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The Balance of Human Desire. A Challenge for The New Humanism

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The Balance of Human Desire. A Challenge for The New Humanism

Uliano Conti *

Abstract: The article considers the literature on the idea of freedom since the Seventies in the Western world. This idea of freedom founds the neo-liberal capitalist evolution, and it is radically connected to human desire, which takes shape as the acquisitive desire to order the world without regulations. The paper focuses on the term *minimalist narcissism* to define contemporary Western subjectivity. Analysis of the literature on freedom and neo-liberal capitalist evolution represents the state of the art on some characters of Western society. The article analyzes in depth this theme, with particular attention to studies published in Europe since the Sixties and Seventies. Scholars, as Girard, Deleuze and Guattari note that human desire has a peculiar social role, particularly among youth people. On the one hand, desire is felt to be a root of violence, according to Girard. On the other, desire is regarded as a creative social force, according to Deleuze and Guattari. In order to reach a recomposition of instances of desire, we may look to perspective of New Humanism. In an educational perspective, education and relationality inherent to New Humanism balance human desire and responsibility. A New Humanism, in the levels of society, culture and personality may limit the drift of Western desiring society.

Keywords: violence, desire, sociological theory, New Humanism

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Capitalism and narcissism

For two decades, the Seventies and Eighties, in the West, particularly in the United States and Western Europe, an original idea of freedom spreads. This idea of freedom founds the affirmation of neo-liberal ideology in the political economic arena and the neo-liberal capitalist evolution. Since the Seventies and Eighties, this ideology, the changes on the political level and on the technical level design the architecture of techno-nihilist capitalism, a macro-concept that includes different infrastructures, such as economic neo-liberalism, technological evolution, the emergence of a global cultural mind. An idea of freedom to order the world without any constraints is foundational of the neo-liberal evolution of capitalism and of its techno-nihilist characterization (Magatti, 2009; 2012).

This idea of freedom is fundamentally linked to human desire which takes shape as the acquisitive will to order the world without conditions. Free of cultural, religious or family constraints, desire contributes to the socio-cultural as well as the political-economic affirmation of an original idea of freedom that permeates the West.

This drift is caught in its ambivalence towards the end of the Sixties. Changes in employment rules, the dominating culture in the United States tending towards the affirmation of the individual and the capitalist dynamics of production provoke trends with contradictory effects: the transition of the employment system towards flexibility and rotation among various jobs for brief time periods contributes, especially among the young people, on the personality level, in making people feel progressively freer, more self sufficient and at the same time more dependent on the State and other bureaucratic organizations.

The biographical experience, particularly the one of the cohorts of births from the mid Seventies and Eighties, is fragmented; their expectations for the future are scarce, the community bond is compromised. The consequences are identity eradication, the sense of lack of control over their own lives, a sense of responsibility shunning fatalism (Lasch, 1979; Sennet, 1998). A sense of helplessness and lack of control over their own biographical path corresponds to this condition and, in spite of illusions of omnipotence, the search for confirmations for their own self confidence. To use one word: narcissism (Lasch, 1979). The culture of narcissism is marked by its ambivalence: the Oedipal acquisitive feature of industrial society is almost specularly opposed to the myth of progress projected

towards the future. While for the Oedipal individualist the world is a no man's land to be modelled according to their will, for the narcissist, the world is a mirror of themselves (Lasch, 1979; Secondulfo, 2001, p. 54).

The above described change is characterized by – from the sociocultural point of view – the rise of an extreme individualism made of self fulfilment, hedonism corrosive to the family and community, to which correspond social bonds without mutual responsibility, self absorption, more isolated people, far from the political dimension of coexistence. We live in an era of decreasing expectations. The distinctive feature of Western modernity is the lowering of expectations. This cultural perspective has consequences on social cohesion (Cipriani, 2007). In Western society fear of the future emerges as well as a loss of confidence, masked by a euphoric, smug, and self satisfied image, a mirror of the process of individualization of life and choices (Cesareo, 2015).

