

**Srbinovska (University of “Sts Cyril and Methodius”
Republic of Macedonia)**

***Hermeneutic approach to the concepts of identity, power and their
commitment in the discourse of contemporary philosophy***

Borders and limits are mere lines; they are an interface which intervenes in the process of appropriation of geographic and symbolic territories. Because they have no essence in themselves, they are impossible to locate if they don't refer by delimitation to some possession of territory or of land. An identity is something that nests itself into an imaginary territory first and real territory only thereafter. For this, it needs and uses a narration which brings about foundation myths, stories about origin, images, representations and fixed interpretation of the history. Through stories and pictures, borders are drown.

Rada Ivekovic

1. ‘In front of a Law’s door ’

At the beginning of my speech, I would like to point out the crucial problem of the concepts through which I can speak about ‘the history of passports, and especially ‘a Macedonian case in that history’. The passport becomes the crucial symbol of moving and traveling. According to it, it could be a symbol of transition from one event to another or the instrument of narration that could be observed as a process of moving in the space of the text and through the time of the story. According to Gloria Anzaldua, we are constantly in movement, from the world of the origin, to the world of our education, from place of the work to the place where we live, and all that passing worlds produce the story of our identity.

Because of that, I will cite this very interesting comparison from Nigel Rapport who pointed out to a serious and interesting relation between anthropology and narratology: “To the anthropological ear, the notion that anthropology and narratology might meet under rubric of an overriding discipline of ‘iterology’ – a sciences of journeys-as Michel Butor once suggested (1972:7), should frivolous at best.” The author argued that there is

a crucial relation and logic of making a bond between the notion of study of social life and study of story-telling and he puts the equality between them under the concepts of movement and identity. The meaning of identity as a value and traveling, movement from one place to another are united in the many simple things such as *passport*.

It could be used as a symbol of identification, although it points out to some national, ethnical or regional image that is summarized in this very specific law document that also poses the question of equivalence and translatability.

I will remember you of a parable that is included in the novel *Der Prozeß* from Franz Kafka. The title of the story is "The man in front of the door of the Law". This parable is from the part of the novel in which the representative of God, the priest recounted the story of a man from the village who has to negotiate with the doorkeeper. The man from the village is asking to pass through the door of the Law, but the doorkeeper is not capable to permit him to pass the door and to enter inside now. The peasant asked him if he could enter inside later, but, after that he received very simple answer: „Maybe“. Because the door leading to the law was always open, the man tried to look in. Watching his effort, the doorkeeper said to him: "If you are so attracted from that which is inside you can try to go in. But you have to be careful, I'm powerful, I'm the first, but in front of the other rooms you can meet many others doorkeepers who could be more powerful than me. The image of the last one who is the most powerful I couldn't stand.

The man didn't expect too many difficulties, the law has to be reachable to everyone and always, but looking at the doorkeeper in his fur coat, at his big sharp nose, long thin barb, he decided to wait the permission for the entrance. The man took the small chair from the doorkeeper and sat in front of the door of the Law. There, he spent all his lifetime, days and years. He tried many times to enter and he made his solicitation with the request. The doorkeeper asked him about his village (normally with indifferent tone of questions as them put the great masters), and at the end, he usually answers that he couldn't put him inside.

The man tried to corrupt him with everything that is worth for the doorkeeper. The doorkeeper took different things with explanations that he did that to make him sure that he has done everything.

Many years the man was looking at the doorkeeper. He forgot the other doorkeepers. At the beginning, he became unhappy and loudly damned his situation, and than, when he became old, he grumbles all the time. At the end of his life, he became childish, than blind and he couldn't see anymore if it is a day or a night around him. Before he died, he summarized all his experience and he pose the question that he didn't ask before. The doorkeeper had to banded his body to hear the man, because the differences in the growth between them became bigger and bigger. "What would you like to know?" - asked the doorkeeper.

“You are too insatiable“. The peasant answer: “Well, all the people want to pass the door of the Law, but I don’t understand why they did not come here.

