interactions are almost infinite and hard to define. Yet, it is even harder to institutionalise these multicultural conversations. Admittedly, Parekh does not pursuit this task very successfully. Accordingly, the second chapter is meant to develop and at the same time reassess the insights explicated of the first chapter. At that point, having displayed what I believe to be the weaknesses of intercultural dialogue, I discuss the Aristotelian model for deliberation from a comparative perspective. I try to investigate on its implications for an argumentative form of dialogical multiculturalism. Of course, I do not take for granted any liaison between Parekh – and multiculturalism more generally – and Aristotle's philosophy. I am too aware of the limitations intrinsic to such comparison. By no means will it contain a new model of inquiry for multicultural political theory. Rather, it seeks to buttress the conceptual cogency of an institutionalised – hence, rationalised – dialogue. To attempt so, I ask whether, in light of Aristotelian notions, we could conceive of dialogical openness as a virtue sustained by *phronesis* and if it can be situated in a deliberative model.

Overall, my attempts to cast doubts on the practical validity of dialogical multiculturalism are meant to give a positive contribution to the debate. In fact, however contentious some of the forthcoming considerations, they will often reveal an underlying adherence to a dialogical engagement in the realm of difference – namely the multicultural realm.

Chapter 1. A NEW, DIALOGICAL MULTICULTURALISM?

In the very introduction to RM, There, we find a significant and balanced definition of multiculturalism, followed by a definition of the dialogical overtone of Parekh's rethought multiculturalism. This statement is stretched as follows:

> It is about the proper terms of relationship between different cultural communities. The norms governing their respective claim, including the principles of justice, cannot be derived from one culture alone but through an open and equal dialogue between them."
>
> (2006, 13)

It can be reasonably argued that two pivotal elements led Parekh to devise such distrinctive theory. Moral pluralism comes as first. The second is a complex relationship with liberalism. The terms on which he writes about the latter depend on the former. That is, we cannot appreciate the singularity of his theoretical attempt to detach from liberalism, unless we understand the kind of pluralism he endorses. According to this purpose, I shall analyse them in turn, to provide an account of Parekh's underlying statement.

Since liberal thought has developed under monist assumptions – the very ones rejected by pluralists – we should revise the liberal terms to deal with minorities. In RM's first chapter, *Moral Monism*, Parekh gives an account of moral monism as an evolution of three major traditions: Greek, Christian and classical liberal. In short, Parekh condemns monism as "philosophically flawed" (2006, 47), for the monist faith "rests on the naïve assumption that valuable human capacities, desires virtues and dispositions form a harmonious whole and can be combined without loss" (Crowder 2013, 155). However, I shall not settle the debate between moral monism and value pluralism, for its scope is too wide and beyond our discussion. Rather, I shall briefly explain how Parekh combines different views giving different meanings to pluralism.

Parekh's Pluralism

There are at least two views supportive of Parekh's commitment to moral diversity. One concerns the plural nature of the good; the other is about the role of practices in morality (Kelly 2015, 41). The former involves an interpretation of conflict and incommensurability when comparing conception of the good. This paves the way for the latter: arguably, a conceptualization of culture, aimed to underline the pluralist detachment from relativism.

Parekh disagreement begins, I think, in what counts as "value" – subject to rankings and combinations. When we pose ethical questions, the answers will vary and even conflict amongst cultures, but their incommensurability comes from values, not from cultures. In the Stanford Encyliclopedia of Philosophy, we find that "moral pluralism is not about different value systems or viewpoints, but about different values". Parekh would not be in full agreement. This question, indeed, enables to understand where Parekh's interpretative viewpoint steps in: group practices embody values and diverse ways of achieving the good life (Kelly 2015, 42). In short, Parekh's pluralist account includes cultural components of human experience.

Parekh's commitment to multiculturalism, indeed, oriented him towards a singular, enhanced appraisal of cultural diversity. This not to say that Parekh's notion of culture is essentialist or reifying. An assessment of diversity requires some definition of culture. These, in turn,are inevitably subject to much discussion about their place in human nature. Consequently, it is obvious that Parekh comes under attack.

Therefore, as Paul Kelly rightly points out, risk of relativism is concomitant with the political problems that multiculturalists are trying to accommodate (2015, 44). Whatever account we regard most highly, relativist temptations will always be an obstacle the cultural pluralist must overcome. If we adapt and extend a political theory to the political recognition of groups with social, political and historical background, we must cope with conflicting values.

As Berlin, who cast the basic concepts of value pluralism, wrote, relativists misconceive cultures as "windowless boxes" or "impenetrable bubbles". Indeed, the idea that each ethical question can be interpreted and weighed in different ways does not necessarily presuppose cultural relativism.

Furthermore, Berlin's and Parekh's views soundly overlap on their acceptance of cultural diversity, and their notions of its admissibility. The two would not come to any disagreement if either were to state that no single ranking or combination of values is universally correct, and that many such combinations – which find expression in cultural diversity – must be permissible (Crowder, 2013, 151).

Under the name of "pluralist universalism" (2006, 126), we are presented with Parekh's most valid rejoinder to the critiques on his presumed relativism. The insight is that universal values do exist, yet they are hard to detect. Parekh is critic of the way moral philosophers have arrived at defining universal values for centuries (2006, 128). Universal values, as we shall see, do not derive from an "ontological primacy". Their essence and cogency are inherent in the immense complexity of human beings. In RM, a whole chapter, ambitiously titled *Conceptualizing Human Beings*, explores the issue.

Yet, in *A New Politics of Identity* (2006), Parekh has set a list of principles to define a "global ethics", whose universality seems straightforward. Namely, these are human worth, human solidarity and respect for difference and plurality (Pantham 2015, 65). Eventually, the dialogical recipe is sustained by a minimal list of universal values, which guarantee the very existence of dialogue. Thereby, while human dignity, equality of worth, equal rights and respect for life are universal, personal autonomy, individualism and individual choice are "culturally specific and distinctive to the liberal view of the world" (Parekh 2006, 360). He justifies his relativizing claims insists on the unprejudiced fact that all human beings are "prone to universalising" their own values (2006, 128). Liberals are not exempted from this charge. It entails that multiculturalism is not realizable within existing liberal theories. In turn, a discussion on the reasons behind Parekh's attitude towards liberalism is necessary.

Parekh's "Post-liberal" Multiculturalism

Following our discussion on pluralist universalism, we read that, in most cases, the universality of liberal values is alleged. Therefore, cultural diversity can be adequately recognised only from a rigorous pluralist stance. Accordingly, since we ought to cherish diversity, why should we not develop its human potentials? This and related questions premise Parekh's search for an original political "dialogical" theory. His attempts aim to give a convincing account on why cultural diversity can enrich the lives and experiences of citizens. In short, when Parekh envisages a truly multicultural political framework, he feels duty-bound to overcome the limits of liberalism.

