Série Antropologia 103

Three essays on anthropology in India

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This issue brings together the translation into English of numbers 57, 65 and 83 of *Série Antropologia*. The present title replaces the former "Towards Anthropological Reciprocity", its designation from 1990 to 2010.

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Introduction

The three papers brought together in this volume of *Série Antropologia* were translated from Portuguese into English especially to make them available for an audience of non-Brazilian anthropologists and sociologists. The papers were written with the hope that a comparison of the Brazilian with the Indian academic experience could enlarge our understanding of the social, historical and cultural implications of the development of anthropology in different contexts.

This project started in the late 1970's when, as a graduate student at Harvard University, I decided to take a critical look at the dilemmas that face anthropologists who receive their training in the intellectual centres of the discipline, but choose to pursue their careers in their country of origin. The focus was on the social sciences in Brazil and especially on anthropology as an academic discipline.

To this existential, political (broadly speaking) and intellectual problem, I wanted to imprint a sociological approach. By deciding to examine the identity of anthropology in Brazil, I had two goals in mind: one was to clarify why certain problems or topics of interest were considered truly anthropological while others were labelled sociology, literary criticism, or history. The second goal was more ambitious. My intention was not to develop a simple study of the Brazilian case, but to widen it in such a way as to have it implicitly reflected on other traditions of social thought. Thus, even if at the beginning the research was not explicitly comparative, its major significance was to eventually lead to a comparative view. A contrast between two classical authors, Louis Dumont and Norbert Elias, was pursued to set the tone of the study: I hoped that, in the process of creating a dialogue between them and the Brazilian case, some assumptions underlying a "French" and a "German" style of social thought could be elucidated. (See Peirano, Mariza. *The Anthropology of Anthropology. The Brazilian Case.* Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1981).

Actually, Dumont represented the major intellectual stimulus for the dissertation after his polemical article published in 1978 about the relationship between the

anthropological community and its surrounding ideology. Dumont asserted that anthropology could only develop in contexts where a hierarchy between the values of universalism and holism was to be found. He thus postulated the impossibility of the existence of multiple "anthropologies," in the plural, by arguing that there was no symmetry between the modern pole where anthropology stood and the non-modern pole of its object of study. (See Dumont, Louis. "La communauté anthropologique et l'ideology", *L'Homme* vol. 18 n. 3-4: 83-110).

In order to elucidate whether Dumont's views were intrinsic to anthropological thinking in general or whether they were just one possibility among contrasting others, my starting point was to search for the indigenous definition of the practice of social scientists in Brazil, and to observe the process by which sociology, anthropology, political science and so on began to emerge as differentiated disciplines from a common multidisciplinary stock called "social sciences", after its institutionalization in the 1930's.

By asking six social scientists of different generations and academic interests (which in my view had helped define the disciplinary areas in Brazil) for their own understanding of what anthropology in Brazil was or ought to be, I came to the central argument which links the development of the social sciences to ideas and values about nation-building. Social scientists, as other "intellectuals" in the country, are by definition civically and politically oriented individuals, whose commitment influences not only the topics chosen for study but also the theoretical approaches developed to study them.

The embeddedness of the anthropologist's work in nation-building ideology could be perceived, for instance, in intellectual careers: Florestan Fernandes, considered to be the founder of the "sociological school of São Paulo" in the 1950's, began his career by reconstructing the social organization of the Tupinambá – the largest Indian population encountered by Portuguese discoverers in 1500 – through an analysis of 16th century documentary sources. This magnificent study, however, just proved, in Brazil, Fernandes's ability and competence as a researcher. Recognition of his work only came when he changed his topic of study from extinct Indians to White/Black racial relations, then to problems of underdevelopment and the seminal ideas of what was to be known later as "dependency theory". The movement from the study of a 16th century tribal

society to Brazil as a dependent country in contemporary times corresponded to the institutional disengagement from a sociology basically conceived in a Durkheimian fashion to a "sociologia-feita-no-Brasil" (a sociology made-in-Brazil).

The same idea of a nationally "interested" social science could be perceived in the way Indians were studied by Brazilian anthropologists. Seen by foreign researchers as societies in and of themselves, Indian groups attracted the attention of Brazilian social scientists, first, by the degree of interaction they maintained with the national society which, later, led to a specific theoretical approach to interethnic situations of contact. By the same token, peasants also became a topic of study since, like the Indians, they too were part of the expanding frontiers through which the national society advanced into the hinterland. Thus, whether the issue was fundamentally strata integration or territorial integration, anthropology in Brazil could not avoid a commitment to problems of nation-building, despite the theoretical sophistication it always aimed at, and the tendency to develop a dialogue (albeit one-sided) with the latest literature produced in the hegemonic centres of discipline.

The result of my research immediately put into question some of Louis Dumont's ideas by showing, for instance, how his proposition that anthropology entailed a hierarchical relationship between universalism and holism is more properly a reflection of a specific (French) ideology that downplays national differences between peoples and emphasizes what is common to all human beings, in a way expressing the self-assurance of peoples whose national boundaries and identity have for centuries been so fully established that they have ceased to be the subject matter of any particular discussion. From this conclusion followed the apparent paradox that it is only when the ideology of nationhood is universalistic that anthropology can assume Dumont's model, in other contexts universalism-and-holism allowing for the inclusion of a third level – the ideology of nation-building – which is both part of the observer's as much as the observed's universe and cosmology. It was not then the case of "subordinating universalism and destroying anthropology", as Dumont feared, but of including nation-building ideology – which is a form of holism – in the universalist quest.

If Dumont denied that anthropology could develop in non-universalist contexts and if he, as the major contemporary Western scholar of India, considered that India was the prototype of a hierarchical society where holism encompassed universalism, then one must explain why anthropology there was being increasingly respected as a creative trend in the discipline at an international level.

This problem was to become the next stage of the research. It began in 1986, with a six-month period of library research at Harvard University, followed, in 1987, by six weeks in Delhi, India, where my purpose was to examine how Indian social scientists viewed Dumont's proposition, as much as how they related (if at all) to nation-building ideology and values. The comparison between India and Brazil also reflected other interests: used to relating only to the radiating centres of the discipline, a direct relationship between anthropologists of two different so-called third-world branches of the discipline promised a new kind of experience. Furthermore, the Indian social scientist, like his Brazilian counterpart, is also a native of the society he studies, putting into focus his identity as a scientist and as a citizen: from one angle, confronting the international community of especialists, and from another, the questions about the relevance of sociological research in a particular society, the Indian sociologist must reconcile multiple codes and forge a complex intellectual-political identity. If these dilemmas are common to sociological traditions of "peripheral" countries, where the commitment to nation-building ideals is perhaps unavoidable, India was a case of especial interest to compare with Brazil on another issue, i.e., because it does not see itself as a child of the West (as in the Brazilian case) but, until recently under direct colonization, wants to maintain its own identity as different from the West, even if recognizing that the West is already an integral part of it.

I have developed the implications of this last part of the research in three papers which I published in Portuguese nd aimed at a Brazilian audience. The first of them was written in 1987, after a period of library research at Harvard University. "On castes and villages" was written as a trial paper, in which I intended to look at the work of Louis Dumont through a comparison with M. N. Srinivas and, in this context, introduce him to a Brazilian audience while, at the same time, showing how Dumont's ideas were refined through a confrontation with Indian sociologists. The different intellectual projects of

Dumont and Srinivas are compared, so as to show how their views were unavoidably incompatible.

The second paper was written immediately after my return from India. "Are you Catholic?" was written in an informal style, and was intended as a travel report of my encounter with sociologists in India. I tried to reflect on the theoretical and ethical problems which my stay in India brought about, focusing my attention on the works of J. P. S. Uberoi and Ashis Nandy.

Finally, the third paper, more traditional in form, deals with the thirty years of the debate "For a Sociology of India", published in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* from 1957 on. This debate is of enormous interest for a Brazilian audience, among other reasons because it shows how the confrontation between Indian and European sociologists gave birth to a more cosmopolitan view, though Indian – an anthropology which is both heir to Indian traditional thought and European sociology.

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In Brazil we live a specific situation in that we consume the latest trends of intellectual discussion in English and French, but write in Portuguese, a language which protects us from outside inspection, since it is known by only a few outside Brazil. This apparent freedom has its price, however, for we are seldom evaluated from the outside and thus accommodate ourselves to an isolation which prevents us from having more fruitful dialogues.

This is but one of the reasons why the debate between Indian and European anthropologists is so important for us. Needless to say, I do not believe that a mere translation of a paper, written in a Brazilian context, is automatically appropriate for different audiences. I start from the sociological idea that the specific public aimed at affects not only the way the ideas are presented, but sometimes the arguments themselves: I am thus aware of the concern voiced by some American anthropologists about the possibility of multiple audiences for anthropological texts. (See, for instance, Fischer, M. & M. Abedi, "Bombay talkies, the word and the world" in *Cultural Anthropology* vol. 5 n. 2: 107-157). My particular experience however shows how complex the endeavour is.

I am thus aware that the English versions of the papers I am presenting to an audience of Indian sociologists are inadequate in a number of ways, the most obvious being the long quotations and summaries which, for Brazilian sociologists, are necessary as ethnographic evidence. Despite this, I decided to present the translations as literal as possible, believing that anthropologists and sociologists in India have the right to know what I have been saying about them in Brazil. This is the minimum reciprocity for their willingness to share with me their views on the development of anthropology in India.

Paper n. 1

On castes and villages: reflections on a debate

French intellectual influence has been strong for centuries in Brazil, and the case of Louis Dumont is no exception. Concepts such as individualism, holism, hierarchy, generally with the remark that it is used "in a Dumontian sense", are frequently found in anthropological texts of the last decade[1]. However, it is not my intention to make an exegesis of Louis Dumont's ideas. I take for granted that his approach is well known in Brazil, and propose to examine who Louis Dumont is for Indian anthropologists (or sociologists, since accepted as anthropologists abroad, at home they call themselves sociologists). How Dumont's theories are received by scholars with anthropological training who are, at the same time, Indian citizens?

This attempt is based on the assumption that Louis Dumont developed his major viewpoints not only by studying Indian civilization, but by answering Indian anthropologists and social philosophers who questioned his work. This aspect, generally unknown (or, where known, unregistered), reminds us that Dumont's works is *one* of the voices of a dialogue in which French, British and Indian scholars participated. This fact has theoretical implications which will be dealt later. To look at the other side, which is less known to us, that of Indian anthropology, may bring us some surprises. Surprises as well as lessons for us, Brazilian social scientists. The point is to recover voices which do not reach our ears, used to tune only the last contributions of the so-called first-world, often, tough fortunately not always, to transform them into local fashionable trends.