The doorkeeper saw that the man was at the end of his life and told him: „Here, nobody could take the permission to enter inside, because this entrance is made only for you, and now I’m going to close it“

How can we understand this fictional text? We can insist on our real situation as it did Josef K. He insists on reality in which he lives and the story is important for him as a story that can help him to explain his life situation in front of the court. The priest didn’t want to make a relation between the text and the reality, he insists on the immanent interpretation, and he left open all the questions. The differences of the positions depend of two goals: the first is the importance of what the story means and the second is the importance of existing the story equally as the cathedral, everything is in the text, and it is unchangeable. It looks very naive to read the parable only to understand somebody’s experience, but at the same time we ask ourselves: why do we read if we haven’t the responses of the questions of our life problems. Sometimes we read to accept something new about the world. But, it is sure, that if someone doesn’t want to say something, he doesn’t try to narrate the story/!

We have to make a frame of the context in which we understand the fiction. The metaphysical reality corresponded with the physical reality. There are different aspects of interpretation. Maybe the man didn’t do everything to pass the door, if at the end of his life, the doorkeeper use the statement that the entrance is made for him. Maybe the nature of the law is usually deceptive, or we can ask ourselves are there any objective type of interpretation of the meaning?

First of all, we have to define the context in which we will make our interpretation, than we will sow another context and another, and so on. That is the problem of objective context or the commentary about every speech act, especially about the story. The problem of commentary or the generally crisis of the context or interpretation is in relation with the problem of the sense of the text. The creating and reading is in relation with the fact that the sense could not escape from the tradition. The tradition of contexts, commentary and concepts are not definitely determinate. Because of that, we speak about the interpretation of the tradition that is evaluated in one historical moment. It seems that the crises of commentary are the crisis of tradition. The sense of the text is in connection with the critical analyzing of the tradition in which it is appeared; or rather tradition is the context in which we are looking for the context.

I decide to make a comparison between the situation of the world in which I spend my life and the other worlds. It is sure that my world is very close to some worlds on the margin, or rather the worlds on the borders, like as it is the world of the people in Mexico, Philippines or Guatemala. I share the destiny of hundreds of others belonging to

other nations that fall in to the Forth World countries insisting on a cultural and national identity. Those countries, as Richard Griggs said, struggle to acquire or sustain sovereignty or recognition of their national Gestalt. I live in Macedonia, the country on the border with European community represented by Greece, on the territory that is in Europe and with a very specific signification and representation which is inscribed in the name of the country: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

What does it means for me? That means that my collective identity is realized and represented by the perspective situated in the past, not yet in my present. It also means that my situation is in the way of transition from the past to the present. I spend my life living on the border and asking for passport that takes me to the reality of the present. The image of Macedonians can be described by deleting the memory of the communist past life and through a narrative that could be narrated as myth instead of a history. The interpretation of the parable can be understand as an effort for making the reconstruction of the moral dimension of the law through which this world accepted the norms that open different possibilities of living.

From my point of view traveling is epitomized as ‘transition’, ‘although ‘the term ‘transition’ is pitifully misleading and empty concept in itself; yet it is pragmatically and is possible to be used for post-socialist and post-colonial transition (they have much in common). Peculiarly enough, the term never says towards what it is meant to be the transition. Surely, it must be globalization of the Western/Northern pattern of postmodern neo-liberal capitalism”, as concluded R.Ivekovic (2001, 1).

If we start to walk on the road of transition, the passport could be a symbol of purgatorial walk to the Paradise through which we have to clean from the sins that are left in our mind from the period of communism.

The spirit of the nation becomes sovereign by its state, and the state is the world that is made by the spirit of the nation. By deleting the state or putting it in to the past, we are forced to delete the culture, the language, and the history. We have only a myth and virtual life at the present as a former people from a former country.

The concept corresponding with the situation of the reality of my country is postcolonial concept, which is useful because it “seize the given apparatus by reversing it and displacing it” (C.G.Spivak, 1990, 228). By using the catachrestic speech of the theory or analyses, that accounting the margins, I can deny the simple transplantation of the given concepts or simple auto referential knowledge.