Apparently, we are confronted with an paradox: only contemporary liberal democracies have perceived the problem of cultural difference with its social implications. Only liberals – or at least scholars of liberal environment including Parekh, deemed it worth of theoretical and political debate. Indeed, no theory of multiculturalism should ever be regarded as anti-liberal, for that would not be multiculturalism. Even more misguiding would be regarding it as mere advocacy for illiberal practices. Multiculturalism, both as an issue and as theoretical debate, has emerged and developed as a discussion among liberals over the implications of liberalism and its values (Melidoro 2015, 18). Nevertheless, we should accept that "'the child of liberal egalitarianism, but like any child, it is not simply a faithful reproduction of its parents", as affirmed by Modood (Melidoro 2015, 40). While it develops from liberalism and as a response to it, it cannot be antithetical to the liberal tradition. On the contrary,

> We need to break away from this obsession with doctrinal identity […]. Rather than talk of "liberalism" with its overtones of essentialism, closure, system building and intellectual rigidity, we should deconstruct and break it up into liberal principles or values, so as to remain free to accept some of these but not others and to combine them with those drawn from other sources.
>
> (Parekh 2006, 369)

Far from accepting a rigorous system of values guided by precepts of inquiry, he thinks that by preserving "our freedom of exploration and experimentation" (ibid.), we can set the ground for a theory that commits itself to cultural pluralism. All proposals for a novel political framework,

among which dialogue, are rejoinders to standard liberal approaches, which often result in assimilationist policies.

It would also be a mistake to think of Parekh's commitment to go beyond liberalism as a pure matter of terminology. Since its theoretical reach can, and has to, be rethought, just as suggested by the very title of his major text. In the realm of cultural difference, we are dealing with theories that do not yet – if they ever will – form a homogenous body of thought. Moreover, his theoretical challenge on liberal formulations is confined to multicultural matters. Accordingly, we should not be concerned with terminologies and concentrate on the limits of liberalism as Parekh identifies them.

From chapters 1 and 3 of RM, *Moral Monism* and *Contemporary Liberal Responses to Diversity*, as from earlier readings, it seems that Parekh's attack on liberalism is basically twofold. It is grounded in his critique of moral monism and in the influence of its historical origins. The latter ground is given more relevance, Parekh because it exacerbates the .While the former should be associated with his appraisal of cultural pluralism and specificity. The latter critique comes as a critical of the historical consolidation of moral monism. The misrecognition of cultural affiliations is subsequent. The "intercultural attitude" – a term I will use below – that all strands of liberalism share is misguided. Here is Parekh's historical description:

> […] liberal writers freely borrowed [Christianity's] language, categories of thought, imagery, self-understanding and manner of relating to other ways of life and thought. […] Human history [in the classical liberal view] was a struggle between good and evil represented respectively by liberty, individuality and rationality on the one hand, and despotism, collectivism, blind customs and social conformity on the other.
>
> (1998, 4)

It can be concluded that the substantial part of this critique is mainly the product of his understanding of long-term patterns. Liberal monism is inextricable from the evolution of the modern nation-state, for which "cultural and social homogenisation" was necessary. Only by means of homogeneity and uniformity could the modern state secure social cohesion and emancipation at the same time. Since Europe was characterised by three centuries of nation-state,

> we have become so accustomed to equating unity with homogeneity and equality with uniformity that we feel morally and emotionally disorientated by a deep and defiant diversity.
>
> (Parekh 1998, 7).

As Paul Kelly best summarised it, Parekh's point is a "challenge to the false neutrality of liberal egalitarianism as a further local variant of ethical monism". However, this is by no means a rejection of the liberal order. Nor is it a rejection of the modern state, who has had a "great emancipatory potential". Rather, his formula is a complement, a multicultural accompaniment to deal with diversity within liberal democratic regimes. To prove so, it is enough recalling that Parekh, in virtue of his seat at the House of Lords, chaired the Commission for the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, whose work would result in the Parekh Report (2000). This passage, introducing *A Vision for Britain* illustrates quite accurately his vision:

> Most theoretical debates on such questions in Britain have been between […] nationalist and liberal theories of society. […] the need now is for debates between liberal and pluralist theories. Britain should develop both as a community of citizens (the liberal view) and as a community of communities (the pluralist view).[1]

It can be witnessed that Parekh perceives the duty to framing and encouragement of the construction of a "community of communities" as the pluralist task, to be carried out by means of critical engagement with established, liberal theories.

Arguably, he leans towards communitarian conceptions of the self, and seems unsympathetic to the Kantian *Moralität*, whereby our ethics should be oriented towards a universal conception of human needs or human rationality (Kymlicka 2002, 209). In *Decolonizing Liberalism* (1994) he gives an interesting account descriptive of non-liberal groups:

> "those bound together by familiar, kinship or other ties do not see themselves as independent and self-contained ontological units involved in specific kinds of relationships with others, but rather as bearers of overlapping selves whose identities are constituted by and incapable of being defined in isolation from these relationships".

[1] http://www.runnymedetrust.org/reportPartOne.html

At this point, the emphasis on community would suggest that Parekh adheres to the communitarian understanding of embedded identities but deploys the concept only in reference to non-liberal groups. He wrote:

> […] contemporary multiculturality occurs against the background of nearly three centuries of the culturally homogenising nation state. In almost all premodern societies the individual's culture was deemed to be an integral part of his identity, in just the same ways as his body was. Cultural communities were therefore widely regarded as the bearers of rights and generally left free to follow their customs and practices. This was true of the Roman as well as the Ottoman and Habsburg empires. (1998, 4)

The ultimate rationale behind his venture beyond liberalism is that "contemporary multicultural societies are historically unique and raise problems not faced" so far (Parekh 1998, 3). The reasons for such uniqueness come under three basic features of contemporary multiculturality (The latter term suggests that society is heterogeneous, in terms of either religion, or ethnicity, or both. Thereby, it is "not new to our age", but it has unprecedented influence):

1) It is wider and deeper. What is most convincing here is the latter case: since most premodern societies were religious, multiculturality was not "grounded in profound differences about the conceptions of the good life".
2) It is now harder to detect how multicultural presence evolves. "Thanks to the spread of liberal and democratic ideas" minority communities "demand equal status, rights, power and opportunity to participate in and shape the collective life of the wider society"(1998, 3-4)
3) The last reason is the momentum of globalisation. For its extremely wide scope, a pattern describing the influence of this phenomenon over cultures and cultural diversity cannot be presented here. Parekh does not venture into the ontology of globalization:

   "Contemporary multiculturality is thus embedded in an immensely complex dialectical process, and heavily bound up with global economic and political forces" (ibid, 4).

Introducing Parekhian Dialogue

If dialogue is to be the best form of inclusion and recognition of diversity, then we should not forgo the comparative nature of our moral discourses when we seek to confirm the universality of a principle when it is not evidently universal.

It is through the notion of pluralist universalism that gives substance to the notion of dialogue as means to reach universal value. Indeed, the ex-dialogue determination of universal values remains Parekh's most coherent feature. It is especially so in his case for female circumcision (2006, 273) and for polyginy (2006, 282).

Parekh's cultural pluralism, from our considerations, is a statement about the importance of moral practices and traditions as a source of values and ethical principles: it is a practice-based conception of ethics (Kelly 2015, 44). Minorities, so understood, deserve special recognition in a pluralist, multicultural society: we enable practices to express a conception of the good and raise them to moral authorities. The idea that practices and traditions should be endowed with public authority underpins Parekh's appeal to Operative Public Values (OPVs) as the basis for opening any dialogue between minority groups and the wider society. As suggested above, if we do not welcome cultural difference in the public realm, we are not being pluralist for the very fact that a conception of the good may be inextricable from a certain form of communal life.