The theme of this exercise is the debate carried out between Louis Dumont and M. N. Srinivas about the basic sociological unit for the study of India: a dialogue that lasted, at least, two decades (from the fifties to the seventies, until Dumont reoriented his interest explicitly to Western society), during which period Dumont proposed that India could only be studied through the caste system, while M. N. Srinivas proposed that, without taking into account village life, very little would be known about India, including caste.

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[1] Some significant works of the beginning of the decade are, for instance, DaMatta, 1980; Velho, 1981; Viveiros de Castro & Benzaquém de Araújo, 1977.

M.N. Srinivas

If Louis Dumont is well known in Brazil, M. N. Srinivas is not. Srinivas was born in 1917 (Dumont, in 1911) in Mysore, southwest India. Of delicate health, he followed a course in social philosophy and modern history, during a period in which the teaching of sociology and social anthropology was only beginning to be introduced in India. At the age of nineteen, Srinivas moved to Bombay where, under the advice of G. S. Ghurye, he completed his M.A. and became a doctoral candidate with a 900 page dissertation on the Coorgs of south India.

Intellectual genealogies in India have always had important links in the old metropolis: Ghurye had been a student of Haddon and Rivers and, perhaps because of that, suggested that his student finish his doctoral studies with Radcliffe-Brown in England (Radcliffe-Brown, if we remember, had been River's student). It was with Radcliffe-Brown, and later with his substitute, Evans-Pritchard, that Srinivas felt his theoretical thirst appeased, since a lack of theoretical orientation had been one of his main complaints under Ghurye. Under the Oxford orientation, Srinivas finished his Ph.D. thesis, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs* in 1947 (later published by Clarendon Press in 1952), and was invited by Evans-Pritchard to occupy the first lectureship of Indian sociology at Oxford. This position was occupied by Srinivas from 1949 to 1951, when he decided to exchange Oxford for Baroda, in India, not without asking himself if he was not committing "an academic hara-kiri" (Srinivas, 1973:144).

Upon his return to India, Srinivas founded and helped establish two programs in anthropology: from 1951 to 1959 Srinivas was in Baroda, and from 1959 to 1972, in Delhi. In 1972 he returned to his native state of Karnataka, where he became the head of the new Institute for Social and Economic Change, in Bangalore. The years of 1964 and 1970, Srinivas spent at the Centre for Advanced Study, in Stanford, taking care of his "academic illiteracy", as he himself puts it in his autobiographical essay (Srinivas, 1973). Considered the father of modern social anthropology in India, Srinivas published *Caste in Modern India* in 1962 (Bombay), *Social Change in Modern India* in 1966 (Berkeley), and *The Remembered Villages* in 1976, the latter based on recollections of

his fieldwork in Rampura, a small village located near his native Mysore. (A fire had destroyed his fieldnotes while he was at Stanford).

Srinivas believes it is unfair to evaluate his contribution to anthropology only by his books, because a third-world intellectual cannot avoid administrative tasks, the constant committees he has to attend, the responsibility of planning graduate programs, and the definition of patterns of academic excellence (see Srinivas, 1978b). However, it was in the midst of all these tasks that Srinivas carried out a debate with Louis Dumont in which he proposed the relevance of the study of villages for theoretical purposes and for anyone who wanted to study India, while Dumont denied villages as units of study and proposed, alternatively, the caste system. For more than two decades the authors discussed this subject matter and, sometimes in explicit terms, sometimes implicitly, referred to each other as a source of theoretical disagreements. If we Brazilians do not recognize Srinivas's presence in Dumont's writings as privileged contender, this fact is significant and says something about our attitude in reading European authors.

The fifties

Villages vs. castes – this was the central theme of the debate. It all seems to have started during the fifties, when Srinivas returned to India. (Ironically, it was Louis Dumont who replaced Srinivas at Oxford, dating from this time the contact between Dumont and Evans-Pritchard.) In India, Srinivas started writing on the subject of villages: the first article, dated 1951, describes the social structure of a Mysore village based on fieldwork done in 1948. On the same research, Srinivas later published a paper in a collection of articles put together by McKim Marriot, in 1955. *Village India* was the title of the book.

A third publication appeared in *The Eastern Anthropologist*: there Srinivas proposed that village studies had important methodological implications. In villages it was possible to observe the function of the different parts of a society and how they fit together. He emphasized that the study of a village "is productive of much more knowledge than knowledge about a single village" (Srinivas, 1955b: 216). In general, the study of villages was an attempt to answer theoretical questions and to provide the anthropologist with some insight into rural social life all over the country. In those

recent days of Independence, Srinivas says that, being of the government's interest the well being of the population in general and of the peasants in particular, it is in villages that it is possible to understand how the castes of a certain area form a hierarchy. The hierarchy conceptualized in the idea of *varna* is different from the reality of the village: "in the varna scheme, there are only four all-India castes, each of which occupies a definite and immutable place, while in caste at the existential level, the only definite thing is that all the local castes form a hierarchy" (Srinivas, 1955b: 224).

The hierarchy of castes is especially uncertain in the middle positions: each caste tries to claim a superior position to which it is allocated by the nearest one. This fact makes it possible to think about caste mobility in a certain period of time and to question the rigidity of the varna scheme. The caste system is more complex than *varna*, but the latter makes facts of caste "intelligible all over India by providing a conceptual frame that is simple, clear-cut, stable, and which, it is imagined, holds good everywhere" (Srinivas, 1955b: 224).

Fieldwork in villages has an additional advantage and, at the same time, difficulty for Indians, Srinivas argued, since the ideas which are carried over from literary material and from the caste to which one belongs by birth may vitiate the observations. Srinivas concludes: "To the anthropologist, the villages are invaluable observations – centres where he can study in detail social processes and problems to be found occurring in great parts of India, if not in a great part of the world" (Srinivas, 1955b: 227). Personally, he confessed to be "a bit tired of reading about caste in general, and it may come as a surprise to some to know that in spite of the great interest in the institution of caste, no one had seen fit to go and live in a multicaste village and record in detail the inter-actions between the various castes. (…) My study has convinced me of the enormous value of studying all Indian sociological problems in single villages. I do not say all sociological problems can be studied in the villages, but only many of the most important ones" (Srinivas, 1955b: 228).

Anticipating Geertz when he says that anthropologists do not study villages but in villages, Srinivas proposed a new direction for anthropology in India, challenging anthropologists to confront economists — natives or imported form the United States — who had in their hands the task of elaborating the social (and cultural) reforms which

would make India become modern. To confront the hegemonic place economics had as a social science — up until today the young generation of Indian anthropologists still find refuge in several Institutes of Economic Growth —, Srinivas incited them to use their best weapon: fieldwork, richer and more powerful than armchair research. But there is another aspect to point to: when we read Indian anthropological literature of the fifties, it seems clear that Srinivas's emphasis on the study of villages had as its background, or its additional purpose, a reaction to the studies of tribal groups, considered until then the object par excellence of anthropology. In this context, proposing that anthropology and sociology — seen as undifferentiated — would only gain by studying villages, Srinivas was implicitly trying a new direction and a new role for sociology in India, both theoretical and social.

Meanwhile, what happened in Europe? Dumont had replaced Srinivas in Oxford, and in collaboration with David Pocock, both had started, in 1957, the publication of *Contributions to Indian Sociology.* Initially, the journal was sponsored by the Institute of Social Anthropology (Oxford) and the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Paris). The history of the journal, which from 1966 was directed by the Indian anthropologist T. N. Madan and edited by the Institute of Economic Growth (Delhi), is unique. It was in the pages of *Contributions* that one of the most important discussions on the identity of any trend (or variant) of anthropological studies was developed. The basic theme was a discussion about Indian anthropology, and took place under the title "For a Sociology of India", a title used initially by Dumont and Pocock for an article. Later, in the hands of Indian anthropologists, "for a sociology of India" became a especial section of the journal. (This is another debate and another history, which should be known in Brazil[2].)

For the time being, let us remark that the debate we are concerned with now also got started in the first issue of *Contributions*, in a book review of *Village India* (edited by McKim Marriot) and in *India's Villages,* a collection of essays introduced by Srinivas. Both books were published in 1955.

In the book review, Dumont and Pocock face the issue of the relationship of the village to the macrocosm of Indian civilization, and state clearly and without any ambiguity:

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[2] See the third paper of this volume.

India cannot be understood through villages. Or, in their own words: "India, sociologically speaking, is not made up of villages" (Dumont & Pocock, 1957: 25). The authors proposed, alternatively, another point of view which, in retrospect, we find in Dumont's future work: the emphasis on the ideological aspects of the caste system. This perspective, later developed in *Homo Hierarchicus* (Dumont, 1966), with its emphasis on the dichotomy of the pure and the impure in hierarchical terms, conflicted with Srinivas's proposal. Dumont criticized the significance of the village in theoretical terms, affirming that the idea of the village, by its presence in Indian literature and thought, "can affect the unwary sociologist as much as the villager or the modern politician" (Dumont & Pocock, 1957: 25). To pose a sociological reality to the village would be to be deceived by appearances. The authors blame this attitude on the influence of Mahatma Gandhi's thought, on the pragmatic interests of early government officers and on the influence of anthropological methods "elsewhere in the world" (:26).

This last remark had a specific target: the Radcliffe-Brownian traditions of anthropological studies. Thus the criticism of the two authors in relation to the obsession in defining a unit of study, and the imposition of a unit of analysis as prior requisite to an analysis of the society. At stake here was the issue of empiricism: "The architectural and demographic fact which the village is lures us away from structural perspective, where things exist only in the relations which are the proper objects of study, to an atomistic or elemental point of view where things exist in themselves" (:26). At this point, being Dumont under the influence of Evans-Pritchard's and Lévi-Strauss's ideas, it is understandable why he should affirm that "the substantial reality of the villages deceives us into doing what we normally would not do in a social analysis and into assuming a priori that when people refer to an object by name they mean by that designation what we ourselves mean when we speak of it" (:26). In other words, generally the referent of the villages was not the whole village but merely the local caste group of the speaker. The village was thus secondary to the social facts of kinship as well as to economic and political loyalties – in sum, secondary to caste.

If Srinivas was mistaken in putting village first, he was not so unfortunate in coining the concept of "dominant caste". Dumont and Pocock considered this achievement to be the result of the high quality fieldwork Srinivas had done. For them, Srinivas had been the first "in point of time to bring into Indian sociology this notion of dominance first

elaborated in the analysis of African political systems" (:27). With this somewhat ambiguous remark[3], the author establishes that a certain caste which is truly dominant must come immediately below the Brahamans in the local hierarchy. This is because the only all-India explanation has to be found in the ideological-religious level — actually in the notion of "hierarchy". In the "Dumontian sense", naturally. It was only at this level that Dumont accepted the conception of a sociological unity for India (see Galey, 1982).