Vincenzo Cesareo (Cesareo & Vaccarini, 2012; Cesareo, 2015) analyzes the contemporary social bond, with particular reference to youth people, and using the psychoanalytic category of narcissism, speaks about minimalist narcissism to define contemporary Western subjectivity. The social relationship attributable to the term of minimalist narcissism refers to some traits ascribable, for descriptive purposes, to the myth of Narcissus. The supremacy of appearance is highlighted. Narcissus mistakes the representation of himself for the *other* than himself. Not only does he not recognize the *alter*, but he believes that the hypothetical *other* is a mirror of his own inclinations. The *alter* is perceived as a grandiose and self sufficient extension of himself. The self takes form as being self sufficient and isolated at the same time, grandiose and without authentic relationships with the *alter*. The metaphor of minimalist narcissism analyzes the social bond in the form of a drift of society characterized by a privatized redeployment of community, by a weakening of the social bonds that risks reducing society into an aggregate of individual consumers and compromising social cohesion. On the cultural level, minimalist narcissism grows over the fragmentation of human experience and trivializes the worldview. On the personality level, the self is locked in its own self reference, confined in utilitarian interpersonal relationships, without the possibility of building social relationships capable of recognizing the *alter*.

In our opinion, the link between a certain idea of freedom and the structure of techno-nihilist capitalism emerges (Magatti, 2012). The *other* than self resists, it is necessary to make him disappear in order to avoid

meeting any limits. Within the cultural frame of techno-nihilist capitalism, the resistance given by the *other* than oneself is devitalized. *Alter* is simply made to disappear from sight, shoved away (Magatti, 2012, p. 197).

Being centred on the self and conceiving *alter* as a mere reflection of self implies, for the personality of the minimalist narcissist, the lack of confidence in self, in others and in the future. The narcissist identity lives in a temporal perspective limited to the present, not in a plan making perspective. This corresponds to the tendency for instant gratification and to experiencing not an awareness of the temporal unity of the person, but rather a continual existential fragmentation. Minimalist narcissism is characterized by an absolute freedom without constraints of responsibility towards others. We want to fulfil every wish. The unfulfillment of uncontrolled desires leads to exhaustion: entropy as progressive loss of energy (Cesareo & Vaccarini, 2012; Cesareo, 2015).

Indeed, the human being has need of *alter*, he relates to his neighbour on the basis of relationality. This idea recalls the Simmelian sociation, a peculiar pattern in which people associate and interact with one another (Simmel, 1908; Coser, 1977). The person is intrinsically relational (Donati, 2003) and finds fulfilment in significant actions understood as any act in which the person bears responsibility. The narcissist personality opposed to the being-in-relation, instead closes the *ego* within himself. In addition, the person is characterized by the perception of his own temporality, that is the uniqueness and the relationality constitutive of the person are historical and the person changes in the course of his existence (Cesareo, 2015, p. 43). The general narcissist drift of subjectivity on the social level and on the cultural level is methodologically argued through empirical research that shows that in the society lacking recognition of *alter*, cohesion and social solidarity disintegrate (Cesareo, 2015; Cesareo & Vaccarini, 2012).

To analyze in depth the above described character of Western society, from our point of view it is useful to explore the theme of human desire and consider how it is regarded in the early Seventies. The review of studies on the theme of desire reveals that since the Seventies in Western Europe and in the United States, this element assumes importance in relation to the capitalist transformation.

Human desire as a revolutionary force

Since the Sixties and Seventies, on the one hand, desire is considered as the root of violence (Girard, 1972); and on the other, desire is considered as a creative force (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972). Girard publishes *La violence et le sacré* (1972) in the same year as *L'Anti-Œdipe* by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1972). In the two analyses, however, desire is considered differently. In Girard (1972), desire is a potentially destructive element; while for Deleuze and Guattari (1972), desire is a creative force.

In our own conceit, it is necessary to question studies that, on the one hand, regard desire as a factor favouring adversarial imitative dynamics between people, cultures and countries (Girard, 1972) and studies that, on the other, delineate desire as a revolutionary and generative social force (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972).

Considering the works of Deleuze and Guattari (1972) on desire and on violence allows us to shed light on relevant sociological issues that allow references of contemporary Western society. The presented issues can be better understood if seen in reference to the works of Deleuze and Guattari (1972), who have, in comparison to some of their contemporaries (Girard, 1972), a peculiar conception regarding desire. The just mentioned scholars elaborate their proposals at the start of the Seventies, a period in which an unprecedented capitalist organization takes shape rooted in a culture based on the affirmation of human desire, capable of compromising social cohesion in Western countries and leading to problematic consequences on the level of personality, culture and society (Magatti, 2012; Cesareo, 2015).

Deleuze and Guattari (1972) have proposed desire as a creative and productive force. We do not desire someone or something, but we desire a large set of elements which includes also the particular desired element: to desire is to construct a complex landscape of objects, people and inner drives. Desire is not responsive, it is a generative active force. Mimetic comparisons and founding objects do not exist, desire is *a priori* unfounded, inherent in people that are themselves *machines désirantes*. They have the potential to be different from what they are *hic et nunc*. Desire is meant as practical endeavour. It is Nietzsche's idea of desire based on the creativity of life, rather than on Hegelian self-consciousness.

