The subject matter of the book, while interesting, can sometimes be difficult. This is not necessarily because the subject of organ donation is hard to grasp, but because the topic can be rather heavy at times. In the opening paragraphs of the introduction, Arthur Caplan states, "Many people are loath to contemplate their own death, much less make plans for the dispositions of their bodies" (xiii). Plenty of statistical evidence backs this claim. One only needs to look at a study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, which shows that only a quarter of American adults have an advance directive.[1] While obtaining an advance directive is not difficult, relatively speaking, thinking about one's personal wishes in the event of a health care crisis can be challenging. If contemplating things like illness and death are difficult for the average reader, then *Replacement Parts* may prove to be an arduous or slow read. This may not necessarily be a bad thing. On the contrary, it can help the reader put end-of-life issues in perspective and open a dialogue with his family and health care providers. The goal of the book is not to frighten readers away from a discourse on their personal health but rather to give them an opportunity to affirm their personhood and develop their own personal philosophies on organ donation and end-of-life care. Indeed, by the end of the book, I had quite a bit to think about regarding the issues involved in organ transplantation. The shortage of viable organs is by no means a one-dimensional problem. A true and in-depth dialogue requires one to ask many questions about what it means to live and what it means to die. One is forced to consider when both death and the appropriate moment to harvest organs for transplantation occur. One must consider the costs, benefits, and risks of organ transplantation as well as the recipient's long-term quality of life. *Replacement Parts* fearlessly acknowledges these thoughts through an excellent collaborative effort.

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1. Jaya K. Rao et al., "Completion of Advance Directives among U.S. Consumers," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 46.1 (January 2014): 65–70, doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2013.09.008.

Relational Sociology: A New Paradigm for the Social Sciences

by Pierpaolo Donati

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Postmodernity versus After-Modernity

Many years ago, I took our son, aged a little over one year, on a round-the-world trip to acquaint him with his Scots–English grandmother on one side and his Jaffna Tamil grandmother on the other. We traveled by ocean liner, which in those days was not a floating hotel but a sleek ship designed to get you from one destination to another. As we neared the port of Bombay where we would disembark, I became aware of a divide among the passengers. It was not so much that some were getting off the ship while others were sailing on to Australia. There was a deeper divide between those who lived entirely in the developed world, those who had both feet in the so-called underdeveloped world, and those like myself with one foot in each. I have since come to appreciate that the contrast between developed and underdeveloped obscures a richness and variety of culture beyond the simple economic label coined by the West.

Since that time, I have often been struck by the huge transition challenging those who arrive in the Western world from ancestral villages that do not have electricity or running water. Yet the reverse is rarely true, since

Westerners mostly assume that our way of life is the pinnacle of material, cultural, and political development. As indicated by the title of Francis Fukuyama's book *The End of History and the Last Man*, contemporary liberal democracy is viewed as the ultimate achievement of civilization. However, attempts to transport it to Islamic countries like Iraq, Syria, and Egypt have produced mixed results. In fact, the world seems awash in chaos. Modernity founded on reason alone, which is credited with establishing democratic institutions—ignoring the part played by the Judeo–Christian belief that all men and women are equal because they are created in the image of God—has given way to the disillusion of postmodernity and its distrust of reason itself.

This summer, when reading *Relational Sociology* with distinguished sociologist Thomasina Borkman, I came to see that we are actually transitioning into a new phase, which can be called "after-modernity." While postmodernity looks back to a failed vision of life and society, after-modernity looks forward to a new, hopefully more enriching phase that is compatible with the Trinitarian anthropology of Pope St. John Paul II. That in itself justifies a theologian who specializes in John Paul II's thought to spend the summer reading a book on a new theory of sociology.

The final chapter of Pierpaolo Donati's book begins, "The emergence of globalization has gone hand in hand with a theoretical 'crisis' in sociology. According to an increasing number of scholars, 'global society' has transformed the 'social' to such an extent that classical sociological theory and that of the 20th century no longer seem adequate for conceptualizing not only the 'new society,' but (human) society as such" (211). Donati criticizes what he sees as the four main approaches to globalization, which are presented as "the fruit of modernity's realization": (1) the last phase of liberal capitalism; (2) world interdependence; (3) standardization of the mind, or cultural homogenization; and (4) a move toward a single world social system. In these approaches, the liberal–labor conflict dominates modern sociology. Either the individual and his freedom are responsible for creating society, or the individual is subordinate to structures that he has little influence on. For Donati, neither is correct. Rather, society is made up of social relations in respect to which human beings are both immanent and transcendent. The relationships between individuals or between many individuals coalesce into the habits of a culture. It is dynamic rather than static.