The seventies

We reach the seventies. The debate continues, though more sophisticated. Dumont accepts the discussion on the theme of "villages" only to show how, historically, the concept of "village community" implies an idea of equality which Indian villages do not have. Srinivas, on the other side, also embarks in a discussion of historical material but with a different purpose, namely, to show how Dumont could not conceive a "community" based on inequality.

In the meantime, Srinivas had received British support. Bailey argued that the study of villages was important not only for India, but that it represented an innovation in international anthropology as well (Bailey, 1962). This fact seemed not to disturb Dumont, who maintained with Bailey a parallel discussion on the pages of *Contributions*.

Two articles set the tone of the period: from Dumont's side, "The Village Community from Munro to Maine" (Dumont, 1970)[4]; from Srinivas's, "The Indian Village: Myth and Reality", published in a book edited by Beattie and Lienhardt dedicated to Evans-Pritchard (Srinivas, 1975).

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[3] Later on Dumont used the concept of "dominant cast" in *Homo Hierarchicus*, considering it "the most solid and useful acquisition of the studies of social anthropology in India" (1966: 158). Four pages later, however, Dumont dismisses Srinivas with the following remark: "There comes a point when we shall no longer follow this author, for he seems not only to contradict himself, but also to throw overboard everything worthwhile in the concept" (:162).

[4] Dumont had published a preliminary version in *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, vol. IX, 1966.

Dumont keeps the discussion within the limits of the field to show how the notion of "community" has held a mythical function in Indian studies from the last century to the present. He mentions Marx, Maine, and the contemporary anthropologists, Srinivas included. Allowing for the fact that the division of labor favors an almost perfect economic self-sufficiency to the villages, Dumont nevertheless insists that the idealization of a generic self-sufficiency begins "when the dependence on the State is forgotten, and the village considered a 'republic' in *all* aspects" (Dumont, 1970: 119). Dumont distinguishes three meanings for the expression "village community" dating from the beginning of the 19th century on: in first phase, the village community was primarily a political society; in the second, a body of co-owners of the land; finally, in the third, it became the emblem of traditional economy and polity, a watchword of Indian patriotism (1970: 112). In all three cases, caste is ignored or diminished in its importance, since the dominant ideology was based on the fact that a "community" was an egalitarian group.

As ethnographic evidence, Dumont brings the results of Adrian Mayer's research, which points to the exogamic nature of the villages: while intra-village relations are mainly inter-caste relations, intra-caste (or sub-caste) relations are mainly extra-village ones (Mayer, 1970: 120). Dumont's main interest, however, is to question the genesis of the idea of "community".

He thus asks what would have led Marx, and especially Maine, to assert the self-sufficiency of the Indian village. What, his question is, is it that prevented Maine from seeing that to understand the constitution of the Indian village, it had to be put in relation to caste on the one hand, and to political power or traditional kingship on the other?

Dumont argues that Marx and Maine are poles apart in many respects, and if Marx was more sensitive to the social context, we owe to Maine the great contribution of having established the difference between status and contract. However, both conceived the "village community" as a survival of what Maine called "the infancy of society" (1970: 124). To Maine, the Indian village community was the "great repository of verifiable phenomena of ancient usage and ancient juridical thought". Always by analogy to the West, Maine's major preoccupation was with the Indo-European village community.

Dumont implies that actually Maine never arrived at the implicit assumptions which are part and parcel of the idea of "village community" in India because he never looked at it in itself. The unilineal scheme of evolution so dear to the Victorians, Dumont argues, led Maine to treat inequality as a secondary and historical development, as a matter of fact not belonging to the community itself. From this point of view, Maine's failure is due "to the incapacity to relinquish a substantialist point of view in favour of a relational view: the village in its context of caste and power" (1970: 129).

Srinivas's answer comes in 1975. He now accepts the mythical nature of the village, but tries to assert its ethnographical reality all the same. He initially summarizes the same material which Dumont had presented before, recognizing that the Indian village had been an object of discussion of British administrators of the 19th century, of scholars of different fields, and of Indian nationalists. He shows how the administrators' reports, as much as the ideas of Marx and Maine, influenced the nationalists: while Marx and Maine saw in 19th century India the past European society, Gandhi, on the other side, was a strong advocate of the village against the State and the big city. But Srinivas denies that sociologists and social anthropologists who have conducted fieldwork in villages after Independence have overlooked the existence of caste and other inequalities. In fact, Srinivas argues, "there is a feeling among (…) [our] colleagues in economics, political science, and history that (…) [we] have paid too much attention to caste" (Srinivas, 1975: 50). In this context, Dumont's accusation cannot but be surprising.

Srinivas discusses the issues of village autonomy and self-sufficiency in detail. He looks at pre-British India and shows how geographical and technological conditions favoured a certain degree of autonomy. But even at that time the payment of a substantial portion of a village's product to the king stood as a symbol of the village's dependency. Contrary to what Dumont asserts, then, not even economic self-sufficiency was ever to be found. Furthermore, weekly markets and pilgrimages were and are a feature of rural India everywhere and represent a traditional institution. "They dramatize the economic interdependence of villages and provide conclusive refutation of the idea of economic self-sufficiency" (1975: 61). The same holds true for the religious and social spheres (:63).

British rule brought changes, and one of them, Srinivas yields, can be found in the increase of horizontal solidarity of individual castes and the facilitation of their release from the local multi-caste matrix (:69). This situation contrasts with pre-British India, when both technological and political factors imposed limitations on the horizontal stretch of castes, while castewise division of labour favoured the cooperation of household from different castes (:68). Srinivas continues: "The relative scarcity of labour and the institutionalization of the master-servant relationship resulted in forging enduring bonds between households of landowners and landless labourers, hailing from different castes" (:68).

On the basis of these historical facts, Srinivas launches his point: Dumont does not accept that different groups living in small face-to-face communities can share common interests which hold them together: "The basic assumption seems to be that when inequalities assume the form of caste they make community impossible" (:64). Thus, Dumont can be charged for sticking to a definition of community which, as for Marx and Maine before, has Europe as a model, a perspective which does not allow the emergence of an appropriate definition of community.

Fieldwork reinforces these viewpoints. Srinivas shows how, in Rampura, the leaders of the dominant caste felt they had to work for the village as a whole and not for advancing their personal interests (whether this ideal was respected or not, is a different issue). Srinivas also quotes the same passage which Dumont had used from Adrian Mayer's book, which shows how "it is that a village containing twenty-seven different caste groups, each with its barrier of endogamy and often occupational and commensal restrictions, can nevertheless exist to some extent as a unit" (Mayer, 1960:146, cit. in Srinivas, 1975: 71, and Dumont 1970: 120). If the quotation is the same, the purpose here is to affirm the existence of caste *and* of village unity.

Srinivas's final argument is that it is possible for villages to function as units despite the various cleavages within them "because everyone, irrespective of his caste and other affiliations, has a sense of belonging to a local community which has certain common interests overriding caste, kin, and factional alignments" (:71). Srinivas again concedes that it is possible that loyalty to a village was greater in the past than it is in the present, and that future developments may weaken it further. The important fact, however, is

that they are there. With the authority of someone who has seen it, Srinivas calls attention to the complex system of loyalties, in the same line of argumentation followed by Dumont before: in an inter-caste context, identification tends to follow castes lines and this is often reinforced by castewise division of labour. In an intra-caste situation, on the other hand, affiliation follows village lines. And concludes: "Given such a frame-work of acceptance of hierarchy, it ought not to be difficult to conceive of communities which are non-egalitarian, their people playing interdependent roles and all of them having a common interest in survival" (:83). And he concludes: "The [idea] that only 'egalitarian' societies can have local communities has to be proved, and cannot be the starting-point for the evaluation of hierarchical societies. Nor can an implicit assumption that 'egalitarian' communities do not have significant differences in property, income, and status be accepted as a 'sociological reality" (Srinivas, 1975: 84).

Some comments

One of the interesting aspects to observe in this debate is that the arguments do not seem to contradict each other. It is not difficult to recognize the same historical and ethnographical evidence to support opposed conclusions. Both quote the same passages of Adrian Mayer's book; agree on the question of the interdependence of villages; accept Marx's and Maine's influence on Indian intellectual thought, and agree that Gandhi's thinking reinforced the concern with villages. The difference, however, remains: for one, the "sociological reality" of India rests on the villages; for the other, on caste.

What conclusions are to be reached from this debate? In what sense a twenty-year dialogue between an Indian and a French anthropologist sheds any light on anthropological endeavour in general and, in particular, on the development of the discipline in the two contexts of origin? Is it in any way relevant to notice that the Indian anthropologist was educated in England while the French anthropologist did fieldwork in India?[5]

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[5] Srinivas continued to write on the subject well after the 70's (see Srinivas, 1978b, and more recent articles mentioned in Appaduarai, 1986). However, for the purpose of our discussion, the two moments we have considered are sufficient.

The first point to observe relates to the difficulties we find in academic dialogues: the development of anthropology in India has implied over decades a profound relationship with European anthropologists, as mentors or as contenders. From a perspective very different from ours in Brazil — who hardly recognize internal lineages — the new generation of Indian anthropologists after Srinivas (T. N. Madan, Veena Das, Satih Saberwal, among others) cautiously criticises Dumont and Srinivas, but learn from both.

It is an open question whether this attitude is a result of the colonial experience, plus a certain "orientalism". The fact is that Indian anthropologists learned to read Durkheim via Radcliffe-Brown, Mauss via Evans-Pritchard, and only recently started to read the French by themselves. It is thus interesting to observe that rarely an Indian anthropologist will consider himself to be Dumont's follower, even when his work points to Dumont as a source of inspiration. The search for an identity seems a stronger trait for the Indian social scientist than in the Brazilian case, possibly because direct colonization left deeper scars.

On his own side, Dumont reacts in emotional ways to the criticism, sometimes severe, which Indian anthropologists or social philosophers direct to him. His reactions seem dominated by resentment, bitterness or irritation. One of these situations occurred when A. K. Saran implied that Dumont could not grasp India in its complexity due to the latter's implicit "positivism". Dumont seemed offended: he answered that being Hinduism, as a religion, or as a philosophy, "as all embracing in its own way as any sociological theory may be" (Dumont, 1970: 160), perhaps it would be better "not to disturb Dr. Saran", who would want to be left alone "in blissful possession of his neo-Hindu creed" (:160). But this is not all. Dumont complains about Prof. Saran's "condescending and somewhat offensive judgements in print" (:159), after an informal meeting in which he "fancied that Dr. Saran had left with somewhat modified notions" (:159).

