

Individual, Society, City: The Sociology of Work and the Experience of the Metropolis through the Thought of Georg Simmel

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ABSTRACT: The paper examines the concept of the **Blazé person** in the modern metropolis, as formulated by **Georg Simmel**, through a theoretical prism of the microsociological approach of the Sociology of Labor. Simmel, founding the sociology of the individual, considers that social forms and everyday interaction constitute the concept of society and labor. He focuses on the **modern city**, where the overabundance of stimuli, the dominance of money and rationality shape a new psychological type: the **Blazé person**, that is, the person who is emotionally saturated and reacts with apathy to stimuli. In the transition to the **postmodern "city of the image"**, the Blazé type reappears with new characteristics, as a subject who no longer distinguishes the qualitative differences between the stimuli he receives, as the world of images equates values and experiences. The study concludes that the Blazé phenomenon continues to be relevant, constituting a subjective reflection of either the monetary or the icon-centric postmodern economy, and highlights the timeless importance of Simmel's thought.

KEYWORDS: Blaze, Georg Simmel, Microsociology, Urban Space, Philosophy of Money, Modernity, Postmodernity, Information overload, Picture

Prologue

This study is an attempt to penetrate the complex thinking of sociologist Georg Simmel with the aim of searching for all those elements that compose the mosaic of the much-discussed image of Blaz é , the saturated man of the city and how this phenomenon affects the work identity. What we must make clear from the outset is that the object that is going to concern us in the following pages is not only Blaz é as a type of person, but mainly the way in which he emerges from the overall work of Simmel , who is considered the "father" of the micro-sociological tradition. In particular, we will attempt to follow and record the potential course of the thought of this theorist, until we reach its center, find Blaze and search for post hoc his identity.

In our introductory chapter "Individual, Society and Sociology" we will try to bring the reader into a first contact with the basic positions of Georg Simmel on the above topics. The choice of such a presentation is a product of our belief that the epistemological positions and methodological tools of each theorist constitute solid foundations for an analysis of his more general theory.

The following section entitled "Space" has a transitional character, which also emphasizes its particular importance. The prominent position that space occupies in the thought of the main representative of micro-sociological thought 'reminds us of the clarity with which this specific social phenomenon must be approached and subsequently defined.

Subsequently, drawing, in an instrumental way, on the main points of the above sections, we will move both inductively and dialectically to the "Urban Space". There we will find ourselves confronted with the Modern City, Money and – ultimately – Blaz é , a confrontation which will also constitute the central part of our research.

Finally, in the epilogue, an attempt to describe the postmodern city will be presented with the aim, on the one hand, of searching for the existence or non-existence of Blaz é today and, on the other hand, of questioning the new content that the current city of the image, which is also the one that gives birth to it, may attribute to it.

In conclusion, as can be easily seen from the structure we will follow, the core of this paper concerns Blaz é through the eyes of Simmel himself . This fact highlights that the essence of our text lies in the attempt to read a social phenomenon, within and through its birth from the broader perspective of the sociologist who defined it as such.

1. Individual, society and sociology of work

"The ideas that sociologists can

to draw from their tradition

they are not easy to summarize.

The sociologist, however,

who will exploit them,

Individual, Society, City: The Sociology of Work and the Experience of the Metropolis through the Thought of Georg Simmel

will be richly rewarded"
C. W. Mills

George Simmel was more of an inspirer than a systematic observer. He was more of a thinker who diagnosed his time with a philosophical disposition of sociological overtones, than a philosopher and sociologist well-rooted in the current scientific movement. ²This universal statement by Jürgen Habermas can make it understandable why Simmel's work, while having an enormous influence on broader sociological thought, at the same time provoked a multitude of reactions, as it was considered fragmentary and theoretically incomplete. ³However, the diversity of interpretations that his texts are susceptible to is fully reflected in the diversity of the scientific path followed by the most important of his students. ⁴Within this complex network of thought of the highly literate Simmel, we would dare to say that his positions on the individual, society and sociology can be distinguished and recognized to an adequate extent, despite his idiomatic writing or the failure to synthesize a unified theoretical system on his part. Our claim derives its correctness from the fact that many of the central ideas of his work constitute fundamental tools of the so-called micro-sociological school. Simmel's overall approach has been characterized as a strong tendency towards psychology, in his work "Philosophy of Money" he gives a purely social characterization to the term Soul, saying that it (the soul) does not possess any hypostatic unity except that which arises from the interaction of the subject and the object into which it divides itself. ⁵ This fundamental approach of Simmel can be a starting point for what individual, society and sociology mean to him.