I shall outline the main traits of Parekh's dialogue in light of a question related to the previous paragraph: if minority culture demanded authority and we accepted the cultural pluralism, then how do assert this authority? The difficulty lies in the inevitable condition of unequal bargaining power. It seems that for Parekh the only way to reach proper public recognition is to overcome the issue of authority. Dialogue, then, offers itself as the best solution for its potentials.

Though Parekh does not make explicit reference to the issue of participation, it seems that a spontaneous dialogue can be engaged by different entities: individuals, families or communities. Again, if we stick to a pluralist conception, we accept the principles that are

chosen by a community according to their values cannot be subject to impartial rules to determine the fairness of a dispute. This requires evaluation, an issue he addresses as follows:

> I suggest there is no single principle in terms of which disputed practices can be evaluated. We start and cannot but start with what I shall call society's operative public values, which provide the context and point of orientation for all such discussions. These values, however, are not sacrosanct and non-negotiable, and may themselves be questioned. The resulting dialogue, in which different values are brought into a creative interplay and balanced and traded-off, yields an inherently tentative consensus that helps us decide on a generally acceptable response to disputed practices.
>
> (2006, 267)

Henceforth the "logic of intercultural evaluation" will take relevance, for it shows that Parekh, in the end, typifies his dialogue as a dispute-settler model to use in case of conflict:

> By its very nature the dialogue cannot centre on the merits and demerits of the minority practice alone, for the practice would not have been a subject of dispute if the wider society had not disapproved of it on the basis of its operative public values
>
> (2006, 270)

The dialogue goes on because most reasons upheld in the name of culture are not conclusive.

A question arises: if minority claims are challenged in the name of OPVs, how do we know there is mutual understanding? Parekh's solution rules that the established dialogue should always be bifocal. Throughout the process, his dialogue works both on OPVs and on minority practices. This envisages that both parties may reconsider the terms of dispute at the light of an identity-based criterion, namely a shared cultural practice.

Definitions of OPVs tend to evoke Parekh's conception of culture. Parekh's understanding of culture is ambitious because it provides a non-essentialist account. It comes in a significant definition when it is said to form "a body of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of human beings understand, regulate and structure their individual and collective lives" (Parekh 2006, 143). A more tangible explanation describes OPVs as providing a "set of constitutional, legal and civic values" (Barrett 2013, 23).

Finally, Pantham has remarked that Parekh shares Gandhi's "interculturally and intercivilisationally dialogical perspective" (2015, 55). Indeed, the conciliatory nature of Parekh's dialogue owes much to his Gandhian ascendance (Melidoro 2015, 48). The thought of Mahatma Gandhi, Parekh maintains, was "an excellent and little noticed example of intercultural experimentation" (2006, 370).

> Gandhi's view that each civilization, religion, and way of life had its strengths and limitations enabled him to highlight both the possibility and the necessity of an inter-cultural dialogue, and to argue that learning and borrowing from other traditions in no way compromised one's loyalty to one's own. As we have seen, he himself freely borrowed ideas from different traditions, brought them into a creative interplay, and arrived at new ones that none of these traditions alone could have generated.

In support of this interpretation, it is worth noting that Parekh has engaged in a study of Gandhian political philosophy.

From the premises made in the Introduction, we can argue that Parekh's pluralism lends itself to manifold interpretations. In the same strand, we may add that its implications are not straightforward. Two aspects of Parekhian dialogue emerged: one marked by open-endedness, more exposed to relativism and thus more "vulnerable". This position bears some resonance with Gandhi's intercultural experimentation. The "dialogical" approach of Panikkar, contained in *Pace e Interculturalità* that will be presented in the next paragraph, is a case that bears several similarities with Parekh's ideal dialogue. The transformative effect, here, is inherent to the dialogue. The other, marked by prudent reasoning and the instrumental deployment of OPVs, seeks such transformation as an end and hopes to reap its benefits *a posteriori*.

"Interculturality" and Dialogue: Panikkar

Panikkar points out five progressive, stages of cultural interaction: isolation; indifference; condemnation; coexistence and communication; convergence and dialogue (2002, 31-32). These are not intended to describe a typical situation that may arise when two cultures meet each other in a specific social context. Rather, they are "intercultural attitudes". Accordingly,

they can be understood as general opportunities of interaction. In the following adaptation, I shall try to convey these five moments to a general discourse on recognition through dialogue. These five stages can be seen as one moment of cultural isolation where no opportunity for interaction is even conceived.

The first and second stage describe the antinomies of a pluralist society. Before any contact, majoritarian and minority cultures are in such isolation, that they are not presented with the problem of multiculturalism. When cultures enter into contact – not into conflict – for the first time, our reaction is such that we do not perceive the other as an object of concern. Indifference is the main trait of this first stage.

Once social and economic relations are established, parts of the local/national culture may feel at odds with diversity: the majority can react negatively to the minority's demands. This situation is governed by conflict. When we are confronted with it, either we turn back to a state of indifference, or we condemn otherness. This is the stage governed by aggressive self-assertion. The condemnation stage is best epitomised by the emergence of anti-immigration policies propagandised in recent years by some European right-wing parties.

Alternatively, we tolerantly accept coexistence should prevail. At this fourth stage, even if the majority still seeks moral assertion, there cannot be an absolute "victory" if there is to be coexistence. The other becomes both a task – i.e. object of political concern – and a source of curiosity. This attitude is best epitomised by the distinction between toleration and tolerance. While toleration may indicate best the historical evolution of the liberal secularist attitude towards religions and religious groups, tolerance is a disposition whereby we both accept and try to understand difference.

Fifth, the peaceful encounter of cultural groups supersedes conflict. Dialogue fosters a process of convergence. The two cultures discover the possibility of mutual influences. Panikkar foresees that the initial, apparent polarity of cultures may actually become a complementarity. To allow so, dialogue should not be the "mere sterile crossing of the monologues" (Panikkar 2002, 34).

Although Panikkar's intercultural project has theological implications and often expresses the will to set an interreligious dialogue, it nevertheless expresses an authoritative view on the dynamics of intercultural encounter. For him, only if we have established a *dia-logos,* will we

reach mutual understanding. Mutuality comes as a precondition for peaceful settlement, and, of course, it is not straightforward. Alternatively, we could keep thinking that our interlocutor's view is mistaken. In both cases, we shall identify what are the reasons for bearing such conflicting opinions. Most importantly, "we shall reach those fundamental options which constitute the richness and torment of human condition" (Panikkar 2002, 39). Ultimately, if we read Panikkar, we see that for him "man, as such, is a dialogic individual, not an isolated one" (2002, 40). This view underpins the concept of interculturality. It reveals a "dialogical" conception of human being:

> The *dialogical-dialogue* is not a simple conversation, not a mere mutual enrichment by the supplementary information that is contributed; it is not exclusively a corrective of misunderstandings […] It is the joint search for the shared and the different. It is the mutual fecundation of what each one contributes […] it is the implicit and explicit recognition that we are not self-sufficient.
>
> (Panikkar 2002)

The substratum of Panikkar's interculturality is the perhaps best expressed by the following tenet: "pluralism does not lead to solipsism, that is lack of communication, but to tolerance and the discovery of the third dimension" (Panikkar 2002, 57). This dimension – universal – must be sought in the "dialogical dialogue", which, contrary to the "dialectical dialogue", does not "try to convince (*con-vincere*) the other, which means to win over dialectically" (Panikkar 2002, 44).