My question here is whether all these reactions and even the implicit debates, which fill Dumont's pages, are visible to us Brazilians when we read his books. This is an important point, because it seems that frustration has been a major motivation for Dumont whenever he adopts a challenging attitude. It is in this vein that he questions the Indian social scientist on the issue of the impenetrability of cultures in an

unfortunate tone, citing "Hitler's Germany or a certain Japan" as an example of the Western refusal to communicate. "Cultures not only *can* be made to communicate, they *must*", he says (Dumont, 1970: 161).

It seems that it is this same motivation which leads him to put so much emphasis on the nature of sociology as a "universal language." As a universal language, it may become a means for communication as long as the community of anthropologists adheres to the contemporary formulation of Marcel Mauss's propositions — which are Dumont's, naturally. (The use of the term "community", in the context of our previous discussion, gains an additional meaning).

Very explicitly, Dumont warns Indian sociologists that the idea of "Hindu sociology" is a contradiction in terms (1970: 153), and he mentions his disappointment with the professionals of anthropology, "especially the small group of anthropologists working in India". And adds: "I have suffered under the paradoxical situation that my work, when it was felt to be original and challenging, was interpreted to be 'personal', or personally oriented, while in actual fact it was essentially oriented to be assumed by the community of researchers to a degree that made it anachronistic in our very individual-oriented world" (Galey 1982: 19).

And Srinivas? Amazingly, Srinivas does not fall behind Dumont and also poses as a victim. Despite being considered the "father" of modern Indian anthropology, and despite the attitude with which he confronted Louis Dumont, it is the same Srinivas who, seeing his book *The remembered village* criticized, abandons the level of a theoretical dialogue and hides himself behind the image of the third-world anthropologist.[6] Having dedicated a great part of his life establishing programs of anthropology and much of his times in academic committees, he apologizes: "I am by no means a systematic thinker, let alone a system-builder. All my formulations are *ad hoc* and tentative, and to be abandoned when more satisfactory formulations are available, or the appearance of new data renders them useless" (Srinivas, 1978a: 131). His style of work is also mentioned: "My mode of working is far more cumbersome and

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[6] In 1978 an especial issue of *Contributions* was dedicated to Srinivas's *The remembered village.* Three years later, it was Dumont's time: volume 15 (1981) puts together several papers dedicated to Louis Dumont. This volume became a separate publication. See Madan, 1982.

untidy, and terribly time-consuming. I do at least four or five drafts of every piece I publish, and only a part of this is due to English being an alien language to me. I am a slow reader and my absorption of facts is even slower" (:131).

Personal and cultural dimensions are clearly presented here. The enormous difficulty to carry on an academic dialogue is exemplified in this debate, but it is as if other dimensions sneaked into it and prevented the dialogue from remaining at a theoretical level. At the same time that we find Dumont criticizing the idea of a native sociology in India, we see Srinivas protecting himself — when the situation becomes too threatening — in the role of the third-world scholar, impaired for not having the same work conditions as his European colleagues.

These observations lead us to a second and final point related to the cultural values we have just mentioned. I propose that one must discern in their intellectual projects the ideological "totality" each one intended to help build. We may even include Marx and Maine in our discussion, as our two contenders interpreted them.

Let us start by these. Marx and Maine saw the Indian villages as "the infancy of society", from an evolutionist and Victorian perspective. From this point of view, the Indian village represented the counterpart to Teutonic and Slavonic institutions, the repository of verifiable phenomena of ancient *European* juridical thought. The main ideal was that the village corresponded to an independent institution, and was seen by the two as out of context. We may thus say that the implicit project for Marx and Maine was the building of an idea of "society", through the reconstruction of the different stages by which this phenomenon developed.[7]

Almost a century later, Srinivas revived the preoccupation with villages, transforming them into the object of study which would substitute tribal groups in Indian sociological thought. This perspective had an affinity with the predominant ideology at the time of independence (especially that of Gandhian inspiration), with its stress on rural life in villages.

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[7] See Elias, 1978 for the importance of the concept of "society" for 19th century European social thought.

My proposal here is that this substitution of tribes for villages is more significant than the decision to find in villages the "units" of study, as Dumont's criticisms run. If this search for "units" was learned by Srinivas in England, in India it had an "elective affinity" with the dominant national ideology. Since it was inevitable that economists, political scientists and sociologists should study village life, it was only appropriate that anthropologists should take the lead — which, in the end, they never did — since fieldwork would hopefully provide a better knowledge of Indian society and a greater universalization of the social sciences.

For Dumont, the intellectual project was different. Dumont was not worried about India as a nation, but with the kind of *civilization* it represented and the contrast it typified for the West. In this context, his interest was on the caste system, which carries within it different, if not opposed, ideological principles to those of Western civilization. For French intellectuals in general, the idea of nation-building is an absent issue (for themselves) since they believe, rightly or not, that France has been nationally integrated for centuries. Following Mauss's steps, Dumont's problematic with the sociological unity of India — of "India as a whole" (Galey, 1982: 16) — was to be found in Indian civilization and not in India as a nation-state.[8]

What is the final conclusion? Actually, the suggestion that the differences between Dumont's and Srinivas's intellectual projects could only lead their dialogue towards dissension and misunderstanding. In one case, the project was directed to the ideological building of the Indian *nation*; in the other, to Indian *civilization* (as a contrast to the "West"). Would it not then be appropriate to think about different ideological projects informing the development of anthropology in different places and different moments? In some cases, nation-building; in others, "civilization-building". And, if we incorporate Marx and Maine, why not think in "society-building"? This recognition does not lead us necessarily to suggest the existence of different anthropologies, in the plural, but simply and perhaps more appropriately, to conceive different "trends" or "variants" of anthropological knowledge. The debate between Srinivas and Dumont itself points to a recognition of shared principles. I believe it is not

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[8] When Dumont addresses Indian nationalism he has in mind the contrast with Western nationalistic movements. See Dumont, 1970, chapter 5: he is the "sociologist"; not the "citizen".

for another reason that that of an implicit complicity, that anthropologists include Maine (and sometimes Marx) as one of their most respected ancestors.

Maybe we should give credit to and learn from the example of contemporary Indian anthropologists: despite the warning against the danger of simple European mimetisms and against false cosmopolitisms (see, for example, Madan, 1966; Uberoi, 1968), they seem to have succeeded in living with Srinivas's and Dumont's legacy, including their disagreements. Both authors serve to sustain the search for an identity bearing on India's historical traditions, part and parcel of which is an opening to foreign influences.

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Paper n. 2

"Are you catholic?" Travel report, theoretical reflections and ethical perplexities

"India — a hundred Indias — whispered outside beneath the indifferent moon, but for the time India seemed one of their own."

E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*

I

On the plane journey from Rome to Rio, it took my neighbour some time to realize that I too was Brazilian. From his dark suit and waistcoat, I had initially taken him for an Italian, since we were flying Alitalia, and he was equally misled by my untypical Brazilian appearance and the English book I was reading. Once having defined my nationality, he revealed that he was from Itaituba, in São Paulo State in Brazil, and embarked on a series of questions that established the direction which our conversation was to take: "are you single? Married? Have you got any children?" Thus it was merely necessary for me to answer affirmatively to the last question and the course of our conversation was established.

Something similar had occurred two days earlier, on the eve of my departure from New Delhi, except that, on that occasion, the key question had not been related to my marital status, but to my religion: "are you Catholic?"

Different contexts, different cultures. This is what we teach in anthropology, from the very first introductory courses in the discipline. It maybe an anthropological platitude to say that in India all other social dimensions are "encompassed" by religion. (We Brazilian anthropologists, used to reading English and French, have borrowed this verb in preference to our own Portuguese "englobar", perhaps because we find the foreign word more familiar). But certainly, to experience a situation in which this phenomenon was unexpectedly manifest, in its most routine and simple form, was both surprising and fascinating, and suggested moreover that sometimes life imitates theory.

I was having my dinner alone in the hotel restaurant when a young Indian asked if he could share my table. My new-found friend's name was Thomas, after St. Thomas the apostle, who preached Catholicism in the south of India and was murdered in Madras.

This he explained to me, while telling me that he came from Kerala, a State in the south — Kerales means "land of coconuts" — and that he grew orchids which he sold in Delhi. Thomas, who was the son of Joseph, gave me his card and showed me many photographs: of the beautiful orchids, of his relatives, of the boats used to transport the flowers, and of the luxuriant vegetation of Kerala. When I rose to bid him goodbye, disappointment was written all over his face. Thomas wanted to help me pack, and unwilling to accept my refusal to allow him to do so, he waited for me three hours in the hotel lobby. It was midnight and he was once more disappointed when I thanked him but said I would rather go alone to the airport. I remembered him standing with that sad smile, which not only made me feel like a character out of E. M. Forster (an Englishwoman, of course), but also seemed to bring down the curtain of my six-week experience of India, which had included meeting Indian anthropologists, with whom I had tried to learn about the field in the country, an experience I had found necessary to complement my precious readings done at Tozzer Library, Harvard University.

Let me begin with Thomas. In trying to make sense of this episode, I find myself dealing with several different aspects. First, the fascination with which many Indians regard the West, of which I was symbol and representative. Second, the taste for learning which I could perceive in Thomas, with his detailed history of the peregrinations of St. Thomas, his laborious statistics about the percentage of the population that is Catholic in different parts of the country, third, his extreme consideration and politeness in his relations with me — India made me aware of a degree of social rudeness in myself of which I had hitherto not known. And lastly, the importance of "religion" as a daily definer of social identities. It is important to stress that Thomas was unaware that Brazil is officially a Catholic country — I rather think that he merely supposed that there was probably a Catholic community in Brazil, as there is in India, or perhaps he simply applied the Catholic/Protestant formula to Westerners in general and was pleasantly surprised when he learned something of our statistics, especially the pride some Brazilians share of being part of the largest Catholic country in the world. In an India dominated by Hindus and Muslims, the name Thomas already identified its bearer as a Catholic, as did his father's name, Joseph.

At the risk of making an over-hasty judgement which may offend the sensibilities of Indian anthropologists and reveal again my own now acknowledged impoliteness, I venture to draw attention to characteristics and similarities which I observed them to

share during my sojourn amongst them. First, the same attraction for the West, be it in a negative or positive form, as exemplified by the willingness of eminent Indian sociologists to come to New Delhi from different parts of the country to participate in a conference organized by the Max Mueller Bhavan, at which 32 Indians met to discuss the works of Marx and Weber with 5 German scholars, an Italian and a Japanese. Second, the detail and depth of Indian sociologists' erudition when it came to European classical authors — examples that I witnesses in the debates between Indian and Europeans scholars at the same conference, where the meticulousness of the latter was challenged by the erudition plus creativity of the former. Third, the politeness and sophisticated manners of Indian sociologists who are likely to invite a foreigner into their home as they are to open up the University on a holiday just to informally exchange ideas.