As Maria Antonopoulou points out, the only true, the only genuine reality for Simmel consists of human individuals, as they coexist and are connected to each other. ⁶Here lies the innovation of his scientific perspective since the understanding of the social shifts instantaneously to the micro-sociological level. For ⁷Simmel, individuals come into contact and at that moment 'interact' (Wechselwirkungen), that is, they act and adapt their behavior according to the behavior and meaning they attribute to the actions of others, and vice versa. This mutual action of subjects constitutes the process of 'communicating' (Vergesellschaftung), the process which brings out small or wider groups through mutual orientation and interaction between individuals.

Through these various levels and types of communication, Simmel tells us, society emerges as a world whose complex nature and direction are unlimited. ⁸The concept of society in Simmel's thought, as he himself emphasizes, loses any mystical aspect, since it is nothing more than the name we give to the set of interactions that gradually constitute it. Thus, society essentially does not exist, since the interactions are neither its causes nor its effects, but constitute this very society. The institutions that are created within it are nothing more than the most permanent form of the continuous process of communication and its main characteristic is the ratio between quantitative expansion and qualitative differentiation of the subjects that compose it.

This strong refusal to any a priori definition of society does not constitute for Simmel a brake on the development of sociology as a science. However, it presupposes, as an axiom according to him, a particular abstraction between the form and the content of communication. While he accepts that the content of interaction and the forms it takes in reality coexist, the scientist's confusion nevertheless lies in the identification of what happens through society with what happens within society. ⁹The following excerpt from "The Problem of Sociology" is particularly illuminating: I have secured a new concept of sociology in which I have separated the forms of communication from the contents, that is, from the attitudes from the goals, which only when they are drawn from the interactions between individuals, become communicated [...] The field of sociology is legitimized through the abstraction of the field of communication of each of these and its forms. ¹⁰

To summarize, we can say that the generative cause of Georg's thought Simmel is found in individuals. Their endless interactions produce the relations of communication whose forms, and not the contents, are society. The complexity of these forms, therefore, prohibits any attempt at a final definition of society, which in turn prevents sociology from being defined by its object. The identification of the way individuals act with the motives that motivate these actions constitutes for Simmel a vicious circle in which the sociologist must intervene actively through the process of abstraction. As he himself states, sociology is an eclectic science to the extent that its object is the results of other sciences. From these, grasping the form and setting aside the content of events, the sociologist becomes the scientist of the real, and not of concepts, as if his thoughts must be directed towards the investigation of reality, ideal compositions can never be an object of study for him. ¹¹

2. Space as a social phenomenon to be studied

Considering that the methodological starting point for Georg Simmel, individuals must be, space as a social phenomenon could not be anything more than a result of the actions of the former.

According to Simmel, this space itself has no meaning, it does not exist. Space takes shape and acquires a specific meaning, a social meaning, since human individuals act and through their action fill and shape a specific delineated space. ¹²Consequently, when we speak of space in Simmel's thought, we are essentially referring exclusively to social space, which constitutes a fundamental dimension of social life and is created during the interaction of individuals, but also because of it. Interaction, Simmel wrote, between human beings constitutes - among other things - the experience of filling space [...] interaction transforms what was previously empty and void into something for us, it fills it to the extent that it makes it possible. ¹³

Individual, Society, City: The Sociology of Work and the Experience of the Metropolis through the Thought of Georg Simmel