Parekh is not alien to this conception, though he may not state it as explicitly as Panikkar. In fact, at a deeper observation, the qualities of Panikkar's intercultural model bear some resonance to Parekh's thoughtful case for cultural diversity– understood as "the presence of a variety of cultures and cultural perspectives within a society" (2006, 165). The two authors are closer than they appear. To show this parallel, the latter describes cultural diversity (2006, 165-172) as exhibiting the following qualities:

1) "Different cultures correct and complement each other, expand each other's horizon of thought and alert each other to new forms of human fulfilment"

2) It is "an important constituent and condition of human freedom". If there were no such diversity, people would "tend to absolutize" their own culture.

3) "The diversity of cultures also alerts us to that within our own". Otherness reveals us that our own culture is the product of diverse influences and is subject to different interpretations (Melidoro 2015, 48). Culture itself comes to be interpreted by its own members through "an internal dialogue within the culture".

4) "Cultural diversity creates a climate in which cultures can engage in a mutually beneficial dialogue". From this point, it is clear that dialogue is the foremost way in which cultures influence each other. This creates interconnectedness and constant interactions (Melidoro 2015, 48)

Therefore, the idea that a culturally homogenous society, is essentially bad underlies Parekh's theory. It rejects a society marked by indifference among cultures (like Kukathas' *liberal archipelago*) because that would undermine critical reflection and, more generally, critical thinking as Parekh understands them.

In the next two parts, I shall try to clarify some of the possible connexions between the intercultural dialogue endorsed by Parekh, on the one hand, and the concepts of interculturality and the more recent idea of "interculturalism". In the former case, I conclude that interculturality, alternatively named "intercultural philosophy", offers a rich philosophical account of dialogue. Thereafter, I treat with contempt recent developments of an "intercultural" politics, alleged to provide more adequate responses to diversity and illiberality than multiculturalism.

Dialogue amidst Interculturality and Multiculturalism

To analyse the passage above in light of previous considerations, we should bear in mind that Parekh's practice-based conception of culture leaves much space to a dynamic understanding of cultural life (Mancina 2013, 93). This, however, does not equate to interculturality, which leaves an extremely limited room for political action.

For example, when Panikkar asks how we may establish a criterion for dialogue (*dia-logos*), he rejects whatever cannot be found in dialogue itself.

This may be put as the rejection of "*criteria ex veritas"* and "*criteria ex ratio"*. For, if there is an "undisputed cultural plurality and each culture claims its own truth" (2002, 35), the former is not possible. The latter, which attempts to "coordinate" and "conceptualise", presumes that Reason is always neutral. The upshot is that interculturality is subject to the criterion which is inherent in the very intercultural dialogue when this is actualised (Panikkar 2002, 38).

This complexity is not characteristic of Panikkar's interculturality only. Rather, the intercultural philosophical project is complex because it lacks a normative homogeneity. It involves many philosophical questions – normative, ontological and epistemological – branches, ranging from historicism and anthropology to hermeneutics. It is, in short, a wide and very ambitious project which, as such, may be subject uniformity. Among its authors, we also find Fernot-Betancourt (2000), Mall (2000) and Wimmer (2006). The latter stated:

> I propose not to talk about "dialogues" but about polylogues, considering that any question discussed by philosophers coming from different cultural backgrounds and traditions, ought to be argumented by the conceptual means and from the viewpoints of many, virtually from the viewpoints of all relevant philosophical traditions.

In the same ambitious vein, here is Fornet-Betancourt's account of intercultural dialogue:

> Intercultural dialogue, therefore, implies a special ethical quality that characterizes it as a form of life or fundamental theoretico-practical attitude whose exercise goes beyond tolerance and respect to ground the reception of the other as a subject who, in order to participate, does not first have to pay customs and apply for a work permit. […] [It] is a project that aspires to the restructuring of relations between persons and their cultures, opting for the universalization of principles of co-autonomy and co-sovereignty as modes of life that concretize and realize the "plan" of freedom in and for everyone.
>
> (2000, par. 38)

From close observation, there are some good reasons to believe that multiculturalism – as a "perspective on human life" (Parekh 2006, 340) – shares with intercultural philosophy a very similar dialogical openness.

An intercultural philosopher could claim that, since Panikkar's dialogical dialogue is not too concerned with recognition of cultural rights, his scope is beyond the reach of multiculturalism. Alternatively, she might argue that, since interculturality does not presuppose the achievement of equality, his focus stands apart from multiculturalism, which as we said is an heir of liberal egalitarianism and is necessarily grounded in some principle of equality. Yet, mutuality may easily be a feature of dialogical multiculturalism. The fact that multiculturalism is based on a principle of equality does not preclude it from embracing these positive qualities inherent to a far-reaching interculturality.

We should be careful of the meaning Panikkar assigns to multiculturalism, which he explicitly rejects it (2002, 26-28). Perhaps, that is a misrecognition of its normative meaning. Perhaps Panikkar, rejects only the "empirical", descriptive side of it, i.e. the meaning multiculturalism had been assigned with, to describe some societies from the late 1960s onwards (Mancina 2013, 83). Indeed, he makes reference to the Canadian model. Panikkar concludes that multiculturalism "still reveals the colonialist syndrome" (2002, 28). This claim is resonant of what we said about Parekh's critique of liberalism as ethnocentric. The intellectual framing of intercultural philosophy, however, would only adapt to a concept of "radical multiculturalism" whose sympathies, we may suppose, go to post-colonial thinking. Indeed, one may argue that both share an anti-Eurocentric stance and strict adherence to the idea of Otherness, drawn from Derrida, who gives "an account of the inextricable next which is the basis of every culture" (Maffettone 2009).

If we endorse this interpretative liaison, we could ultimately affirm that Parekhian, dialogical multiculturalism is the direct result of a theoretical appraisal of cultural difference. In so doing, we could still admit some insights of Panikkar's philosophical cogitations and refuse, say, appeals to total lack of criteria. At the same time, we could claim that reliance on "symbolic" communication does not help in practical matters, because of its abstractness.

A Note on the More Recent Phenomemon of Interculturalism

Here I turn to a quite recent, policy-oriented account of interculturalism. As Martyn Barrett wrote, it "has been championed most prominently by the Council of Europe, especially through its White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue". It comes as an alternative to multiculturalism. Its main feature is the claim to bring cultures into dialogue, to accept differences and revise identities. Henceforth, I shall retain the term interculturalism to describe this approach.