This same politeness, which can be detected in the tone of voice of both men and women, and is found in their presence and posture (and which Ashis Nandy would call the feminine component of Hindu self), is especially noticeable in the rhetorical nuances with which debates are conducted.

And lastly, "religion," the dimension of social life most apparent to the secularized foreigner. At this point, however, to speak of religion as a determining factor in the complex ethos of Indian academics is probably an over generalization of this concept. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to speak of a style or an ethos. It is this ethos which, to give an example, may explain why Indian sociologists — the majority of whom I think are Brahmans — live in a very simple manner (compared to Brazil), but send their children to be educated at Chicago and Harvard (which we do not do). I believe that the asceticism of academic daily life in India is a result not simply of the poverty of the country, but of values which are different to those we are accustomed in Brazil (among then, saving for children's educations and marriage — dowry — in particular).

It is this same "ethic" that can explain why a sociologist, well known for his independent views and whose lectures are considered to be real performances, finds it necessary, after one of these representations, to privately express doubts about his lecture, pleading to have been nervous and insecure. The academic "ethic" in India – an extension, perhaps, of the Brahman ethic and thus as such "religious" — does not

encourage anyone to boast about their achievements. It does, at the same time however, assume that right or correct opinions should be defended, not just firmly, but with conviction ― but with courtesy and good manners, as Thomas would.

Ashis Nandy suggests that all interpretations of India are basically autobiographical. As a Brazilian anthropologist I am thus aware of the abuse I might be committing in using Thomas and Indian sociologists as human metaphors for the society in which they live. In this sociological abuse, however, I am in line with Clifford Geertz of *Islam observed*, remembering that the beginning of the so called "field experience" and the nature of ethnographical material are inherently arbitrary by definition. Unlike the couch, the arm-chair and the fifty minutes of the pshycoanalithyc encounter, fieldwork depends on the potential for unfamiliarity generated by the meeting of the ethnographer and his subject of interest. I do however recognize the simplistic nature of the views presented in these opening observations and I offer them solely as a means of introducing an India that is at the same time pluralistic, unequal, and complex.

In the following argument, I adopt an attitude which I learned from Ashis Nandy about the distinction Hindus make between reality and truth. For a Hindu, truth is irrefutable. Reality, however, is all that which, as one translates, results from a fidelity to one's inner self and, when expressed, is loyal to one's inner voice. This should explain why the travelogue I present is incomplete and fragmented, as my purpose is to speak of an intellectual ethos which I at first found different, but which I learned to admire: the theoretical reflections which I present do not extend further because I wish to limit myself to that which was brought to life by my experience of India; the ethical perplexities are not based on philosophical considerations in the classical sense, but result from my having been transported to a different culture. They thus reflect a comparison between my academic experience in Brazil and observations made while I was in India. Lastly, the choice of J. P. S. Uberoi and Ashis Nandy for especial attention, from among so many social scientists I was privileged to meet, can be explained by my fascination with a singularity which is not a privilege of the "other" but which is part of us. This Indian style "reality" guided me in putting this paper together.

II

E. M. Foster's view of a hundred Indias beneath the indifferent moon can perhaps also be applied to social scientists. Up until my trip I knew two classical anthropological interpretations of India: that of Louis Dumont and that of M. N. Srinivas.

Dumont's India is more like a civilization. The most prominent morphological aspect of this civilization is that it is a society of castes. The structural principles of the pure and the impure govern the society that makes up the civilization of India by means of the system of castes. As the degree of purity defines status, power is hierarchically inferior to status. Thus, according to Dumont, the holistic ideology of India presumes hierarchic inequality of the parts in relation to the whole. This is in direct contrast to the individualistic ideology wherein every individual is an incarnation of all humanity, and as such is free and equal to any other individual. This latter ideology, so common in Western countries and especially in the United States, gave rise to the observation that Dumont was "a Tocqueville in India". It is Dumont's use of comparison with the West which allows him to make India universally accessible, in the manner of Evans-Pritchard. For Evans-Pritchard, this procedure indicates that it is possible to translate the language, the concepts and the values which the ethnographer learns during his field research, when upon his return he (re)lives the experience by undergoing the critical and interpretative process of writing up his ethnography. The example of India teaches us that hierarchy is a universal need, Dumont says, and if it is not recognized, it can lead to unexpected manifestations of such social pathologies as racism and totalitarianism.

Unlike Dumont's propose, Srinivas's study of India was not necessarily intended to lead to universal understanding of sociological or anthropological concepts. Srinivas's India is a society made up of villages, in which we can get a general view of Indian rural life, including the caste system. For some, Srinivas's India is less ideological, less preoccupied with the idea of "civilization" and more with "society". It is in the villages, Srinivas argues, that one can perceive how the castes in a determined area form a hierarchy. It is in the villages that reforms drawn up by the government's economists and those charged with planning for a modern India can be challenged, and it is in the villages that sociology and anthropology can be combined in a single discipline which would, both in theory and in practice, lead to an anthropology that is not exclusively devoted to the study of tribal groups or the exotic.

These two images of India could not be reconciled during the 20 years (1950 – 1970) in which Dumont and Srinivas debated the "true sociological reality" of India: whether in castes or in villages. I believe that this is, in part, because their respective intellectual projects were substantially different. While Dumont was concerned with the kind of civilization which could help explain the West, Srinivas wanted to know what kind of society India would became after independence.

During the process of reading and sorting out the opposing positions of Dumont (whose work is required reading for a Brazilian anthropologist) and Srinivas, I confess to have developed an especial affection ─ due to what psychoanalysts call "projection" ─ for this Indian Brahman, who experienced the life of an outcast while in England. I followed his tribulations from his first ill-fated interview with Radcliffe-Brown, his clothes crumpled from the long sea journey, and unable to see much because his glasses were broken, to Evans-Pritchard's invitation to take up the first lectureship in Indian sociology at Oxford, in 1952. I became still more identified when I knew of his decision to renounce his post at Oxford to dedicate himself to the recently-created chair of sociology at Baroda, in India, even if that meant committing an academic hara-kiri. But the memory of India was stronger, and the "warmth of India" won.

I arrived in India in September 1987, and very soon I began asking myself what Srinivas or Dumont still meant to social scientists. I particularly remember my first conversation with J. P. Uberoi, who immediately whetted my curiosity. I already knew something of Uberoi's critical attitudes, his rhetorical skill and his position on "science-and-swaraj". I was therefore not surprised to hear him say that Dumont's India did not correspond to his India, since caste and Hinduism are insufficient to account for India. For this Sikh Indian, of course, this view of India must be a sad limited one. But I was more surprised to hear Uberoi say that neither had Srinivas known how to Interpret India, simply because Srinivas was not an Indian: though he had returned *physically* from England, this had not been enough to reconcile him to India. According to what I understood, for Uberoi, Srinivas had apparently remained English in his study of "family, villages, caste". (One should note that in the Sikh religious tradition itself family is greatly emphasized, as caste is in the Hindu. It would then be the case of an "elective affinity" between Indian religious traditions and British scholarship).

I had confronted many criticisms of Srinivas's work: he founded three different programmes in anthropology in India, taught new generations of university students, received foreign researchers, and in due time came to be considered the father of modern anthropology in India, together with the dismissal of the importance of his work. Some of his critics pointed out that he had conducted his fieldwork in his home region, where he enjoyed certain privileges as a Brahman returned form England. But in my readings I had never come upon any doubt about the "Indianness" of Srinivas; this led me to question if Uberoi was not adhering to an idealized concept of "a good Indian".

Anyway, once it became apparent that neither Srinivas nor Dumont had understood India, Uberoi was able to elucidate his own view of India. Uberoi's India is defined by the non-seccionist subnationalities, by the stable and well-defined multilingualism, by the movements for regional identity and the search for some kind of unit within the diversity of Indian culture. Actually, this India was already familiar to me, from the daily bustle of streets, the newspapers, and the railway stations: Uberoi had explicated the India of my first impressions. However, it surprised me that he had never chosen any of these themes as an object for study. He is currently concerned with the West, and finds his themes of interest in Goethe, Plato, Paracelsus (and Zwingli). His most recent book aims to discuss Goethe's ideas as a scientist, and seeks to explain why several aspects of Goethe's thought are not recognized in the West.

To try to understand Uberoi's position became a challenge for me, and this pursuit influenced a great deal the forming of a much more complex view of India that I have today. In the Indian academic world, it is possible to find characters who reminded me of Brazilian colleagues or professors — which may perhaps justify our thinking of an academic community —, but I could envisage a "Brazilian Uberoi". To me he was different: the one who did not turn up for the seminar on Marx and Weber organised by the Max Mueller Bhavan; the English trained Indian who folded his hands and said "au revoir" on parting. How was I to understand this tall, very thin figure, with this Sikh turban? This challenging and charismatic teacher to his students, his discourse ranging from messianic to pessimistic, and his personality at the same time gentle and acutely ironic? "Are you going to talk about development?", he asked me after inviting me to participate in a seminar at the Department of Sociology. For some who says that he does not get angry with those with whom he disagrees — that he merely feels sorry —, and

considering that I personally prefer anger to pity, I could imagine that our discourse might not meet, but held out the promise of the unknown.

I wanted to clarify one more point: I was fairly familiar with the path which had led Uberoi to publish his M. A. thesis, *Politics of the Kula Ring*, in Manchester. This was followed by the controversial article "Science and Swaraj" and the two short books, *Science and culture* and *Goethe as a scientist*. All this seemed to point to the trajectory of an anthropologist in search for his identity as an Indian in the process of reversing the West's monopoly of theoretical explanations. But there was a certain discrepancy in this apparent coherence: in 1974 Uberoi published an article in which he evaluated the progress made by structural sociology from the Second World War on. In this article he included a positive assessment of structuralism, structural-functionalism, and of a certain Marxist view (Louis Dumont was the only author overtly criticized). Where was the *swajarist* Uberoi in this apparent concession to structuralism? I even considered the possibility of the article's having been written by a different Uberoi, since the initials of the first name were not the same. My hypothesis was refuted by T. N. Madan, the editor of *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, who explained that changing initials is not unknown in India and adding initials is a common practice and even a tradition in South India. (Later I remembered that the initial "M" in M. N. Srinivas stands for "Mysore", thee home state for the author).