In his work "Sociology of Space" Simmel identifies five basic forms of communication that can be formulated respectively into five interdependent fundamental qualitative characteristics of the form of social space, which are taken into account in the formation of community life. ¹⁴These are none other than the 'uniqueness' of space, its 'limits', the 'stabilization' of the social forms that develop within it, the 'distance' and the 'approach' and finally the 'possibility movement from place to place'.¹⁵

The uniqueness of space lies in the identification of the group's identity with the specific area in which it is based, with a more classic example being that of the state. The boundaries of space consist of the defensive or offensive way in which neighboring social spaces are expressed. The stabilization, now, of social forms concerns the way in which established structures are created and crystallized within space. The example that Simmel uses to explain this parameter has to do with the local binding of the medieval city, in contrast to the freedom of movement of the modern metropolis. Distance and approach constitute a dialectically complementary element of social space. For Simmel, each social space simultaneously creates mechanisms that intensify relations between individuals, and others that deregulate them. Finally, in the possibility of moving from place to place, Simmel studies and mentions both the ability of groups or individuals to change places, as well as the property of space to deprive or welcome them. He shows particular interest in the effects that these movements bring both to individuals and to places.

Concluding the current section, we must add a crucial observation. Georg's thought Simmel is possessed above all by a tendency towards a complete dialectical perspective. Even the simplest interaction between two people may fulfill the dimensions of the space that exists between them, but at the same time the already socially constructed space influences - through the stimuli it transmits - individuals, and therefore the forms of their communication. For Simmel, individuals therefore do not act in any way from scratch, but rather within the contexts in which they find themselves. This position of Simmel, clearly evident both in the "Philosophy of Money" and in his essay "City and Soul", constitutes an integral part of an analysis of the Urban Space of Modernity, such as the one we will attempt in the next section.

3. Urban Space: the Modern Megalopolis, Money and Blaz é

The most serious problems of modern life arise from the individual's claim to maintain his autonomy and individuality in the face of oppressive social forces, historical heritage, the surrounding culture and the process of everyday life. ¹⁶For Simmel, beyond the interpersonal individual struggle that Nietzsche saw or the elimination of it that socialism preaches, the person in modernity resists his flattening and deterioration by a social-technological mechanism. What we experience, according to him, in the modern era constitutes the most recent form of transformation of the eternal struggle of man with nature. This latter phase places the individual so specialized, but also so dependent on the specializations of other individuals at the same time. Thus, the unanswered demand that arises is the resolution of the equation between the individual and the supra-individual contents of life.

The modern metropolis and the way in which modern life unfolds within it, becomes for Simmel the new sociological dimension, through which it becomes possible to approach the centrifugal tendencies of modernity and allows the sociologist to focus on the everyday life of the social. ¹⁷According to him, the essential difference between the modern metropolis and the small town, or the rural area, lies in the lack of sensory foundations in the mental life of the individuals who inhabit the former. The urban consciousness is nurtured by the rapid accumulation of changing information, the abrupt discontinuity that manages to grab something with every glance and the unexpected invasion of impressions. The adaptation, now, of the man of the metropolis to the contrast and the rapid change of phenomena, presupposes an effort to deal with the latter purely intellectually, without the slightest intrusion of emotional interventions. Thus, the dominant feature of life in the modern city is the dominance of the intellect. Despite the thousands of individual variations, Simmel wrote, that we encounter in the metropolis, the common feature of all its people is that they react with the mind and not with the heart. Because intellectuality emerges as the only shield of protection for subjective life, against the intensity of objective stimuli, the intellect dominates at the base of the consciousness that develops in the metropolis, with the result that the reaction mechanisms are organically removed from the soul. For Simmel, the modern mentality and its faithful recording in the modern city, rises as a daily volcano of incessant images, whose successive eruptions make man an extremely calculating being, with a futile naturalism in his formerly restless gaze. The advocate of the complexity of subjects, Simmel, seeks and ultimately locates, within the so disparate modernity, an objective reality: the universal existence of mental reaction, uniquely highlighting his dialectical scientific identity.