From the other side, I need to make a revision of the categories and conceptual tools. Because of that, the intention of my speech is not the concept of ethnicization, through which I have to speak, “because it is at work each time when we accept and utilize the categories which have resulted from a conflict-to explain that conflict”. (R.Ivecovic, 2001, 7)

The tautology points out that our discourse based on a conflict has to postulate a completely closed narrative. Because of that, I have to spike through the accepted, but very conflict concepts to come to myself and to create the language of my reality. By that way I can create the narrative that could be acceptable for the others and which could be fluent in the process of understanding and inter-subjective dialogue.

Colonialism and later nationalism, imagined the 'discovered territories they proposed to civilize as 'empty territories', or as 'nobody's land'. Territories, geography, countries, borders have to be virtually created ex nihilo. In North and in Latin America the nations are created without the local population or in disregard of it, underscored by an elitist dream about an imported population, about a ready made people coming from Europe and already in itself a political subject, citizens.

The post-colonial discourse, according to Homi Bhabba, intervened when the people from the local places or margins have a specific description in the discourse of modernity and in the normal appropriation of the truth. They are usually unequal, different; they haven't a normal process of development. Instead of nation, state or history, they have a transitive or rather virtual situation of legitimization. (Homi Bhabba. (1997, 211)

According to the contemporary believing, I belong to the territory that has to forget its communist past life (although it is a socialist, but because the country was leading by the communist party on the head, we can accept that our past is communist history of living). After that period, it has to be create as a national state, which could be able to legitimated the territory between the „others“ (nationalities) and to produce the document of identification that will be legal and acceptable for all.

How can I explain the reality of my life?

Every sphere of the reality is a social construction and the discourse for the reality has political consequences. The language doesn't correspond with the reality in a close, pure and innocent relation. It usually depends of the subject that uses it with aim to represent the structure of the culture. According to the main stream in the sciences of humanities, I can conclude that the western cultures are the centre of the concepts; they 'promote' the discourse for the reality as a successful culture.

The concepts through which they can decide or have the power to create their perspective of the life - of the others, uncivilized or empty people - are usually restricted by their central point of view! If we try to speak about the differences between reality of a successful culture and social constructivism, then we have to ask further more, are there any self-critical tendency in the western tradition of rationality, how do they become so successful, or to whom the western cultures debits its success?

2. The useful concepts of analyzing

From one side, Benjamin explained the task of the translator. He was analyzing the translation as a process of going close to the unity, or to the God. On the other side, we have the other concept of Derrida who points out that with his presence; the process of the translation deletes the difference between the forgery and the original, or between the original and the translation. According to our starting discussion about the priest and Josef K. and according to Derrida, it looks like that there is nothing out of the text.

G.C Spivak in her preface of Derrida's *Of Grammatology* points out to the process of deconstruction. The reader has to go out of the directions that are given by Derrida as a subject who control the process of reading. (1976:1xxxvii). Because of that, the concepts that are close to my goal of explanation activated the 'catachrestic' fluctuation and led to the theory of post-colonialism. If the deconstruction is against the essentialism and representation, than feminism or postcolonial critic, subaltern critic couldn't stay only on the basis of deconstructivism, and it has to go back to the representation of the identity or to the self-representation.

Leaving the theory of deconstruction, we have to start our work in the world of our life. Post-colonial critic has to develop the intelligence of a local mind. The discourse of representation has to go over the derivative or auto referential discourse; it has to negotiate and to use the modern or the post-modern discourse without analyzing and deconstructing the discourse through a 'game'. (Homi Bhabha; 1983:33) The concepts of analyzing don't have to stay inside; they have to go outside and to become useful.

At the end, Derrida was speaking about his asking for the line of his life, for the language of his life, he was speaking about the sketch of the book that he could write in the future, using the old and the new, archaic or the new language. He is speaking about his constantly remembering and about his looking for his own form, it couldn't be only the story, but the story of his culture, of the language, the families and over all, the story of Algerian. Derrida is speaking about the positive ethic of identification.