In brief outline: *Politics of the Kula Ring* was a re-examination of Malinowski's Trobriand material, written under the guidance of Max Gluckman, and published by Manchester University Press in 1962. "Science and Swaraj", published in 1968 in *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, challenged Indian anthropologists to seek self-government in the field of science as well, and thus to oppose the two Dumontian tendencies: one which presented a shallow criticism of the dependence Indian anthropology maintained on Europe and North America, and another that pointed out to the fact that anthropology in India had never made original or significant contribution to the development of international anthropology. Uberoi foresaw that the logical corollary of this latter position would be a vast increase in the number of applications for grants to finance travel expenses for those who wished to attend the latest international conference to learn how to be original. Unless Indians decided to concentrate efforts on learning how to nationalise the problems, and to account for the extreme poverty of the country, they would continue to be colonized and deprived of their originality.

Science and culture came out in 1978; *The other mind of Europe: Goethe as scientist* in 1984, both published by Oxford University Press. The former work challenges the West on two points: its monopoly on theory and the authority and exclusivity with which it explains itself. In this context, the non-Western world would have lost the battle for theory before firing a shot. To conduct empirical research in India and thus accept that methods and theories could be imported obviously was no solution: neither did it help to adopt a passive attitude of constantly regretting that borrowed concepts were no good. In the latter work, Uberoi decides to break the monopoly of theoretical explanations held by the West that he had denounced earlier: he seeks in Goethe the scientist with a worldview consciously at variance with the philosophy of Newton, Bacon, or Locke, and he speculates on why Goethe's prestige in the West has been confined solely to the literary aspects of his work.

Within the context of this apparent linear coherence, the article in defence of structuralism seemed incongruent, if not contradictory. How could he defend and assimilate a theory that was so clearly of Western origin, while at the same time postulating a *swaraj* attitude which, at its extreme, even advocates an exchange of roles between Indians and Westerners?

Initially, the answer appeared to be simple: as Uberoi had himself told me, he is a Sikh follower of Gandhi. I did not, however, feel competent to draw conclusions from this statement. I remembered V. S. Naipaul's warning that, in India, everyone is a discipline of Gandhi, but since each person has a different idea of what Gandhism is, it does not mean much. I also remembered that Dumont had stressed that Gandhi's objective had not been just to lead India to independence, but also to save Hinduism. For his part, Ashis Nandy had shown that, to Gandhi, Hinduism was a way of life and an open system of universal ethics with an inherent capacity to incorporate new ideas. Gandhi wanted to organise the Hindus as part of a wider political community, and not as a religious group (and that is one explanation of why he was murdered by an orthodox Hindu).

In this way, and after a long conversation, I was able to perceive that Uberoi defines himself as a follower of Gandhi by virtue of certain characteristics. According to Uberoi, to be Gandhian means to opt for a political philosophical position in contrast to Marxism, liberalism and traditionalism. The first two, which are present in Indian

academic circles, are opposed to imperialism and capitalism, but support democracy and believe in science; the last current is inimical to everything that comes from the West. As a Gandhian, Uberoi subscribes to a universal ethical system, and believes himself to be a Christian. From this perspective, he wishes to show the West that the West is unable to understand its own reality. As a Gandhian, Uberoi longs to help to save the West from the errors of its ways and thus to save India from the West. That his last book made little impression on Europe is of little importance, he says: actually, given the power structure within the academic world, it would have been surprising if it had. Yet he carries out his task just the same, believing that in some small measure he can contribute to the proposition of eventual harmony; he does his part, "and God, mankind or nature will do the rest".

Uberoi's Gandhian, and thus Christian, and universalist thinking led him to become interested in the cognitive and intellectual aspects of human beings. Like so many others, he had initially gone to England in order to pursue studies in the area of technology. Today he says: "I had lost myself to seek science in the modern world". To become a scientist, and at the same time to retain his moral integrity, he recognises that he instinctively developed a dual attitude: to work with complete faith in methods of scientific learning while at the same time assuming a position of "uneasy scepticism" with regard to the applications of this kind of knowledge. After graduating in telecommunications, he chose to enter the social sciences, which was to some extent a return to the tradition in which he had been brought up in Lahore, in which literature, the arts and religion flourished.

Thus I realized that the key to understanding Uberoi's career was to be found in that nebulous are which I have referred to earlier, that which we call "religion", though we could just call it ethnics or philosophy. In other words, it is because Uberoi is a Gandhian Sikh that we can understand his option for the analysis of the universal dimensions of human knowledge. It is in this context that Uberoi eschews the idea of a neutral social science that destroys values, but accepts the affinity which structuralism has with grammar and philology, which are supreme among the sciences in India. I presume that, for Uberoi, the principles of structuralism can serve as a possible channel for scientific communication between India and the West. By concentrating on the cognitive and intellectual aspects of mankind, and by using linguistics — either in its Western manifestations as structuralism or in its Indian manner as grammar — the

barriers can be overcome and thus a modified universalism can be achieved. In fact, Uberoi emphasises that the great Sanskrit grammarian, Panini (who lived early in the Christian era), was a structuralist, which points to the fact that structuralism after all is not a Western discovery. It was precisely because Weber remained a prisoner of the Western view of the world that, despite his existential anxiety, he did not manage to develop a theory of power that included man's mental power of himself. His model of power was based in the physical sciences. (Would that be the reason why Uberoi did not appear at the seminar on Weberian thought?)

III

The mystery of Uberoi was thus partially solved and two important aspects of his thinking were shown to be new to me. First, he indicated the possibility of an anthropology qualified in terms of "religion", something which, to my secularist views, would have been inconceivable or even contradictory. Uberoi had shown me, however, how his "religious" view of the world enriched his anthropological work and guided it. I remembered, at this point, the difficulties that Indian social scientists face when they try to conceive of a secularism that does not threaten their religious principles, the anthropological articles which discuss the "quest of Hinduism," and the historical and contemporary accounts of the relations between politics and religion in Asian countries. Uberoi was not an isolated phenomenon. The second intriguing aspect, which my meeting with Uberoi made me aware of, was with regard to the enormous ethical problems that are generated by the encounter of Indians and the West, especially when universalism is held to be the ideological horizon. Uberoi's book on Goethe, for example, does not sell in the West because, as Uberoi knows and says, the reward abroad is for those who sell India. If his book were well received, and if due recognition were paid, this would be an acknowledgment that he, Uberoi, was a better European than the European themselves. Thus my contact with Uberoi made me realise that adopting a *swarajist* attitude could lead to a kind of universalism which escaped the bounds of scientific cosmology, reaching the existential level, and even explaining the combination of the traditional gesture with the French expression "au revoir".

> To me, God is Truth and Love: God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness.
>
> M. Gandhi

Uberoi's India is, in fact, one more interpretation among others. As I had expected, I found the image of an India of castes and villages out of date. "Religion", or more specifically Hinduism, had regained space since the publication of a book by Veena Das in 1977. One should not forget that Hinduism/religion was already a tradition in sociological studies in India, as exemplified by M. N. Srinivas's classic monograph *Religion and society among the Coorgs of south India*, dated form 1952. Actually, Das studied under Srinivas, but also influenced by Dumont, she was able to demonstrate the advantages of being an insider by analysing Hindu theories on castes and rituals with the use of classical texts. At the time of my visit, another book on religion was being published: by anthropologist T. N. Madan, more specifically on the theme of non-renunciation in Hindu culture. Madan discusses the values of domesticity and non-attachment; the difference between purity and auspiciousness; the dialectic between aestheticism and eroticism, and the themes of life and death. Based on field research carried out among the *pandits* of Kashmir and on contemporary literature, Madan implicitly addresses Dumont, affirming non-renunciation as a value: Dumont, we remember, regarded renunciation as the universal language of India, and the renouncer as the equivalent to the individual in the West. I also found that while Uberoi chose to study the West, other anthropologists, such as Surendra Munshi, chose the Weberian part or, like Sudipta Kaviraj, adopted a somehow Marxist perspective. In all cases, however, I observed that the very "identity" of Indian anthropology bore the mark of a dialogue with the West: whether in the affirmation of Hindu values, or in the rejection or acceptance of Dumont, whether in the reversal of the habitual roles of "us" and "others", or in the questioning of the situation of oppression between the two civilizations. In all these versions I detected an ethical feeling and a *problematique* which we could understand as political-religious from a universe built on a dialogue with the oppressor.

None of this is surprising, given that India was under colonial domination such a short time ago. But it was from observing the paths taken by Indian anthropologists that I became aware of how colonialism affected the building of individual identities, and became interested in finding out what Indians themselves have to say on this subject. Ashis Nandy, a combination of social scientist, psychologist and historian, offers one of the most original suggestions, putting forward the idea of an "intimate enemy" which Indians incorporate, with whom they co-exist, and which furnishes them with an

alternative view of the Western universalism. (It is interesting to note that Uberoi considers that both he and Nandy are developing "a Gandhian critique of Western civilization" but, while Uberoi chooses the intellectual path Nandy opts for the affective, and while Nandy is an optimist, Uberoi "is not so sure").

The story of the conquest of Mexico is used by Ashis Nandy as a metaphor: herded together as sorcerers by the Spanish conquerors, a group of Aztecs priests decided that they would rather die when a Christian sermon announced that their gods were dead. Nandy suggests that this story could end in a different way had the priests been Brahmans: they would apparently embrace Christianity at once, but after a while the new faith would begin to show signs of a new variant of Hinduism. Under the principle of the way of life under perilous conditions, and under the principle of oneness of every being, they would have felt justified to protect one's sanity and ensure survival. Blind, straight courage is all right for individual piety and immortality, Ashis Nandy find in the Hindu Puranas, but they are not all right for ensuring collective survival.

From the Western viewpoint, the Aztec attitude is the response of the brave; the hypothetical reaction of the Brahman priests, the response of cowards, who upset the Westerners for their dubious masculinity. But Nandy reminds us that after their last act of courage the Aztec priests die and leave the stage free for those who kill them; as for the unheroic Indian response, it opens the possibility for an opportune return.

Ashis Nandy's is the view of an insider. Others do not feel so comfortable: V. S. Naipaul, for one, feels that by rewarding those who retreat and abstain from action, Hindu philosophy diminishes men intellectually, leaving them incapable of responding to anything which might constitute a challenge. Hinduism curtails the growth of Indians. Thus vulnerability, defeat, and retreat are constant and repeated events in the history of India.

In Naipaul we find the lament of a Hindu from Trinidad and all the ambivalence of one who failed to find his ideal India, a heroic India of millennial civilization. In contrast to this, Ashis Nandy sees the characteristics that the West despises in the Indian, including his alleged weak grasp on reality, his weak ego, his vague presence in social situations as being part of the rationale of a civilization which has faced the problem of survival for generations. Instead of deploring contemporary India, as Naipaul does, Ashis Nandy

presents an India that has weaknesses, but weaknesses which are not derived from submission to authority, but rather from a certain talent for and faith in life.