This typocratic realistic and cold cruelty towards people and things, which the dominance of the intellect in the metropolis produces, is intrinsically linked, according to Simmel, to the money economy. The metropolis, he says characteristically, has always been the seat of the money economy. ¹⁸In his most accepted text by the dominant sociological trend, the "Philosophy of Money" - an acceptance which is possibly explained by the systematic style of the text - Simmel recognizes an antithetical character in money and at the same time questions himself about this antithesis which he identifies: money is valuable to us because it is the means for acquiring values [...] even though it is only the means for doing so. For, from the point of view of logical necessity, it does not seem at all that the emphasis on values, which is based on the final ends of our action, is transferred to the means which in themselves and without their placement in the teleological sequence, would be completely foreign to value. ¹⁹As Simmel emphasizes, never has a means, that is, an object which owes its value exclusively to its mediating capacity, to its convertibility into more definitive

Individual, Society, City: The Sociology of Work and the Experience of the Metropolis through the Thought of Georg Simmel

values, so radically and so relentlessly assumed the character of an absolute final end, which fulfills practical consciousness with such universality. Although money itself does not contain any quality, nevertheless, and perhaps precisely for this reason, it becomes more capable of dealing with the qualities of things. Thus, the increase in its value as a means also increases its value as an end, to the point that its first quality – that of a means – definitively ceases to exist in the consciousness of modern man. In this way, modern life requires individuals to experience a series of moments to which they attribute a simultaneously contrasting meaning. While each moment must be attributed as a final end, at the same time it also presents itself as a means to ever higher levels of ends. This apparently contradictory requirement for each moment of life to be simultaneously absolutely definitive and absolutely non-definitive, Simmel characteristically states, stems from the ultimate internalization of the modern way of perception and finds a curious, in a way, ironic fulfillment in money.²⁰ which is placed beyond all qualities. Here lies the internal relationship of intellectualism with the monetary economy within the everyday life of the modern city.

According to Simmel, close emotional relationships between persons are based on their individuality. However, in the modern metropolis where rational relationships prevail, man is counted as a number, as an element that is indifferent in every respect.²¹ This problematic social relationship finds its cause and its solution in the properties of money: with money everything is objectified, as modern man is only interested in exchange value. This principle is answered as common to all and equalizes every quality and individuality to the question 'how much does it cost?'. Therefore, within the modern city, we all count not only our merchants or customers [...] but often also the people with whom we are obliged to have social relations.²² Thus, **attributing some value to the subject presupposes its reduction to an object, from the moment that the fragmented life of modernity is recomposed in a flattening and violent way in the universalized funnel of monetary perception**. The structures within and through which the above process develops also produce the anonymity of the consumer subject, as the modern metropolis is supplied almost entirely by production for the market, that is, for completely unknown buyers, who practically never enter the producer's field of vision as persons.²³ The importance of this phenomenon constitutes a key point for understanding the way in which life is conducted in the city, due to the fact that this constant anonymous relationship annihilates the emotional and other resistances of both producers and consumers, developing an economic and calculating egoism in the way of perception, thought and action of both sides.

This, then, extreme realism that prevails in the metropolis both economically and at the level of everyday practice, leaves unanswered the question, Simmel tells us, whether the intellectualist mentality first promoted the money economy or whether the latter determined the former. The reciprocity with which they coexist makes any abstract hypothesis on the subject impossible. What is certain is that the modern spirit is becoming increasingly calculating, with a rational precision of practical life where only the money economy fills the days of so many people with weighings and calculations, with numerical determinations, with a constant reduction of qualitative values to quantitative ones.²⁴ This phenomenon of urban life is born, according to Simmel, from the necessity of so many people, gathered with such different interests, to integrate their relationships and their activities into a highly complex social formation. This very necessity constitutes the cause and causality of the new form of computational precision, the precision of everything, that we encounter in the conditions of urban life. Within and through these conditions that we have described, the personality of the **Blaz é** man also emerges.