To speak about one's cultural inheritance means to speak about many concrete forms that are developed from the individuals with generations. (Clifford Geertz, 1994:395) Cultural inheritance or the feelings of belonging to some culture or history is an origin of emotional safety and give us a self-force to do something. In the systems of repressive regimes the main goal usually corresponds with the destruction of the cultural inheritance.

Because the concept of the border along with the concept of the nation and the state is too global, and because there are too many particularities, it looks better to speak about the concept of primordial loyalty. By that way, we can catch the local worlds developed in different part of the world. It is a close connection between the subject and the social existence that is his own; in it we can include the language, religion and history. It is

important and useful for analyzing, according to Geertz, to include the perspective of the actor, not of the indifferent spectator.

Because of that, I have to accept first of all the position of a child, because from its position there are no questions about the woman that everybody called his mother, because for him she is really his object of projection (J. Lacan) and his mammy. It simply believes and it doesn't ask. Because of that, my starting positions include the concept of believing instead of suspicion and asking, or skepticism. Believing is constituted before the knowledge, and the suspicion comes after that, with the knowledge. I want to say that I believe in my history, country and its culture and after that I start to speak about the suspicions in my collective identity

3. The history of passports

The history of passports points out to some aspects that I want to explain. In her essay on 'Passports', Susan Buck-Morris presents archaeology of the passport which makes it bearer of an object of intolerance, because the function of the passport always been to restrict and confine. The Middle Age and the plague produced the 'pest pass', as 'a means of preventing entry into the community of diseased persons during epidemics of the plague', and 'established an ideology of aliens as a dangerous source of contamination'. At that time, passports were used as a means of controlling military desertion. And after World War I, the passport would develop the 'Pest pass' idea on a global ideological plane; the passport was supposed to prevent entry or intrusion of the ideas of communism and anarchism into Western countries. Later, in the countries of the now former Eastern Block, the passport prevented the exit. "By creating a place of passport control and practice of passing through it", according to Buck-Morris, 'it gave the appearance that state boundaries were substantive, that they really existed, that a particular state apparatus 'owned' a part of the world, in the same way that a private citizen owned his home, a capitalist his business, a farmer his field, a person his or her own body-except that the state owned all of this first'. (Sarkanjac, 2000, 47)

If the privileged vocabulary of the theoretical subject is legitimated as an objective, scientific and totalitarian, no one, lesser the policeman who is representative of the Law can think about someone who is staying long time in front of the Consulate of the Netherlands and wait for visa applying. He has recommendations from his government and its administration that he has to apply 'their law 'for the Macedonians. His job is to make the control; his power is to select the pure from the others, and to show the way to the Purgatory. The power of the policeman is manifested through his right to control the people on the way of their entrance in the world of paradise, or the world of European Community, or, I can say, the First World.

There are many different answers for that case. To solve the problem between the central and the local worlds, Donna Harway proposes the relations between the local and

critical possibilities of thought; she proposes the net of relations between different political or epistemological positions. (1991). Accepting the logic of pragmatism or dialog in the community of different people seems to be a simple discourse against the Power. But speaking through the discourse of post modernity that is proscribed through the CENTER, it looks like that we have to accept the differences without giving something new which could be useful instead of traditional discourse of the science of universal thought. It is not important for the scientist from the marginal academic community only to analyze through simple acceptance of the concept of “orientalism” from E.Said or through the postcolonial discourse instead of traditional concepts of universal truth, rationality, realism, objectivity. The most important for him becomes his reality of identification.

The power of western concepts or its epistemology couldn't make my passport free from all that controls in front of the door of the Consulates of European Community. I can accept the theoretical concepts for making the narrative if they are only the instruments for negotiation with the subaltern, or if they aren't the instruments for epistemological violence and stigmatization of my identity represented by the European Law. According to master-narratives, Macedonians have a narrative that is only a myth, not a scientific proof, they have no state, no name of the state, and they live in the territory that has to be named from outside, or rather by the Centre.