In his non-heroic ordinariness, Ashis Nandy comments, the Indian is the archetypal survivor. Defeat is a disaster and so are the imposed ways of the victor. But worse is the loss of one's "soul" and the internalization of one's victory, because it forces one to fight the victor according to the victor's values, within his model of dissent. It is thus better to be a comic rebel than a serious and powerful opponent; better to be known as a hated enemy declared unworthy of respect than as a proper opponent who has to make adjustments all the time. From the Hindu point of view it is better at times to be dead in somebody else's eyes, so as to be alive for one's own self.

Ashis Nandy's argument helps to clear up many points, such as the relationship between Uberoi's quest for *swaraj* and its combination with a universalist view. In other words, a dialogue with the West is always present, be it in Uberoi's one sided style, or in the intimate-enemy fashion of Nandy. In this context it is possible to ask whether Indian social scientists are really talking to the West at all, or whether they are to some extent inventing a new West to address in their universalist quest, in the same way that Europe formerly invented "orientalism". The one thing we can be sure of is that a new concept of universalism is being cast.

Indian universalism differs from Western universalism in that it seeks to capture the difference between the two civilizations within its own cultural domain; it does not simply regard the West as its double, nor does it simply regard the West as being politically interfering, but views Westernized India as a local sub-tradition, the result of having "digested" another civilization. Thus, while for the European India is the different "other" part of a duality — which does not necessarily affect his own view of every day life —, the Indian includes the West. Ashis Nandy thus explains why Rudyard Kipling, when he opted to define himself as a Westerner, could not be a Westerner and an Indian at the same time. The everyday Indian, however, even when he remains only Indian, is both Indian and Western. (Marguerite Yourcenar points to similar views in relation to Japanese literature). This was my experience with Thomas, the young orchid grower, and this attitude also seems to inform Uberoi's decision when he chose to make Goethe the subject of his study. Being more faithful to Europe and

truthfully a Christian, Uberoi represents the other West, precisely because he intends to be a real Indian.

IV

> To this day the political sphere in actual Indian life appears as one of several boughs carefully grafted on to a huge Indian tree.
>
> Louis Dumont, "Nationalism and Communalism"

At this point one can see that, in comparison to India, the concept of universalism in Brazilian intellectual circles is poor. If during the modernist movement of the 30's we could approach the European view through the idea of a "concert of nations", throughout most of our intellectual history what has predominated has been an impoverished copy of European universalism. As Antonio Candido puts it, for us "Europe is already the universal". We copy Europe, or more specifically France, until some decades ago, and thus make that which is singular in another land our universal model. We see ourselves as a child of Europe. On the other hand, we have this ideal of a social wholeness, of a nation-state always in the making. Our political thinkers, journalists, and novelists, both liberal and authoritarian, have put forward different models of the state, and even the social scientists of the past few decades, despite all their contestatory attitude, have not been able to avoid adherence to one or another model of a nation for the future.

Compared to Brazil, India seems to occupy an opposite position: powerful in its cosmopolitism, it runs up against great difficulties in the process of creating a national identity, in this century of nationalities. When Dr. Aziz, doublé of E. M. Foster, foresaw in 1924 the day when India would become independent — "India a nation! What an apotheosis! Last comer to the drab nineteenth century sisterhood!" —, he made no secret that he viewed India as a civilization, and with a certain perplexity he added: "She, whose only peer was the Holy Roman Empire, she shall rank with Belgium and Guatemala perhaps!"

India's transformation into a nation-state has not been an entirely painless process. The impression that an outsider gets is that it is a civilization that simply will not fit into one nation. The predominant view among the social scientists with whom I spoke was that

nationhood was yet another unfortunate vestige of British colonialism. The formula: one people, one language, one religion, one territory, and thus one nation does not apply to India. Usually religion and linguistic diversity head the list of difficulties. Whether religion is a symbol or instrument to rally political or economic grievances is not important; the fact is that religion (or language) is used for secular purposes and reinforces a kind of ethnic diversity in which accommodation rather than integration should serve as the path to national unity.

This is T. N. Madan's view and can be compared to other points of view which seek to explain the same difficulty. For Ashis Nandy, for example, the sense of community or history which comes from an overlap between religion and nationhood has never been an important constituent of Indian selfhood. Actually, India has mostly rejected the national self-consciousness which the modern West has tried to impose on it. For Nandy, the alternative to Hindu nationalism has been the peculiar mix of classical and folk Hinduism by which most Indians, Hindus as well as non-Hindus, live. Naipaul, on the other hand, who sees nationality as a positive value, condemns Hinduism for its lack of ideas on which to base a concept of the state, and accuses it of failing to provide an elementary basis for contract between men. He observes bitterly that politicians speak of "emotional integration" without even developing a concept of "the people". As for the Gandhian view of the world, there is a jump from Gram-Raj (control by the village) directly to Ram-Raj (the kingdom of God), without leaving space for the idea of India as a whole.

Opposite to Naipaul's emotional viewpoint, Louis Dumont presents as interesting sociological argument. If the nation, defined within the modern framework of political ideas, is a group of people united in accordance with their own will and having certain attributes in common (territory, history, and others are optional), then a nation is not built on the common religion of a group of people. In modern society, the sphere of religion has been restricted in such a way that, for one, political organisation falls outside it, is autonomous: this is one aspect which opposes the modern nation to most comparable political entities of the past, Hindu, Islamic, or other. In India, however, one finds a predominance of religious communities which stand in opposition to each other in the phenomenon generally known as communalism. Communalism differs from nationalism in the role that religion plays; however, the religious element that enters into its composition seem to be "but the shadow of religion", i.e., a sign of the

distinction of one political group against others. It is to this aspect which I believe Madan is referring to when he says that religion is used for political or economic purposes.

> Hindus have not been particularly self-conscious about their religion as an isolable aspect of their worldview or of their way of life.

> T.N. Madan, *Non-renunciation*

The role of communalism in this context is ambiguous: on the one hand it appears to be a genuine transitional step towards the building of a nation, while on the other, it seems to be an attempt on the part of religion to counter change, thus allowing no more than the illusion of the modern state to emerge. In India, Hindus and Muslims have co-existed for centuries, but this has not led to any ideological synthesis; or at any rate no synthesis other than their common opposition to foreign invaders. As the Muslim Dr. Aziz puts it to his English friend Fielding at the end of *A passage to India*: "We may hate one another, but we hate you most".

So, on the one hand, universalism incorporates the "enemy", while on the other communalism sentiments maintain exclusivity. A national model that takes into account on the political level the religious differences that India contains is yet not clear. Historically, the creation of Pakistan and currently bloody communal violence bear witness to this. The political sphere appears to be unable to impose itself as an independent power. The question remains then: in a context where politics is simply that branch grafted onto an ancient tree, as Dumont describes it, could it be that religion is the sap that nourishes the tree? If this be the case, is it feasible to create a national model, in the modern sense, if we are speaking of India the hierarchical society par excellence? Or should one hope for an alternative view to the concept of a social whole other than the Western nation?

V

I began this text by giving an account of my encounter with Thomas and, examining the career of J. P. S. Uberoi, I proceeded with my own quest for reality in this travel experience. With the help of Ashis Nandy, this search led me to examine the theme of the building of the Indian self, then the alternative conception of universalism, so as to

finally focus on that non-universal aspect of India: communalism. In my effort to maintain intellectual coherence and at the same time be faithful to an existential quest, I finished with Dumont the sociologist what I had begun with Thomas the cosmopolitan-communalist. Perhaps this is the way anthropologists' minds work: by putting together Thomases and Dumonts, we pretentiously seek to make sense out of both existence and theory. To what degree we succeed remains to be seen.

There is another point that also remains to be seen and which comes up as a subtext. By touching on themes such as the relationship between ethics and religion in the building of the Indian self, by attempting to link these to concepts of civilization, nationality, social wholes, by discussing the path taken by certain social scientists I ended up disclosing certain traits which relate to our Brazilian intellectual world and to problems with which we deal in our daily lives. In the same vein, I tried to point to the fact that our Brazilian experience can shed light on certain aspects of Indian academic life. Let me close by making explicit two topics that resulted from this speculation on the effect of India.

The first of these relates to a hypothesis that I put forward in a previous study on the development of anthropology in Brazil. By observing Brazilian sociology and anthropology, and comparing them to the same disciplines as practised in Germany and France, I considered that the parameters that have defined the ideology of nation-building since the beginning of the nineteenth century have guided, if not determined, the style of social sciences as they are practiced in countries that adopt them as a form of knowledge that can lead to solutions to national problems. It was thus in France, with the "Classe des sciences morales et politiques" of the Institute National, suppressed in 1803 when the danger of a type of critical thought, which was not subservient to the interests of the dominant groups, became apparent. This also occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century in the United States. And also during the 1930's and 40's, when Brazil was immersed in the ideology of modernity, the economically dominant groups began to expect that the social sciences could create a political elite capable of guiding the destinies of the nation. That the first graduating classes from the University of São Paulo saw themselves as sorcerer's apprentices to the liberal politicians reinforces the idea that the development of the social sciences was linked to the ideology of nation-building in Brazil too.

At the time when I wrote that study, I speculated about the Indian situation since, in a different way to Brazil, India does not see itself as part of the West, and wishes to maintain its cultural traditions alive. Indian anthropologists had faced yet another challenge: since the beginning of the 1960's, but specifically in 1978, Louis Dumont, recognized as the major contemporary Western authority on India, published a controversial article in which he denied the possibility of anthropology's developing in contexts where the ideological values which gave rise to its origin in the West were not present. Dumont thus explicitly cast doubt upon the future of anthropology in India, having observed before that a Hindu sociology was a contradiction in terms.

The establishment of the social sciences in India and the government support afforded to sociology in the 1950's, however, corroborates a similar view to that found in Brazil. During the 1950's studies on kinship, family, castes and villages were carried out. In this period post-independent India followed in the footsteps of M. N. Srinivas, and field-research was seen as being the way to respond to development projects of economists which left aside cultural aspects. Among the many questions I took with me to India was how the third or fourth intellectual generation after Srinivas viewed their academic and civic role. The most recent literature in itself did not provide all the answers: Indian anthropology could easily pass just for a modern trend of international anthropology as far as seriousness and competence were concerned. The themes were, quite naturally, local: Hinduism, caste violence, the violence of religious groups, Islamism, the conception of death in different castes. It was however still necessary to understand *swarajist* Uberoi better, and his relationship with Goethe. As Uberoi was not an isolated case, it was not necessary to understand the recent studies carried out by Indian anthropologists in Holland and Denmark, and the studies on Western medicine in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Besides these, India had produced one of the most important debates on the nature of anthropology in the "For a sociology of India" series, which Dumont initiated in 1957, and which is still alive today in the hands of Indian sociologists in the pages of *Contributions to Indian Sociology*.