There is no doubt that in all parts and all aspects of the modern metropolis one can encounter innumerable different behaviors – occasional or crystallized – of the people who make it up. However, one of these behaviors – that of **Blaz é** – fully represents the mentality of this city and the value of the content of the present study written so far is precisely located in Simmel's position that **the Blaz é disposition constitutes the faithful subjective reflection of the completely internalized monetary economy**.²⁵ Thus, understanding the latter is a key prerequisite for an attempt to analyze the former. Having already met the above requirement, we can now come face to face with the complex figure of this saturated, satiated man²⁶, who occupies such an important place in the thought of the theorist we are studying.

As we have already observed, the urban way of life in modernity, according to Simmel, excludes almost by definition any instinctive or irrational behaviors. The mechanisms that produce the above exclusion and elevate the objectified idea of absolute precision, merge at a subjective level, creating on the one hand a human structure characterized by the complete lack of any element of personality and on the other hand they have the ability to nurture a highly personal subjectivity. This dialectic of the modern city is realized to the greatest extent in the dominant figure of **Blaz é**. There is perhaps no other psychic phenomenon that has been so completely attributed to the metropolis as the **Blaz é** attitude,²⁷ Simmel tells us, a fact that is also responsible, according to him, for the lack of growth in intellectuality in modernity. The **Blaz é** man is not stupid, the theorist in question makes it clear to us, but he is that intelligent character who, due to the rapidly changing and closely crowded contrasting stimuli he receives, has lost to the highest degree his ability to react to new impressions with the corresponding energy. Therefore, this man lives a life dedicated to the unlimited hunt for a new pleasure that might manage to move him, to the point where this incessant running becomes an end in itself, with the result that in the end he ceases to react completely so that his ability to question anything is also annihilated. **Blaz é** is not a cynic either, Simmel is quick to clarify. Cynicism for him – like **Blaz é's** behavior – is a product of the money economy. Their difference lies in the fact that the cynic's way of thinking and acting is a choice for him. His own sense of life – Simmel writes characteristically about the cynic – finds adequate expression only when he has demonstrated theoretically and practically the

Individual, Society, City: The Sociology of Work and the Experience of the Metropolis through the Thought of Georg Simmel

baseness of even the highest values, the illusory character of the difference in values [...] In no other general field does the cynic find such a triumphant justification as here (in the modern metropolis), where the finest, most ideal, most personal goods are not only at the disposal of whoever has the required money, but even, and more characteristically, even the most worthy are deprived of them when they do not have the means (to acquire them). On the contrary, the way ²⁸Blaz é leads his life reveals the other side of the flattening, the one that is not essentially chosen by him, but appears gradually and consumes his entire existence. Blaz é does not equate values and things because he recognizes in them the non-existence of any difference, as we have seen the cynic does, but essentially performs an inverse act. Blaz é is no longer able to recognize differences and therefore unconsciously levels everything. The essence of his (Blaz é) attitude consists in the attenuation of his ability to discriminate ²⁹, Simmel emphasizes .

We see, therefore, that for Blaz é everything around him has taken on a colorless character, a uniformly dull and gray tone , as with the speed and contradiction of the changes that surround him in every corner and in the relationship he develops within the modern city, the impressions he receives wear out even the last reserves of strength in his nerves . This, Simmel emphasizes , does not mean that objects are not perceived, but from the moment that the diversity of their values is not recognized by Blaz é, they are experienced by him as non-existent, with the result that in his way of thinking no object deserves his preference over another. If money is, as Simmel believes , the terrible equalizer that irreparably eats away at the core of things, their special value and their uniqueness, then its faithful subjective internalization – which, as we said, is the Blaz é attitude – creates an individual behavior where the discolored coloring of things can be so insignificant that it cannot go unnoticed . This is why cities, according to the same theorist, are the places that truly favor the Blaz é attitude, as within this attitude a unique process takes place. The overconcentration of people, things and images stimulates the nervous system of the individual to its maximum potential, to their culmination. With the simple quantitative intensification, however, of his own conditioned reflexes, the above peak of interest is transformed into its opposite and appears in the peculiar adaptation within Blaz é's behavior , in the zero existence, that is, of any interest. The important result brought about by the above phenomenon is that Blaz é's negative disposition to react to the surrounding stimuli constitutes his ultimate possibility of adapting to the contents and forms of the metropolis. In this way, the mechanisms of thought and action that this individual develops, simultaneously with their external appearance, are turned inward, towards Blaz é's very existence in the end, as the devaluation of the entire objective world for him is a devaluation which in the end drags his personality down the same descent, making it feel equally insignificant .³⁰

Epilogue: The new anthropotype in the meta-city of the image.