Meer and Modood identified, by way of confutation, four ways in which the interculturalist alternative is alleged to contrast positively against multiculturalism in contexts of cultural diversity (2012, 176):

> (1) It is more than co-existence, more geared toward interaction and dialogue than multiculturalism.
>
> (2) It is less 'groupist' and more yielding of synthesis than multiculturalism,
>
> (3) It is committed to a stronger sense of the whole, in terms of societal cohesion and national citizenship and the like.
>
> (4) "Where multiculturalism may be illiberal and relativistic, interculturalism is more likely to lead to criticism of illiberal cultural practices (as part of the process of intercultural dialogue)" (2012, 177).

Congruently with has been said about the nature of multicultural theory, there is hardly a reason to contend that multiculturalism cannot welcome these four qualities. More specifically, the first and fourth point can be challenged by the very quest for dialogue, as found in Parekh. However we conceive of intercultural dialogue, we would have a notion that makes political theory flexible. Thus, taking the positive aspect of such flexibility, it may be amenable to an interconnectedness where liberal values are ultimately shared. The third point is arguable too, given that multiculturalism partly arised as a communitarian response to liberal individualism.

The reason for such misleading renomination may be due to the consensus arisen amongst European political leaders in recent years, professing the failure of multiculturalism. These advocates misconceive multiculturalism as mere concession of a minimal form of

accommodation of minorities' claims. In so doing, they think of the latter as a monolithic body of norms:

> while advocates of interculturalism wish to emphasise its positive qualities in terms of encouraging communication, recognising dynamic identities, promoting unity and challenging illiberality, each of these qualities already feature (and are on occasion foundational) to multiculturalism too.
>
> (Meer and Modood 2012, 7).

To maintain that multiculturalism cannot adapt to these features is to provide a narrow interpretation of it. Conversely, dialogical multiculturalism adheres to all possible proactive interactions among individuals and promotes an interculturally created sense of community.

In conclusion, the mutual integration envisaged by advocates of interculturalism can be reformulated as a list of intercultural attitudes, to which a theory of multicultural recognition may often appeal. Among these attitudes, dialogue comes into clear sight as the most important element of an intercultural disposition. Furthermore, it creates the basis on which mutuality, convergence and Hence, if our theory welcomes some of these attitudes, it cannot but accept the importance of dialogue. Such appeals are true to their purpose only if they accept that the dialogical option cannot be omitted:

> even amongst those theorists who do not elaborate a philosophical concept of dialogical multiculturalism, dialogue is important at a political level. Whatever their varying views about the importance of say entrenched rights, democratic majoritarianism, special forms of representation and so on, they all see multiculturalism as the giving of 'voice' in the public square to marginalised groups.
>
> (Meer and Modood 2012, 185)

Moreover, it is worth arguing that interculturalism is too vague to offer guidance. Wieviorka, a French sociologist, made the point when she analysed a European Union report on intercultural dialogue that dates 2006:

> can interculturalism take the shape of a concept as well worked out, in its different variants, as that of multiculturalism? […] Intercultural dialogue, [the text] explains, should ''strengthen

> respect for cultural diversity'' and contribute to portraying ''a diverse, pluralist, solidarity-based and dynamic society, not only in Europe but also in the world'': the least that one can say is that the concept here is vague and much too general. Is it possible to make it more specific, as a few of the authors quoted by Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood attempt to do? Their endeavours are never as clear, conceptually, but also legally and institutionally as is multiculturalism.
>
> (Wierkova 2012, 230)

This, in turn, reveals that openness to dialogue shares a weakness typical of interculturalism, namely the usual vagueness of the notion in political terms. Multiculturalism, instead, has developed over multiple issues and resulted from their discussion at the academic and public level. Among these, the result of national minorities' claims for independent status or right, post-colonial heritage (and moral burden), post-immigration settlement (intermingling and marginalization), singular cases where conflicting values emerges (most importantly, Salman Rushdie affair) and the challenges to established sentiments towards otherness deriving from new forms of encounters.

Parekhian Dialogue: an Expanded Assessment

In *Pace e Interculturalità*, Panikkar proposes an interesting distinction between *agora* and *arena:* dialogue is realisable only in the former, as to favour the emergence of a new understanding. In the *agora*, the condition of mutuality can be realised. It can be true to its nature. Both participants should be willing to accept profound cultural exchange. If this condition is fulfilled, mutuality can be co-constituted. Consider Parekh. He would agree that *agora* is a constructive concept because it is indicative of the pluralist search for remedies to conflicting values. He could also subscribe to the idea of co-constitution, since he insists on praising cultural diversity. A friction between Parekh and Panikkar could come if the latter claimed that, in the *agora*, cogency should be abandoned to favour convergence and embrace true mutuality. Indeed, we are going to witness Parekh's defence of persuasion. The discussion he raises in favour of persuasion appears as a controversial aspect. It epitomizes his attitude towards a middle solution between rational argumentation and unrestricted dialogue. The

articulated defence of persuasion originates from the challenges posed by public deliberation in a pluralist context. This cultural context, with its particular traits, is reflected inevitably in the arguments advanced by every individual (Melidoro, 2015, 56).

This being said, we can state that Parekh would not subscribe to Panikkar's criteria as too demanding, for Panikkar's proposal offers no practical guidance. His insights are valuable because they contribute to frame an ideal environment for dialogue. Nevertheless, they confirm what has been stated above: while interculturalism is an "integral part of communication and dialogue", it cannot stand aside as a political theory of cultural difference (Wievorka 2012, 230).

While its communicative features may be "dialogical" when they display openness and mutuality, the very perpetration and continuity of dialogue rests on the conclusiveness of the claims made by the parties in dispute. As said above, if the latter are not conclusive, dialogue continues. This conclusiveness, in turn, is harder to detect if we take a pluralist stance.

Since dialogue remedies for the lack of universal principles, OPVs and minority practices are the only criteria to revise the authority of a claim. If an OPV can be construed as a criterion, it is certainly far from that envisaged by Panikkar. Panikkar's *dia-logos* takes a very different view. Its foundational basis and its very existence are, as said, extremely demanding and abstract. To recall Wieviorka, pointing at their vagueness is to say the least. The claims is that the sole criterion for dialogue is to be found, intrinsically, in the very dialogical moment (2002, 36). He defends this by confutation of rationality as a parameter capable of transcending meanings assigned by cultural practices to certain values.

In its search for pragmatism, OPV-based dialogue must follow a logic that inevitably compromises some of the qualities intercultural dialogue that are supported by Parek himself. In other words, by attempting a balanced dialogical formula, Parekh seems bound to give up, perhaps partially, the exaltation of cultural difference and practices his theory claims to promote. Indeed, the attempt to reconcile theory and practice under Parekh's dialogical theory is a controversial aspect, perhaps the most debateable. Some authors concluded regarding Parekh's approach as abstract and idealising, at least as much as those theories sucject to his criticism. Melidoro is among them (2015, 56). On the opposite side, we can find Paul Kelly, who, instead, advances a straightforward defence of Parekh's model of intercultural evaluation as an "ongoing societal process". Kelly writes, "There is no obvious point at which the process

ends and a final decision is made" (2015, 50). In *Situating Parekh's Multiculturalism*, he generously concludes:

> As Parekh has always insisted with respect to cultural practices, we should see them as sites of interpretation and reinterpretation […]. Practices are always the starting points for deliberation, debate and reinterpretation.
>
> (Kelly 2015, 51)

Quite evidently, this view is too simplistic. It assumes that practices can be the central criterion of an unrestricted dialogical process. For, if you endorse such interpretation, you are basically vowing to the solidity of OPVs to express one's held practices alongside their legitimate authority. Moreover, assigning authority to these practices does not lead to easy settlement of the terms of dispute. Obviously, there are many reasons to doubt that the institutionalised intercultural dialogue is best carried out via OPVs' evaluation.