I think that I could hear many excellent people with great souls that are speaking for me, but they don't have the experience of the reality about which they are trying to speak.

I'm accepting the pluriversum instead of universe, but in my practical life, I haven't any answer for it, it is defined in the space of the past time. Instead of all, identities are constructed not only in relation to unique territories, but also in the multicultural intersection of objects, messages and people coming from divergent directions. Starting with that meaning, I'm involving the concept of traveling.

The concept of traveling started with the explanations of Deles and Gattary at the early eighties, but it was transformed to a concept of international communication, globalization or rather homologization of the hegemonic models of the thoughts. There is no political activity; everything became some kind of voyageristic nomadism closed to technology. To be someone, who can accept the position of nomad, you have to be at first subject, rather than nobody or everybody. It means that the traveler/nomad has to have a root or its origin, its history, language and identification, and after that he has to decide to be everyone. Nomadism means to have the root and than to throw it away. Because of that, the symbol of passport points out to some concepts that is traditionally active in everyday life: identity, crossing the borders of national or ethnical identity, opening the new doors of the world and it usually means living close to the people.

As the document of identification, at the same time national and individual, the passport is made to locate the origin of the traveler. It enables the passage from one country to another, but also stamps people by their place of birth and the time that changing them. The passport as synthesis of entrapment serves as a metaphor to man or woman of multicultural age, and amongst them to the artists for whom their place is not within any particular culture, but in the interstices between them, in transit.

This narrative about different uses of the passport during the history leads my discussion to the parable that was given at the beginning of my discussion. Using the parable we can make a comparison and through the interpretation of the story we can point out to some moral dilemmas: If the doorkeeper cheat the peasant, than the priest has a right because he explain that there isn't any contradictions between the statement that 'now 'the peasant couldn't enter through the door and the statement that 'the door is prescribed for him'. The text is unchangeable, and it is very sad, explains the priest. Josef K. insisted on all contradictions between the different interpretations of the words of the doorkeeper. But, at the end, the priest argued his story with these words: "There is no need to count everything as a truth, but as a necessity". The last sentence of Josef K is: 'It is so sad explanation, because it means that the world is based on lies.'"

Literature:

- Homi Bhabba. (1983) "The Other Question-the Stereotype and Colonial Discourse", *Screen* 24(6): 18-36.
- Homi Bhabba (1990). *Nation and Narration*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Jacques Derrida (1978). *Writing and Difference*. London: Routledge and Keegan Paul.
- Clifford Geertz. (1994) 'Angestammte Loyälitäten, bestehende Einheiten', *Mercur* 48 (5): 392-403.
- Richard Gregg (1971). *The power of Nonviolence*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Donna Haraway (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: the Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Association Book.
- Edward Said (1978). *Orientalism*. London. Routledge and Keegan Paul.
- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. (1976). 'Translator's Preface', in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: Johan Hopkins University Press.
- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. (1996) 'Poststructuralism, Marginality, Postcoloniality and value, pp.219-44 in Peter Collier and Helga Geyer-Ryan (eds.) *Literary theory today*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Rada Ivekovic. (1998). 'Nation and Identity in Post-Socialist Transition', Die Erweiterung Europas, Österreichische Gesellschaft für Mitteleuropäische Studien, HUMANIORA, Fundacja dla humanistyki, Wien-Poznen , pp. 229-241.
- Rada Ivekovic. (2001) 'Gender and borders and boundaries. European integration and the ethnicization of the Balkans', Women and Gender relations: Eastern and Southern boundaries (lecturing at the European University of Florence).

Nigel Rapport. (1998). "Movement and Identity", *Traditions in Movement, ASCA Yearbook*, Ed. By Thomas Elsaesser, Burcht Pranger, Beate Roessler, Hent de Vrais, Willem Weststejn.

Branislav Srakanjac, *Makedonskiot katahrezis*, Skopje, 2001.

Branislav Srakanjac, *STATE- IRWIN*, Skopje, 2000.