"What could be stranger than that?"

from the silence that someone experiences

when he wants to ask a question

in a written text?

Neil Postman

The city of postmodern transition – or even postmodern reality for others – while identified with the dominant structures of the modern city, at the same time surpasses it in the way it develops and evolves as a new superstructure of values. With the above position in mind, the purpose of this concluding section is to attempt to explore Blaz é, as an attitude and as an individual, today.

The modern metropolis, as we inherited its description from Georg Simmel , is the space in which, through the conflict and antipathy that characterize the relations between its subjects, mechanisms develop which, while seemingly declaring desocialization, nevertheless constitute a particular form, the urban form, of communication. The above social process, therefore, realized within the city, brings about on the one hand the freedom of movement that the latter grants to its inhabitants and on the other hand entails its dialectical cost, which is none other than the loneliness of the individual in the crowd. This universal definition of Simmel for the way in which everyday life is experienced in the modern city has as its basis, as we have already presented, the monetary economy and the disappearance of all non-logical – non-calculating behavior, that is, the generative causes of the Blaz é personality. Within the confines, now, of the Western post-city , the phenomena and relationships that develop require an equally careful approach. We could easily claim that both the unassailable dominance of intellect and money, as well as the diversity of stimuli that the individual receives, remain the focal points of the social structure that we continue to characterize as urban. However, an important element that differentiates the Modern city from that of the Postmodern is the omnipotence of images, and their consumption, that we encounter in the latter.

The general development of technology and in particular the rapid evolution of multimedia sound and image, could not leave the way in which daily life in the city is conducted unaffected. In every corner of the post-city, on the streets, in the means of transport, in the workplace or even in the living space of its inhabitants, the image, moving or not, accompanied by sound or alone, produces a non-verbal communication, the character of which is dynamically reproduced. The constant massification of images that one encounters in the modern West, and even more so in its urban centers, highlights the universalization of an ideological reality, which, however, is experienced by the acting subjects in its de-ideologicalized form, without its ideal content being perceived. The moment of this latent reception is its moment, it essentially constitutes the realization of images and their purpose, which is none

Individual, Society, City: The Sociology of Work and the Experience of the Metropolis through the Thought of Georg Simmel

other than to convince that they are not ideas, but truth. Following now Simmel's methodological proposals on the abstraction of form from content at the micro-level of sociological study, we would say that from the moment the image convinces of its realistic existence, it becomes socially true –even uniquely true– and therefore the forms of interaction and communication between individuals are extensions of this truth and are therefore produced and reproduced under its own influence. Within this new urban network of thought and action where either the consumption of the product pre-requires the consumption of its image, or the image constitutes the product itself, all human activities are mediated first and foremost by the power of the image. In attempting a study of the real here, we must accept that in the post-city the image constitutes the social truth, without this meaning that the truth of the city is now virtual, as such a position would refer to an ethical, and not a sociological, approach to phenomena. In this way, insisting on what is happening – and not on what ideally should be happening – in society, and in this case in the urban one, we observe that the equalizing quantification of qualities brought about by the monetary economy, as described by Simmel, tends to be reversed into a qualitativeization of quantities through the new post-economy, the economy of the image. The various images – symbols have managed or are trying to identify themselves with various specific qualities, to the point of being the first to determine the value of the latter. The question 'how much does it cost' with which Simmel comprehensively described the essence of the modern city, gradually shifts into the everyday life of the post-city from the question 'what brand does it bear'. Within and through this new principle, as in Simmel's analysis of the dominance of the money economy, the value of the image concerns and extends to the everyday relationships of the inhabitants of the postmodern city. If the dynamics of money defined in modernity where each person is in the city in relation to the other with a leveling feeling of extreme rationality, the postmodern form of interaction transmutes the value of subjects and their relationships in the light of the image that defines them, the ideas they consume and the semiology of the places where this consumption takes place, with an equally calculating way of thinking.