In fact, as Parekh himself is ready to admit, "every culture is internally varied, speaks in several voices, and its range of interpretive possibility is often indeterminate" (2006, 145). The same may be true for the collective identity OPVs are presumed to embody.

On the contrary, by conferring such importance to OPVs, Parekh clearly forgoes, not wholly but to some extent, the idea of dialogue as a place of cultural discovery and critical reflection. It is hard to see how a transformative process can take place if a sense of mutuality is not considered. For, even though OPVs are themselves subject to the transformative process, they are responsible for the very undertaking of dialogue. For example, an initial status of marginalisation could mean that the minority is so isolated that it lacks knowledge of OPVs. Analogously, the majority may be at odds with the claims of the minority to an extent that, when confronted, the groups or the individuals involved may create an environment that is hostile to dialogue. The conflicting values will most often find expression in an *arena*, not an *agora*. Finally, the issue of representation can magnify these risks. As said, Parekh's condition of equal representation do not preoccupy him too much. Yet, we should be wary of this problem and fear that from an initial *agora* Parekh's ideal dialogue could wane in the *arena.*

However, while I believe there are potential dialogical dynamics of Parekh's formulation – and its constructive liaison with intercultural philosophy – worth being cherished , their proposals, cannot be approved just by reliance on calls to dialogue, OPVs or rational persuasion. At a

practical level, they cannot always accommodate conflicting moral values. Awareness of conflict requires a degree of realism.

Ultimately, our acknowledgement of "conflict" must be comprehensive and realist. We should not limit ourselves to speculation. Case-by-case analysis is needed. Muslim minorities are the most relevant epitome. Empirical evidence testifies that this conflict has been expressed under social unrest – with a small, yet momentous, presence of extremist Muslims rejecting the authority of the British State in an outrageous protest in Luton[2]. Events urge that we deploy prudence and cautiousness. They urge, ultimately, that the best virtues are put into being.

Henceforth, I venture to discuss the value and relevance of practical philosophy – we shall see its meaning below – for multicultural societies. I query the possibility to forge a practical model for multicultural inclusion. I shall proceed from Aristotelian *phronesis*-based deliberation to embrace a theory of dialogical openness. The next chapter originates from an attempt to overcome the underlying tensions between theory and practice in dialogical multiculturalism.

[2] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/4991313/Lutons-Muslim-extremists-defy-public-anger.html

Chapter 2. DIALOGUE AND DELIBERATIVE ACTION

If we were to locate Parekh's approach as a theory of dialogical multiculturalism, we should accept that it is meant more to serve as a means for deliberation than to provide an encounter of differences, as envisaged in the Ghandi-Bin Laden dialogue (Pantham 2015, 63-64). The ultimate purpose of Parekh, indeed, is a restatement that – to use Raz – an "equal standing of all the stable and viable communities" within a society must be recognised politically (Crowder 2013, 163). While Parekh's account of cultural pluralism – which underpins the "dialogical" attitude of his theory – adds insights to the moral side of the multicultural debate, his greatest contribution is to be seen in a different dialogical model, more tailored for political participation and public deliberation.

Consider Iris Young's democratic multiculturalism. Young analyses "greeting", rhetoric and narrative as supplements/alternatives to reason-giving argument (Crowder 2013, 142), but she does not seem to reflect too much on the interplay between these modes of communication and the actors and values involved. The model, as Crowder rightly holds, is "poor in credible concrete proposals for reform" (2013, 145). Yet Crowder pools Parekh and Young under this same critique. In this chapter, my purpose is to argue that labelling the former's approach as poor in content is to draw an imprudent conclusion. By thorough analysis, Parekh's notion may result less abstract than it appears.

Unlike Iris M. Young's non-argumentative deliberation, which is more concerned with political communication, Parekh's rational persuasion, as we observed, insists on deliberation. If we attempt to combine this *non-adversarial* procedure with OPV-based dialogic procedure, we may arrive at a positive notion. Unlike Young, he does not nurture suspicions for argumentative reason. Contextual arguments are often the most valid option we have. This rationale behind it, namely that political deliberation is contextual and culturally embedded (Parekh 2006, 312), can be found in Parekh's case for persuasion, covered in the previous chapter. I ask whether , by means expanded, we can arrive at a notion of deliberation that encompasses provide practical guidance.

Following Oakeshott, who thought politics was a "conversation of diverse interests" which required practical efforts, Parekh is not alien to the Oakeshottian "pursuit of intimations". As Kelly abridged with striking clarity,

> the crucial point [of Oakeshott's "pursuit of intimations"] is that politics as a practical activity that is shaped by given circumstances and institutions and that political wisdom acknowledges that context rather than wishing to impose a wholly new and artificial set of circumstances in their place.
>
> (Kelly 2015, 49)

However, his is does not a statement that Parekh shares with Oakeshott the belief that practical politics must stand aside all speculations, for that is misguided, as remarked by Hall and Modood:

> To force us to choose between incompatibles it requires only that we must have some beliefs or reasons for our actions on which it can bear. It is important to note that philosophy connects not just with propositions, but with actions, and its mode of criticism is not to reveal only verbal inconsistency. Conceptual analysis is not concerned simply with what it is possible to think or say without contradiction, but affects our actions themselves profoundly.
>
> (1979, 341)

Rather, in the pluralist realm of cultural – conflicting – differences, we might try out practical philosophy as the privileged interpretative means of "conceptual analysis". Crowder too ascertains that the pluralist inquiry emphasises hard moral choices. He illuminates this aspect with striking clarity in his account of value pluralism:

> Incommensurability does not rule out the possibility of reasoned choice within a particular context. A classic explanation of how this is possible is Aristotle's account of practical reasoning, which sees ethical decision making not as the application of abstract rules but rather as a matter of specific judgment tailored to concrete choice situations (*phronesis*).
>
> (2013, 150)

To remain faithful to value pluralism, then, true political praxis is choice. In line with this pluralist necessity, I shall seek a solution to the question developed at the beginning of the chapter through an evaluation of Aristotle's account. As we shall see, Aristotle proposes a dialectic procedure. Its main aim is to test out opinions. Hence, it can be defined as a procedure regulated by *peirastics*, namely the "art of examination". What is most valuable about the method is that its premises are grounded in a particular context. To our purpose, the result of such peirastics may be a valid account of the possibilities and risks we face in the domain of cultural difference. The aim is to enrich society's capability to act, i.e. to deliberate, without forgoing the normative, theoretical basis. In the case of dialogical multiculturalism, this basis consists in value pluralism. Ethics would consist not only practices in general, but also cultural practices. In other words, these could meet the terms of virtue ethics, whereby we seek the mean and excellence in practice.