According to Hegel (1807), otherness urges human self-consciousness and induces it to be articulated as desire. Consciousness relates to the *other* than itself by desiring it and must become *other* than itself to know itself.

Desire is both discovery of otherness, as well as principle and expression of self-consciousness. To know oneself is to find the entirety of the external world. Desire in the Hegelian sense is the desire for reflection and poses the problem of human identity. Self-consciousness is the effort to overcome the apparent ontological disparity between consciousness and world (Butler, 1987). We note that the role of the *other* than self emerges as an active part in the journey towards self-consciousness.

In the effort to obtain the reflection of the self through the recognition of and by the *other*, the subject discovers that his social bond habit is not only one of his many attributes, but it is his very self. The interdependence that constitutes this new subject is still desire, but a desire that seeks a metaphysical satisfaction through the articulation of the historical position of the subject in the community (Butler, 1987).

Conversely, in our opinion the Deleuzian desire, a practical endeavour aimed at living life, possesses a liberating charge and contributes to the configuration of the singularities and social forces of history. Desire does not exist if not within constructing or acting. You cannot conceive a desire outside of a determined social construction, on a dimension that is not pre-existing, but must itself be constructed. Let everyone, group or individual, build the immanent plane where the only thing that matters is where they lead their life and their plans. Outside of these conditions, something is indeed lacking, but they are precisely the conditions that make desire possible (Deleuze, 1977).

We note that Deleuze and Guattari (1972) sustain the affirmative property of people, without there being any element that transcends the principle of pleasure. Instinctual life is fulfilled in the historical forms of the world, in a process of social adaptation that structures the individual, the family, the production methods. The human being–world structuring is concrete, it is not interior illusion. Individuals and the world, the work forces and the social structure materially exist. Since this structuring is a repressive adaptation, the starting point in knowledge and in acting can not be an individual result of social repression (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972). In the theorization of the two French scholars, desire in the West is something compromised by capitalism which has weakened the creative and affirmative force of desire, adapting it to production lines governed by abstract systems such as money, separate from actual human situations, from their bodily concreteness. Capitalist society structures the tension to desire. Neurosis, widespread among those who live in the West, is the

pathological symptom of induced and frustrated desires. To resolve these tensions we develop different kinds of cures and remedies. For example, psychoanalytical oedipal practice isolates people from the social context, restraining the energetic source of life. Psychoanalysis wrongly understand the authentic problem of desire; that is, capitalist repression, and by concentrating on the individual person, stems the desire of political participation. In this perspective, and analyzing the ways in which power that limits desire is introjected by people, the term *Anti-Oedipus* is used. It is necessary, in particular for the youths, to rediscover human desire understood as collective production of a new subjectivity capable of combating capitalist drift. Desire is a revolutionary force. This criticism of the rational conception of the individual has repercussions in the political dimension, providing a cultural background, especially among the young generations, for the *French May* (Deleuze, 2010). May 1968 is a pure event, free from all normal or normative cause. It was a phenomenon of clairvoyance, as if all at once a society saw what intolerabilities it contains and also saw the possibility of something else. It is a collective phenomenon under the shape of a little bit of possible. The possible is not pre existing, it is created by the event. It is a question of life. The event creates a new existence, produces a new subjectivity.

In a critical perspective according to Philip Rieff (2007; 2008), repression is not to be regarded as a capitalistic power struggle against human desire. This repression, indeed, is based precisely on transgression and on the imperative of liberating desire from the controls exercised by sacred interdictions. Repressive imperative is, first of all, directed against the religious and "vertical" dimension of human existence. Repressive imperative is to be interpreted, especially since the second half of the twentieth century, as a claim of liberation of human desire directed at the sacred dimension. Rieff (2007; 2008) uses the term *Anti-culture* to describe this repressive imperative. Anti-culture is a term used to indicate the claim of liberation from prohibitions, of affirmation of desire and instinct, of assertion of individual satisfaction as an existential objective: "Our culture is adversarial: against what is interdictory […]. The repression of the human urge upward describes the authority of the present" (Rieff, 2007, p. 35). The cultural stigma of prohibitions has encouraged a pervasive mystique of transgression (Girard, 1978). In addition, the more people think to achieve the utopia dreamed by their desire, the more they want to act to reinforce the capitalist competitive world that they believe is

smothering them (Girard, 1978). In this regard, Girard (1978) emphasizes the protective function of prohibitions and at the same time refuses all reactionary political response to the liberation of desires. Artificially re-imposing cultural constraints and obligations can only lead to tyranny.