But who is Blazé within this late urban space? Does his particular figure exist within the life of the meta-city? And if so, then what social mechanisms create him and in what way might he differ from the Blazé man of modernity?

As we saw Blazé under Georg's gaze Simmel's personality is the product of the culmination of his reactions to the over-accumulation of stimuli offered by the city. This culmination consists in the saturation of the person in question with everything and the complete inactivation of his subjective mental or emotional mechanisms for identifying the difference of things. In this sense, we can claim that the Blazé attitude continues to be found in the newer social formation of the urban. As diversity and the ceaseless alternation of stimuli dominate equally or even increasingly dynamically in the metropolis, the saturated recipient of such an environment cannot but exist, possibly to a greater quantitative extent than the one that Simmel encountered in modernity. The essential difference of today's Blazé, from that described by the theorist in question, is traced in the diversity of the central values of the postmodern city and how they function as causes in the creation of the behavior of the former. If Simmel's Blazé is the faithful subjective reflection of the internalized monetary economy, then the post-Blazé cannot but be the faithful subjective reflection of the internalized ideology of the image. The dominant dogma of the respective description of the urban space in question is that which is placed at the core of the Blazé attitude. Within the city of the image, as presented previously, the Blazé man has lost the ability to identify the elements that may differentiate the endless images – symbols that surround him and bombard him stormily on a daily basis. As in the city of money, so in that of the image, Blazé finds the ideal framework for establishing his personality, as intellectualism continues to be the core component of both these spaces. Finally, the ever-increasing qualitzation of quantities that takes place in the postmodern city makes Blazé not an individual who, by devaluing himself and his entire objective world, ultimately considers his own existence insignificant – Simmel's view that stemmed from the dominance of the monetary economy – but on the contrary, with the universality of the power of the image, our contemporary Blazé, exalting the importance of symbols, considers his existence important or not only in relation to the value of the image that he can bring and give him meaning in relation to others. If the Blazé of the modern metropolis found his meaning only in the endless hunt for a new pleasure that he hoped would move him, the Blazé we meet today discovers his purpose only in the daily journey of searching for changing guises that seek to define him.

In conclusion, completing this study here, we are able to claim that Georg Simmel proves to be not only important, but above all timely. The thoughts and analyses of this dissident of classical sociology rightly become a necessary and integral part of a path of social theory towards a dialogue between the general and the everyday, which he tried to achieve with so much effort and imagination.

NOTES

¹Microsociology is a field of broader sociological theory. The focus of its analysis is the action of the social subject or social group, rather than society as a system. Its study is limited to the relationships that develop between interacting social subjects and does not concern an approach to overall social processes, social structures, or social classes and institutions.

²Excerpt from the *monograph* by J. Habermas, *Georg Simmel on philosophy and culture*, which we encounter as an epigraph in the study by Gagas Sp. and Kalfopoulos K. entitled *Wandering and Modernity*, published by Alexandria, Athens 2004, p. 316

Individual, Society, City: The Sociology of Work and the Experience of the Metropolis through the Thought of Georg Simmel

³A powerful example of the bipolar nature of Simmel's work is the disagreement between two of the most classical sociologists. Weber directly recognized the importance of his work, while Durkheim rejected it because it did not address the phenomena in a comprehensive manner.

⁴The fact that both Robert Park - founder of the Chicago School, and Georg Lukacs or Ernest Bloch - leading representatives of neo-Marxist thought - were Simmel's students indicates the breadth of his analyses.