The Aristotelian Model

The idea that political deliberation is intrinsically rewarding owes much to Aristotle's interpretation of public life and his account of practical philosophy and political science.

According to Aristotle, philosophy has a threefold nature: theoretic, poietic and practical. This scheme suggests a second distinction, namely that between theoretic science, on one side, and the latter two, exclusively concerned with human nature. The poietic concerns *poieton,* namely "what is reproducible through *poiesis*", through production; the practical – *prakton* – pursues solely the "action" and does so through *praxis* (the action itself):

> The principle of products (*poieton*) is in the person producing […] whereas the principle of action is in who is acting, hence in the choice he makes. For what can be fulfilled through an action coincides with something that can be chosen.

The logic may seem controversial but can be reformulated. In the latter case, that of practical reasoning, there is no difference between the action and its principle, which is the choice. Neither action nor choice lead to an external product. Rather, they are immanent in human nature. Its ultimate aim is not the improvement of a product, but that of improving man. When

Crowder discusses the problem of dealing with choices among incommensurable values, he makes direct appeal to practical philosophy, and summarises it. The process, he writes, "is perhaps best approximated by the Aristotelian model of practical reasoning as a skill developed from the experience of dealing with concrete choice situation".

In Aristotle's thought, the pursuit of the good in the *polis* is not an epistemological matter as in Plato's vision. In fact, his very distant position will culminate in the proclamation of political science as practical philosophy par-excellence. Political science is, among the practical, "architectural": the good it pursues is that in light of which all other goods are pursued. Political science, as a result, is committed to understand, on a general line, what the "supreme good", namely the human good, would be. However, since goods are varying and mutable, political science cannot be precise; it is not oriented towards a single, unchangeable aim. Its conclusions will be valid most of the times, not always.

Even though political science is not an exact science, it has its own method. This method, as Aristotle makes clear, consists of an argumentative process: a process that starts with premises and reaches conclusion.

Phronesis, or practical wisdom, lies at the heart of the Aristotelian model, for it provides guidance for the mastery of ethical virtue. "Ethical virtue – Kraut wrote (2014) is fully developed only when it is combined with practical wisdom". This concept has exercised much influence throughout the centuries. The Vichian concept of *prudentiam civilis vitae,* for example, is a direct heir of practical philosophy (Berti 2004, 79).

Each of the virtues is a state of being that naturally seeks its intermediate point. Virtues seek to avoid excesses. Therefore, the virtuous habit of *action* is always an intermediate state between the opposed vices of excess and deficiency. Accordingly, the right course of action always lies in the mean.

Aristotle and Vico conceived political science as a practice to be necessarily supported by the mastery of civic virtues, hence the science that best enshrines the idea of practical philosophy. The wide scope of political science is an acquainted knowledge of the general guidelines to cope with deliberation. That is why he defines it as architectural (Berti 2004, 21): Its end is to make all other human ends realizable. To allow so – to detect the consequences of our actions

– political science requires a method. The "method of political science" is approximated by three stages. It can be described as follows (I re-elaborated from Berti 2004, 23):

I. All considerations on the object of discussion should emerge, independently from the opinion's degree of conflict.

II. Hence, develop *aporias* from each opinion to deduce all the obstacles to the object of discussion. This should lead us to reject opinions carrying *aporias.*

III. See whether some opinions are acceptable and compatible with *endoxa.*

An *endoxa* is an opinion, which has ethical authority because it has a fair share in society. As the Greek philosopher defined them:

> Endoxa are those opinions that are accepted by everyone or by the majority or by the wise – that is, by all, or by the majority, or by the most notable and reputable of them.
>
> (Berti 2004, 23)

At this point, the viability of dialogical multiculturalism as theory of deliberation comes as a question. A comparison with Aristotle's endoxa-based method is a valid alternative and might be helpful to overcome some controversies surrounding the concept of dialogue.

We can draw similarities on at least three grounds

First, an OPV has some resonance of an endoxa. Even though the former has a broader definition, they are both a starting point to estimate whether a certain decision is right or wrong.

Second, both strategies are argumentative and make use of instrumental reason. The difference is that while endoxas cannot be changed, OPVs "may themselves be questioned". Nonetheless, once revisited, they will play the same role of general validity. There will always be OPVs to "provide the context and point of orientation". While OPVs' provision of context is a good point which reveals the inescapability of context, "orientation" inevitably reveals that any dialogue has its interpretative restrictions. We cannot exclude that these restrictions, although

quite loosely, will end up favouring the wider society in most cases. This lead us back to the problems posed by interculturalists

Finally, in both cases conclusiveness marks the decision process. *Contra* Panikkar, Parekh writes:

> The dialogue cannot therefore be open-ended and free-floating and must start with and centre on the prevailing values, which provide its vocabulary, structure its context, and impose limits on its direction and likely outcome.
>
> (2006, 267)

This acknowledges the limits that most contexts provide. The ends sought by the interlocutors require decisions.

Aporias

Virtue ethics are not void of problematic considerations. That is, the idea that "plural values can be compared in that a wise person will 'just see' that one course of action rather than another is to be taken" (Mason 2015, part 4), cannot escape the circumstances.

Although Aristotle's elucidation of the nature of virtue and practical wisdom has political significance, what a virtuous agent must do on any particular occasion depends on contingent conditions. There is no possibility of stating a series of rules, however complicated, that collectively solve every practical problem.

Provided the context, the legitimacy and significance of moral action can be assessed. In the multicultural case, the nature of intercultural relations depends on the values endorsed by its participants. These values, as we saw, may be irreducible to each other and seem to unfold the idea that "no gain is without loss". In turn, creates an aporia and a subsequent call for dialogical consensus. Here, an aporia is a stalemate revealing a difficulty in choosing among incommensurable values. This justifies the initial validity of dialogue, for its practical disposition offers a wide breadth to our moral discourses: Parekh's identification of OPVs as

guidelines, for example, is a search for a solution to a choice situation which, for its volatility, concedes the presence of an aporia: an acknowledged difficulty to proceed. We should not be too optimistic: volatile situations often prevent us from going beyond reason-based scrutiny. This, of course, undermines the very existence or development of the dialogue.

In Socrates' dialectics, an aporia reveals the fact that, contrary to what we thought, we do not know. For Aristotle it takes a different meaning. As we saw in his *peirastic* method, the diverging arguments are put in opposition. This opposition develops and states a challenging choice situation. More generally, to accept it is to accept that a problem is inherent to a philosophical question.

Crowder wisely identifies "sense of reality" as a pluralist virtue. Accepting that no gain is without loss, attentiveness to the context, flexibility and open-mindedness (2013, 197), are virtues that may help overcoming the dilemmas faced by the pluralists. We should bear in mind that a gain for one incommensurable good cannot fully compensate for the loss of another: no gain is without loss (2013, 197).

At times Parekh seems to identify the problems and aporias implied by his discourses. For example, his proposal incorporates the basic ideal of deliberative democracy: allow, even require, those affected by a public policy to be given a respectful hearing in public (Crowder, 137). The critical question of participation, then, is ruled out. One, however, could rightly contend that institutionalised dialogue should be qualified by rules of participation.