Rieff's point of view is inseparable from Max Weber's theoretical position (1919) on the relationship between science and *Entzauberung der Welt*. The repressive imperative of Anti-culture is a product of the rationalization of life wrought by science, i.e. *Intellektualisierung und Rationalisierung* (intellectualization and rationalization) of life. The process that Weber (1919) tends to consider inevitable, is for Rieff (2007), a voluntary abandonment of the sacred coordinates promoted by the aristocracy of modernity, scientists and intellectuals.

The *Anti-Œdipe* mirrors and at the same time gives rise to the European cultural climate of the Seventies. Desire is a combative collective production against what intolerabilities society contains, starting with capitalism. To oppose these limitations, a set of possibilities takes shape in the perspective of repositioning the force of desire in original territories and of continuous subjective change (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980). It is a question of recognizing and reconstructing the person as desiring machine, leaving rational logic and confronting the plurality of the possible (Deleuze 2000, p. 14): the problem is not the one of being in this or that human way, but rather of becoming inhuman, abnormal: not becoming like a beast, but undoing the human organization of bodies, through such and such zone of intensity of bodies, each one covering its own zones, and the groups, the populations, the species that inhabit them.

It seems to us that it is a matter of projecting life according to a rhisomatic organization that represents unexplored paths of desire and ways of production: it is necessary to surpass current space-time, conditioned by social structures that harness desire, going towards the multiple virtual spaces and times. This theoretical configuration between the end of the sixties and the start of the Seventies is expressed in the cultural and political language of freedom characterizing 1968. Deleuze (1969) argues that the sense of events is mobile and situational, it cannot be defined as the property of a subject, but as the effect of an event and that the emerging feature of the future pluralist culture would have been the reversibility of the sense. According to Magatti (2009) in this perspective, the sense is always subject to the random conditions in which it gives itself; it is linked to the event (Magatti, 2009).

This meaning of freedom is intimately connected to acquisitive violence: it is necessary to appropriate whatever exceeds not only from a cognitive, but also physical, point of view, reality. This appropriation is a violence. Thought begins with violence, that is, with the force of thought conveyed by a sign (Deleuze, 1969). Only the free man can understand all violence in a single violence, all mortal events in a single event, which no longer leaves space for contingency and which denounces and deposes both the power of resentment in the individual and the power of oppression in society.

Desire understood in the perspective of the challenging of the world's contingency may obtain satisfaction only by denying temporality. The conditions of desire are the non realities of human lives (Sartre, 1946). It means to achieve the unachievable by thinking of an imaginary existential state in which timelessness exists, a transfigured temporality that suspends us from the perennial demands of transience and self alienation (Butler, 2009).

In this regard, techno-scientific progress, human dominion over living matter, the ability to control mental phenomena require reflection on the uncharted possibilities of the affirmation of desire. Modern science does not deal with the truth itself. Scientific progress and the non-evaluative science deliver the search for meaning to the individuals (Weber, 1917). Jonas (1979), for example, emphasizes the risks connected with the possibilities of techno-scientific advancement. The separation between biological body and mind gives way before the advancements in neuroscience. By gradually extending the boundaries of the possible, we get to the point of designing and building an artificial biosphere of transgenic organisms, clones and chimeras regulated by a network of artificial minds. Advancements in genetics, neuroscience and in robotics upset the very idea of human in the direction of what is possible. It is not just a transformation, but an authentic challenge of the sense of human existence (Cesareo, 2015). Deleuze's idea of the possibility for the person to become "inhuman" vigorously emerges, doing away with the human organization of bodies. We can appropriate "what exceeds" contingent reality from the physical point of view. Considering the progress of neuroscience and the so called post-human, the eruption of future dimensions in daily decisions constitutes an ethical *novum* and the ethical category questioned is called responsibility (Jonas, 1979; Cesareo, 2015).