⁵Simmel continues his position on the soul by saying that *the fact that there is no object without a subject and no subject without an object is something that is initially realized within the soul itself, which rises as the knower, above itself, as the known, and as it in turn knows this knowledge of itself, its life flows in an infinite progression, whose current form, in a way its cross-section, is the circular movement: the psychic subject knows itself as an object and the object as a subject*. Excerpt from *The Philosophy of Money*, in *Wandering and Modernity* by Gaga S. P. and Kalfopoulos K., op. cit., p. 137

⁶Antonopoulou Maria, *Theory and Ideology in the Thought of the Classics of Sociology*, Papazisis Publishing House, Athens 1991, p.325

⁷As Spyros Gagas points out, *by making this turn towards microsociology, Simmel does not deconstruct social reality, but rather tries to strengthen the cohesive character of a modern society, integrating the element of otherness, but within socially determined relations*. Excerpt from his introduction to the work *Wandering and Modernity*, op. cit., p. 28

⁸Simmel Georg, *Essays in Sociology*, trans. Makridis M., published by Anagnostidis, Athens, xx. p./33

⁹Antonopoulou M., op. cit., p. 329

¹⁰Simmel's work *The problem of sociology*, as translated in the book by Antonopoulou M., op. cit., p. 350

¹¹Simmel's work *The problem of sociology*, as translated in the book by Antonopoulou M., op. cit., p. 349

¹²Antonopoulou M., op. cit., p. 336

¹³Simmel's work *The problem of sociology*, as translated in the book by Antonopoulou M., op. cit., p. 350

¹⁴Simmel's work *Sociology of space*, as translated in the book by Gaga Sp. - Kalfopoulos K., *Wandering and Modernity*, Alexandria Publishing House, Athens 2004, p. 145

¹⁵For more detailed information on the subject, see Gaga S.- Kalfopoulos K., op. cit., pp. 143 – 169.

¹⁶Simmel Georg, *City and Soul* (accurate) title *City and Mental Life*), translated by Lykiardopoulos G., published by Erasmós, Athens 1993, p. 13

¹⁷Gaga Sp. - Kalfopoulos K., *Wandering and Modernity*, Alexandria Publishing House, Athens 2004, p. 33

¹⁸Simmel Georg, *City and Soul*, trans. Lykiardopoulos G., Erasmós Publishing, Athens 1993, p. 15

¹⁹Simmel's work *Philosophy of Money*, as translated in the book by Gaga Sp. - Kalfopoulos K., *Wandering and Modernity*, Alexandria Publishing House, Athens 2004, p. 203

²⁰Simmel's work *Philosophy of Money*, as translated in the book by Gaga Sp. - Kalfopoulos K., *Wandering and Modernity*, Alexandria Publishing House, Athens 2004, p. 210

²¹Simmel Georg, *City and Soul*, translated by Lykiardopoulos G., published by Erasmós, Athens 1993, p. 16

²²Simmel Georg, *City and Soul*, trans. Lykiardopoulos G., Erasmós Publishing, Athens 1993, p. 16

²³Simmel Georg, *City and Soul*, trans. Lykiardopoulos G., Erasmós Publishing, Athens 1993, p. 16

²⁴Simmel Georg, *City and Soul*, translated by Lykiardopoulos G., published by Erasmós, Athens 1993, p. 17

²⁵Simmel Georg, *City and Soul*, trans. Lykiardopoulos G., Erasmós Publishing, Athens 1993, p. 20

²⁶This phrase is the purely philological translation of the word *Blaz é*.

²⁷Having already referred to the social definition that Simmel attributes to the term *psyche* (p. 8 and note 5), we can understand how we are justified in having the scientific competence to study *Blaz é*, even though the sociologist himself characterizes him as a *psychic phenomenon*.

²⁸Simmel's work *Philosophy of Money*, as translated in the book by Gaga Sp. - Kalfopoulos K., *Wandering and Modernity*, Alexandria Publishing House, Athens 2004, p. 247

²⁹Simmel Georg, *City and Soul*, trans. Lykiardopoulos G., Erasmós Publishing, Athens 1993, p. 19

³⁰Simmel Georg, *City and Soul*, trans. Lykiardopoulos G., Erasmós Publishing, Athens 1993, p. 21

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