The same occurs with regard to communicative and linguistic barriers. Although Parekh does not reflect upon communication, it seems, as we saw, that he prefers arguments of rational persuasion. The issue of language is more problematic. Since language, he notes, has "deep cultural and evocative associations"; we cannot "purify" the arguments we use, however articulated and conducted (2006, 310). Attentiveness to linguistic barriers should play a vital role in multicultural societies. Reconciling conflicting semantic field is perhaps the most challenging aporia when we compare conflicting claims. Since this subject would require another study, I shall spend a final word on language, the role language plays in Panikkar's proposition. This is primarily to suggest that we should not forget that language can complicate and even compromise processes of cultural encounter. For Panikkar, dialogue has to be *duologal* (2002, 43): in case A and B engage in a dialogue, their terms could be alien to C's viewpoint. According to our context, we ought to undertake a different linguistic realm.

CONCLUSION

So far, multiculturalism has never been a political commitment of societies other than liberal democracies. Whether we use Kymlicka's concept of cultural rights or Fraser's politics of recognition, or a broader or narrower definition of multiculturalism, we can be sure they were all born out of liberalism. Liberal multiculturalist have all confronted the problem through monological approaches.

In the first part of the *Parekh Report*, *A vision for Britain*, it is maintained that "a state is not only a territorial and political entity, but also an imagined community". In the same vein, Vico and Herder envisage a process of imaginative empathy (Crowder 2013, 146).

We saw how Parekh's political theory rests on his pluralist convictions. These provide backing for an ethical inquiry gives much significance to dialogue. His critique on liberalism too has its innovatory thrust and fosters the debate on how to frame a multicultural state within liberal democracies. However contentious my arguments have been in some cases, the possibility to distance from liberalism, in order to favour a new, multiculturally oriented account of liberalism proves defensible. The method attempted by Parekh is valuable primarily because its key objective is to endow the latter with "a dialogical openness it has long lacked" (2006, 370).

Undeniably, Parekh's cultural pluralism rules out optimistic conclusions and forewarns painstaking evaluation. When Parekh discusses the role of culture in determining the *morality* of individuals and groups, i.e. the meaning assigned to way of thinking and living by the latter, he sometimes presents a thick notion of identity. "Culture – he affirms – shapes and structures moral life including its scope, content, authority and the kinds of emotions associated with it" (2006, 144). Parekh calls this "the cultural embeddedness of morality" (2006, 145). This is certainly among the most challenging aspects of the transformative effects of dialogue, since morality is, according to Parekh, inherent to one's held practices, which in turn provide authority.

The moral validity of dialogue may remain unquestioned, for we can compare and evaluate claims more fairly. Yet, the logic I tried to illustrate should lead to acceptance that such dialogical encounter, as found in Parekh's writings, is often confined to a theoretical discourse. It shows that "creative interplay between visions of the good life" (2006, 370) does not emerge too easily from the interaction he proposes. Once again, it should be acknowledged that Parekh's dialogical formula is a sensed praise of cultural diversity, whose features form the backbone of the dialogical rationale underpinning the whole theory. The great contribution of RM's intercultural dialogue is the dynamic nature of cultures in contexts where we seek responses to diversity. Unfortunately, as in many other theories of multiculturalism, his elaboration does not go as far as some of his theoretical claims do. In fact, as the context sets limits to the potentials of dialogue, we must accept a reassessment of the dialogical potential. Even though RM offers an interesting, thoughtful account of dialogue as the most accommodating form of recognition, it provides wise guidelines that are yet not sufficient to meet the persistently challenging demands of cultural pluralism. To fit the tasks set by multiculturalism, we must redefine dialogue in light of the various meanings it has been assigned with. One of these leans towards a notion of dialogue that cannot stand apart from the concept of deliberative democracy. This was be the object of chapter 2, which concentrates on courses of action and deliberation. There, I ventured to compare Parekhian multiculturalism with the concept of *phronesis*, especially as enshrined in the Aristotelian concept of political science as model of deliberation sustained by the mastery of virtues. It should be clearly restated, however, that when I distinguished among models of dialogue, I did not mean to be exhaustive, nor do I wish to present them through a thorough comparison.

Perhaps, a conclusion one can draw from virtue ethics is that, in light of pluralism, practical wisdom grants new attitudinal virtues. We are more prone to discover the character of our interlocutor, however different her origins and beliefs are from ours. We may want to know what she deems worthwhile, or why hers and/or her wider family's marginalisation has prevailed. What would it mean to adhere to the public values of their new country. We may ultimately agree on should be retained and what instead needs to be contested by proper legal action (think of infibulation).

I also presented another dialogical model, namely Panikkar's, as an alternative option for intercultural encounter. To be true to its nature, this dialogue often fails to provide tailored judgments. Thus, it seems limited to philosophical speculation. It is a quite radical

interpretation of dialogue; taken to its extreme, it is at once a statement of complex relativisation of all systems of thought. In this sense, true dialogue is only that of procedure-free, open-ended interaction. While it is dubious whether intercultural philosophy provides practical guidance, its momentum is undeniable.

The Anglo-Pakistan sociologist Tariq Modood, whose work in part develops from Parekh, has insisted on the analysis of the negative terms of difference – alienation, stigmatisation, exclusion and discrimination, racism and so forth – as the outset for multicultural policies (Mancina, 2013, 94). Not only should we follow his suggestion, we must also be wary of those extemisms which make it harder to establish a peaceful dialogue. The epitome of such rooted – and misleading – perceptions is the debate surrounding the condition of Muslim women. Guardian's journalist Susan Carland commented the disorders provoked by two Femen activists while two imams were holding a speech in Pontoise, north-west Paris, on September 12th, 2015. The speech's focus was – not as coincidence – on the condition of women within the Islamic world. What we can observe is a degenerate polarization of views: "it is as if one can only be either a Muslim who loves misogyny as a religious duty, or an orientalist feminist who hates Islam".[3] The case presents that currently, some parts of our society lack any idea of a multiculturally created civic culture. That, they do not know what dialogue means.

Such conflicts present one of the most problematic issue: where they have occurred, they tend to influence the popular sentiments and to undermine the process of gradual reconciliation between cultural communities. Such process is vital to find ways, for Muslim communities, "of overcoming the pervasive sense of victimhood and tendency to father all their ills on the wider society" (Parekh 2008, 37).

The current "terms of relationship" (recall Parekh's definition of multiculturalism") between European citizen and the Muslim community epitomise the concepts of this analysis and help evoking the considerations advanced here. Even if Muslim communities around Europe proved to be prevalently peaceful and willing to reconcile with British society, we must fact the problematic dialectic: Muslims minorities – as Parekh put it – "have some difficulty in coming to terms with multicultural societies, and this aggravates European anxieties" (Parekh 2009, 74). These anxieties tell us much: dialogue ought to combat such dialectical bifurcation and

[3] http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/16/femens-topless-condescension-towards-muslim-women-only-helps-sexism

operate a bifocal effect in order to be transformative. For that, perhaps, would be its ultimate achievement.

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