The violence of human desire

Below, the main Girardian elements are briefly illustrated, such as desire, scapegoat, and escalation, proposing how they consider desire at the origin of violent conflict (Tomelleri, 1996). Girard (1961; 1972; 1978) identifies an imitative dimension at the root of violence. Imitation, anthropologically, is indispensable to the human being. It allows us to learn to walk and to talk, for example, and by imitation people desire what others desire. Human beings are adroit at constructing their own mimetic desire, referring to the desire of others. When two people desire the same thing, the conditions are laid for a conflict, which is inherent to human societies since human beings are "mimetic". Desire has a triangular configuration (Girard, 1976): the relationship between subject and object of desire is mediated by a third party, by someone else understood as a mimetic model. Girard conceives desire as imitative, guided by external models, not by an interior teleology, produced by what others desire. The desires converge upon the same objectives. The social difference between people, groups or countries is substituted by resemblance. Desire and mimetic rivalry between human beings and, on a larger scale between countries, are at the origin of violence (Girard, 1961; 1972; 2007).

Perpetuating conflict *ad infinitum* may potentially lead to an uncontrollable cycle of violence. To avoid this, in archaic social contexts, it is channelled towards an innocent victim on which to concentrate group conflicts. To overcome violence, it is channelled onto the scapegoat – a person or group of people – making a sacrifice. The conflictual dimension is focused on a single sacrificial victim. In the first instance, Girard's anthropological model is elaborated with reference to archaic social contexts and it considers metaphors and myths that describe societies where the cycle of violence is interrupted by sacrifice. It is not by chance that imitative dynamics are to be found in ancient narratives, for example, in Greek myths. The myth of *Oedipus*, for example, reflects a mimetic conflict. The myths of antiquity represent the mimetic origin of conflict and its interruption by means of sacrifice. In archaic social contexts then, sacrifice is an element which unifies the members of a social group and puts an end to the chain of violence. Thanks to sacrifice and the victimization process, social differences are re-established. In Girard's perspective, the sacrificial ritualization of violence onto the scapegoat is at the origin of archaic religious and cultural institutions. Ancient religions

are full of violence: violence is sacred. In this perspective, the sacrificial nature and in a lager sense, the basic violent dimension of pre-Christian human culture emerge. Rituals and taboos in archaic societies are elaborated as a set of controls that guide desire and contain excesses. Due to cultural rituals, social differences are accepted and desires are not directed towards the same object (Girard, 1961; 1972; 1978).

Christianity reveals the mythological falsification that sacrifices and sanctifies victims to keep social order. By unmasking the dynamics of the scapegoat, Christianity deprives humanity of a means for managing conflict, that is, sacrifice in the archaic sense. Christian revelation rehabilitates the victim. For Girard (1961; 1972; 1978), Christ reveals and incarnates the innocence of the victim of collective violence, he represents the resistance of the innocent to the mythological falsification that inculpates, sacrifices, and sanctifies victims with the end of conserving social order. The Christian figure of the innocent victim decrypts human culture, which with the ritual sacrifice of the scapegoat resolved the conflicts generated, potentially *ad infinitum*, by mimetic desire. Christianity demystifies the figure of the guilty to be sacrificed and archaic victimary dynamics. It represents the overcoming of the sacrificial myths of pre-Christian antiquity. In other words, it debunks the logic of the scapegoat, the main way human beings have for centuries kept violence under control. Thus, an archaic meaning of sacrifice as illustrated above is outlined, and a Christian meaning of sacrifice, i.e., the sacrifice of Christ to interrupt the archaic sacrificial rituals and to unmask the lie of myths based on victimary dynamics. Christian sacrifice is an anti-sacrificial one. Christian worship is sacrificial by demystifying sacrifice.

In short, in our opinion Girard's argument is articulated as follows. Christianity unmasks the dynamics of the scapegoat, showing that the victim of collective violence is innocent. In doing so, it deprives humanity of a primordial way of managing conflict, that is, through sacrifice in the archaic sense. Christianity leads humanity away from archaic religions, but at the price of losing a fundamental tool of social control. Two possibilities present themselves: apocalyptic self destruction or the renouncement of violence. The demystification of the dynamics of the scapegoat is only partial and mimetic phenomenon has many dimensions (Girard, 1961; 1972; 1978).

In the first place, over the centuries, especially since the French Revolution, in the West an intra-state judiciary system developed able to

control intra-group violence. Democratically recognized institutions eliminate the archaic victimary mechanism: the judiciary system is a codified system of norms that, with a rational and organized, even if ritual, process, circumscribes the violence in the "retaliation" of a sovereign authority. In addition, it is after the French Revolution that the modalities of violent conflict changed radically. War is no longer the preserve of an elite, based on aristocratic codes, but it has gradually been transformed into total war, characterized by mandatory conscription and by the involvement of both military and civilians. Girard identifies in the French Revolution the rift from which an unstable world order arises, always at risk of being contaminated by violence (Girard, 2007; Hodge, 2016).