It is not my desire to scrutinize the various sociological theories that have endorsed either pole of the lib–lab dichotomy or sought to combine them both since Auguste Comte introduced sociology as a way of describing the social and social change in modernity. Rather, this brief essay seeks to show, according to the thought of Donati, that the structures of modernity cannot capture the new vision of society that is unfolding with globalization. Donati emphasizes that "functionalism remains the infrastructure of modernity's characteristic mode of thought." He categorically states that the "original sin … [is] thinking that society is characterized by the essence (the inmost kernel, the cultural pattern) of modernity, which entails the *negation of the relational character of social relations"* (222, original emphasis). He categorizes modernity's slogans as "'linear and limitless progress,' 'exploitation of the environment,' (in Faustian spirit) society as 'dialectic between the state and civil society,' and politics confined to 'constitutionalism within the nation state.'" By contrast, the slogans of transmodernity are "'sustainable and limited development,' 'human ecology,' society conceived as a 'network of networks,' 'multicultural society' and 'politicization of the private domain'" (229).

Donati speaks of the importance of "substituting the concept of the person for modernity's notion of the 'individual' and replacing modernist semantics, based on the opposition between equal and unequal with the distinction between identity and difference, thus pointing to a new logic of social inclusion" (224). Here I am on familiar ground, since the notion of person is primarily of Christian origin and was employed in earlier centuries to describe the Trinitarian persons as substantive relations. Made in God's image, the person is

relational at the core of his being. He is also gift, which means he is free to give himself to another, so that freedom of the gift is the hallmark of his humanity. In John Paul II's terminology, he is an original solitude in a contingent relation with his Creator. While his identity consists in being a unity of body and soul, he needs to transcend himself in encounter with another like himself and yet different in order to be complete. As Donati expresses it, "relations [with the other] are 'constitutive' of the possibility of being a *person,* just as oxygen and food are for the body. *If one were to suspend the relation with the other, one would suspend the relation with the self* " (123, original emphasis). Relations between human beings define the social: "Social structures are nothing other than the stabilization of this relational order during a certain period of time and in a certain space" (152). The human is prior to the social as original solitude is prior to original unity, but both are necessary for full human development. While the alter (other) and ego are oriented to each other and condition each other, they generate a distinctive bond stemming in part from each other but going beyond.

Donati gives an example of the way contemporary society is doing away with the human. In reproductive technologies, it is more and more common for a person to have a child without involving a "partner or any other social entity." The individual is, in a certain sense, outside society without any need to stay in social relations with significant others. Thus, "'functionalism's man' is no longer the measure of society, and vice versa, society is no longer *ipso facto* human" (164). The same could be said of the gender-neutral movement, since the first unity in difference is the masculine–feminine difference. This is not to say that women, especially, do not need to be liberated from oppressive structures, but not at the expense of their unity in difference.

To return to the challenge presented at the beginning of this essay, multiculturalism will become more and more prevalent in society. Recent popes, particularly John Paul II and Francis, stress the need for dialogue, but it cannot be a dialogue that denies the identity or the subjectivity of the participants or their experiences. Western culture emphasizes the subjectivity of the autonomous individual. In other cultures, the subjectivity of the person takes a back seat to relationships, whether one is a son or daughter, cousin or wife. Something happens in the relation between the two cultures when they meet. Both are modified in some way. Donati is optimistic about this development. He says, "The emergence of relational society is a historical process which embodies and produces *a paradigm shift from the simple to the complex.* This process can and should be represented as a radical change in the ontological, epistemological and phenomenological status of relations in both science and society" (122–123, original emphasis). We are emerging from the postmodernist age into what he calls aftermodernism. I have briefly touched on only one of the many dimensions of this important book. It is eminently worth the time spent in reading and studying.

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