In the second place, at the intergroup level in recent centuries, there has been an escalation of violence, such as in the wars of the twentieth century or in global terrorism in the twenty-first century. The extent of the groups of sacrificial victims – think of the genocide of the Jews – in the twentieth century gradually grew. The presence of "scapegoats" in contemporary society is evidence of the constant influence of victimary dynamics (Girard, 1961; 1872; 2007). A discrepancy with respect to Girard's original model emerges: this violence does not break, unlike the archaic victimary mechanism, the cycle of conflict but rather potentially increases it *ad infinitum*. The atoning mechanism no longer works as an interruption of the cycle of conflict, but as an escalation. Violence in antiquity produced the sacred, today it just produces itself in a destructive escalation (Girard, 1972; 2007). Rivalry between countries, for example, risks giving rise to a global conflict that at the peak of an escalation like the one described by Clausewitz, could lead to the destruction of humanity. Mimetic rivalry extends globally (Clausewitz, 1832; Girard, 2007).

Considerations for a New Humanism

The proposed analyses highlight the link between violence and mimetic desire for what others have since the early Seventies (Girard, 1972; 2007). In some cases, desire is considered a revolutionary and generative social force. It is necessary to oppose the individual as rationally structured by capitalist society, a structuring which also Oedipal psychoanalytic practices adhere to, while only able to apparently cure schizophrenia generated by desire, able to structure human acquisitive impulse, induced and frustrated.

Some scholars abandon the idea of acquisitive desire in an Oedipal sense (*Anti-Oedipal*) and try to tear apart the capitalist structure (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972). In other words, scholars note that on one side, capitalist society contributes to mimetic desires at the origin of conflict between those who can fulfil them and those who see them disappointed: an analytic element to be favoured is it is not so much difference, but rather frustrated desire for resemblance that turns into hate (Girard, 1972; 2007). On the other hand, capitalist society reduces desire understood as affirmative ability of people and a potential to be different from what we are *hic et nunc* into production lines and consumption (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972). Consumer capitalism and immediate gratification, destroys desire (Cimarelli 2000). Since the Seventies, to the cultural dilution of the theoretical charge of the works by Deleuze and Guattari (1972) there has been corresponding the affirmation of freedom in an individualistic sense in political movements, especially among the young, and in language. The hold of desire over the human being emerges (Gomarasca, 2013).

In our opinion, to reach a recomposition of the instances of desire, you can look to the perspective of New Humanism (Cesareo, 2015a). It is necessary to place the person, understood as *homo civicus* who lives in a society of citizens, at the centre of social sciences. A greater humanization of people and society may happen thanks to the fact that the members of society share responsibilities (Jonas, 1979). A New Humanism in the planes of society, culture and personality can limit the drift of Western desiring society, not by opposing the idea of the person as a rational being in a capitalist society, but by limiting the scope of the phenomenon of minimalist narcissism on the planes of personality, society, and culture. It is a matter of reconstructing a balance of responsibility by identifying a cultural solution in the idea of responsibility towards *alter*, leaving the domain of mimetic desire, harmonizing attention for self and *alter* (Cesareo, 2015; Cesareo & Vaccarini, 2012). Desire as an element favouring imitative dynamics of conflict between people, cultures and countries finds a limit in the recognition of *alter*.

On the plane of personality, it is a matter of recognizing human potential and the limits of action. Experiencing responsible freedom is achieved in a tolerant attitude open to differences, in a temporal projection towards the future and high expectations, not seeking instant gratification but rather gratification deferred over time. The culture of New Humanism recognizes the value of the transcendent, welcomes a vision of the world as

a meaningful whole and trusts in responsible political meta-narratives (Cipriani, 2007). New Humanism enhances and consolidates generative social ties. Human desire that contributes to conflict between people, countries and cultures, violence rooted in imitative dynamics in the Girardian sense (Girard, 1961; 1972; 2007; Girard et al. 2002), absolute freedom deriving from Deleuze's idea of desire as a revolutionary force (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972) and the consequences of techno-nihilistic capitalism on social cohesion are elements to be redefined by a New Humanism, under the guidance of responsibility towards *alter*, solidarity, cohesive society and responsible policy. In this perspective, education is deeply related to responsibility in relationship and is a dynamic path to become citizen (Cesareo, 2015; Archer, 1988). Education has the power to harmonize creative desire and responsibility towards *alter*.

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