Once again I discovered that the practice of anthropology does not render anthropologists less defensive as informants. I was invited to participate in a colloquium on sociology at the University of Delhi to discuss the development of anthropology in Brazil. Having presented, with some difficulty, my viewpoints, I perceived that Indian anthropologists did not identify with the problems we face, since they consider

themselves, for reasons already discussed, to be immune to nation-building ideologies — nation-building is a problem imported from the West, responsible for the serious conflicts from which Indian society suffers. National ideologies can be important to the social sciences in other contexts: Brazil and Australia for example, in the same way as they were in nineteenth-century France. I heard the humorous comment advanced that if it were possible to give a truth drug to the English, perhaps they would recognize that imperial ideologies were an important component in defining the discipline. (I also discovered on this occasion that India is as far from Brazil as Brazil is from India. I found myself in the role of an informant of an unknown country, but of which they knew extensively about dependence theory and liberation teology. I discovered that both these themes awakened the interest of Indian sociologists because of the alternative views, be it religious or be it academic, they present to European models).

To give the truth drug to Indian anthropologists however proved to be no easy task. With good humour and finesse, Uberoi closed the seminar when I attempted to bring the discussion around to the Indian situation. Furthermore, my command of English was a handicap while Indian seem to be acutely aware of the power of ambiguity, in which they are aided by their sophisticated and fascinating command of languages, be it English or any of the other various languages in which they can express themselves. Nation-building, in short, is a problem for new countries, and they do not see themselves in this category.

I must admit that their argument did not entirely convince me. My not-so-original assumption is that those same tensions that we observed earlier to exist between universalism and communalism are reproduced in the social sciences. The ideology of nation-building may be present but hidden and its ("residual"?) presence can be detected even in such *sui generis* works as Uberoi's book on Goethe. Does not the underlying universalism of this work originate from a Gandhian perception of the world? Is it not a search for a definition of a universalist India that leads Uberoi to attempt to exorcise the West as "the intimate enemy" and embrace Goethe, even if later he may become disappointed by the fact that he will not be widely read? Is it not for this same reason that Indian anthropologists are so well trained in classical European theory, so that they can seek a solid alternative to problems that have been previously framed for them in Europe and the United States? Could it not also be that the need to assert themselves as competent *Indian* social scientists leads them to devote time and energy to discussing

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Weberian and Marxist theories with Europeans, even knowing perfectly well that their visitors will retain only a temporary impression of what was so creatively and passionately discussed on Indian soil?

It is true that in the ideology of Indian social scientists nation-building does not reveal itself in the way we are used to. The scepticism as to whether it will ever be possible to think in terms of an Indian nation have become so deeply ingrained, that the counterpart to this is the consciousness of a civilization that defines itself in terms of an ethical (or "religious") view of the world. We must not forget, however, the anthropological maxim that the context favours the meaning. Thus a book on Hinduism which might normally be seen by Brazilians and Westerners at large as a study on religion — and, as such, included in the subcategory entitled "anthropology of religion" or "anthropology of representation" — in the communalist context of India this same book may represent an attempt to define "Indianness" too. The marked tendency in the anthropological studies carried out by Indians (and focused on religion) over the last decade seems too point to this possibility. On another level, my attention was drawn to the practice of sociologists of assuming responsibility for protesters against the policy of developing nuclear power, thus "protecting" the physicists from government reprisals. I also noticed the prestige the economists have enjoyed since the time of independence: it is from economics, the hegemonic among the social sciences, that projects are expected which will eliminate poverty and lead India towards modernity. (A revealing joke is the use of the concept of "hypergamy" to describe marriages between sociologists and economists).

And lastly, it is important not to forget that peculiar trait of Indian culture which I mentioned earlier: the distinction between truth and reality. For a Hindu, if reality is the product of a loyalty to his interior self, then Ashis Nandy is justified — as he himself concedes — in speaking of the West as a single political entity, of his tendency to speak of the West as history and Christianity, and of Hinduism as Indianness. Even though none of these is true, all of them are realities. My own supposition that the concern with nation-building is not absent among Indian social scientists can be checked thus: because it does not conform to any former image, and because it deals with an undesirable aspect, it cannot be accepted as reality; but for the same reasons that caused Indians to incorporate the West, the truth of these same concerns cannot be denied.

VI

When compared to India, we Brazilians could be said to have more luck, and at the same less luck, in not having interlocutors of the stature of a Louis Dumont, a Weber, or a Marx. Even Lévi-Strauss, when he chose our country to work in, studied the Xavantes and Bororos, and not the national society. Except for the fascinating testimony of *Tristes Tropiques*, we would know nothing about the impression we left on him.

We are then poor in exoticism, unworthy of considerations as a type of civilization to be contrasted with the West (actually, we believe that we are part of the West), deprived of a dialogue with European centres. In the eyes of the more developed countries, our role has never been that of an "other", or an alternative type of civilization. In truth, we never seem to have got beyond that uninteresting role of "underdeveloped," or perhaps worse, of a country that aspires to development and modernity. (If we cannot attract the attention of Europeans, consequently we do not exist to Indians unless we fight European models ─ which most of the time we prefer not to do).

This situation has two sides: on the one hand, it gives us a certain freedom to develop ideas on our own, in what Otávio Velho called one of the "privileges of underdevelopment". Our problems can thus, in a great measure, be defined by ourselves. This contrasts with the distress of Indian sociologists who complain that most of their intellectual problems have been predefined by the West. To this I should add that we express ourselves and publish our works in Portuguese (that "dead language", as Giannotti calls it), which increases our isolation. We only show ourselves when we publish in English ─ which generally we do not do ─; and this, of course, is not a sure guarantee that a dialogue will be established. We need look no further that the experience of Indian social scientists, and in the context of this paper, the work of J. P. S. Uberoi, who publishes no less than by Oxford University Press. By writing in Portuguese we can, to a certain extent, opt to maintain the discussion within a well-defined academic community.

The other said of the coin is that, deprived of an effective dialogue with the rest of the world (and of the ideological promise of the universality of science), and restricted to a relatively closed community, our vices are apt to proliferate. It is unnecessary to remember that well defined ethic principles are indispensable for the development of a

solid social thought. If sociology was born during the crises of the eighteenth century and was inherited by the following century, its central aim was to seek a solution for the moral crisis of society. Not that a new morality based on mysticism was needed; what thinkers of the time fought for was a positive morality, founded on the belief that knowledge could be based on empirically demonstrated facts.

In Brazil, the moral commitment of the social sciences seem to have taken on a predominantly political overtone, both in the area of sociology (as characterized by dependence theory), and in anthropology (which developed a theory of inter-ethnic contact, the so-called "inter-ethnic friction" theory). These examples show the predominating trend, at least up until the beginning of the 1970's. In India, as we have already seen, the moral commitment seems to be an ethical-religious commitment which includes and combines universalism with communalism (which may be appropriate for alternative models of nation-building).

> This, I suspect, is another way of restating the ancient wisdom — which for some cultures is also an everyday truism — that knowledge without ethics is not so much bad ethics as inferior knowledge.

Ashis Nandy, *The intimate enemy*

What in India is a truism — that an ethical basis is a requirement in the quest for knowledge —, for us is an aspect which we need to be reminded of. My trip to India reawakened my awareness that without some form of ethical or moral purpose we can easily fall back into our old propensity for pursuing ideas for their own sake, or to use them for direct social purposes. Lévi-Strauss was not the only one to draw attention to the tendency among Brazilians to show off their knowledge of ideas and theories as a means of boosting their prestige. Back then in the 1930's he was impressed that, when it came to the latest theoretical proposition form Europe, his students in São Paulo were always better informed than the French professors themselves. (Does this help to explain our preference for the foreign-inspired "encompassar" rather than the insipid Portuguese "englobar"?) Sérgio Buarque has also pointed out that, very often in Brazil, the motivation for the acquisition of knowledge is not simply intellectual yearning, but rather the purpose of reaping the rewards of greater dignity and heightened social status.

In the last decade, amid propositions of global proportions and of a unified planetary mythology, the tendency towards academic consumerism has reached disastrous

dimensions. The article bought from the latest fashion from abroad ignores national traditions in the name of an illusory universalism which, in the political field at any rate, simply does not exist. If in India the consciousness of tradition leads to the danger of conservatism (I was told that it is easier to organise a seminar on the classic Weber or the outdated Redfield than about the fashionable Geertz), in Brazil we skip stages, trying to be more modern than the post-modernists. In this process, we run the risk of, after having exorcised the theory of modernization, having to live with its ideology in our daily academic lives.

A delicate question remains then: in India I was often amazed at the depth and breadth of knowledge displayed by the social scientists when it came to the classic anthropological and sociological literature, and I asked myself if they did not, perhaps, know *too much*. I wondered if the price they paid for quality was not excessively high, since it appeared that it was only possible to be creative after having proven one's competence. In Brazil, the question is different: needing a moral ethic, with political principles in crisis, and with no one to engage us in a dialogue and show us the dimension of our efforts, to what extent are we not in danger of reproducing the same thing over and over again, regardless of new appearances, doing the same (or even less of the same) because incapable of combining the new with the old? For what it was worth, tradition always contains the motivating force of a guide, and provides the guarantee of a certain density. Antonio Candido has been saying this for a long time: only the consciousness of internal lineages can allow that the articles borrowed from abroad may have a meaningful impact.

Perhaps then we could exchange some experiences with India: while we could convince them that there may be possible rewards and sources of freedom which spring from a kind of irresponsibility typical of the new world, from India we could relearn that without an ethical purpose and a traditional morality, knowledge impoverishes, declines, or dies.

NOTES ON SOURCES

I

The quotation form E. M. Foster's *A Passage to India* can be found on page 15 of the 1984, New York, Harvest Book edition. (The original edition dates from 1924.) The conference mentioned was held at the Max Muelle Bhavan, India International Centre, New Delhi, from 8 to 11 October, 1987, under the title "Marx and Weber: classical theory of contemporary society" coordinated by Surendra Munshi, of Calcutta. Wolfang J. Monnsen and Wolfgang Schuluchter, of the Universities of Dusseldorf and Heidelberg respectively, presided at the opening of the four-day seminar.

For ideas on the feminine component of the Hindu self, and the distinction between "reality" and "truth" in Hindu thinking, see Ashis Nandy´s *The Intimate Enemy. Loss and recovery of self under colonialism*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1983. The reference to Geertz is from *Islam observed*, Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968.

In this paper I use the terms "sociologist" and "anthropologist" interchangeably, according to Indian usage: though they may be known abroad as anthropologists, they usually refer to themselves as sociologists when in India.

II

For a view of the argument between M. N. Srinivas and Louis Dumont, including a reflection on how Dumont is read in Brazil, see paper n. 1 of this volume. This paper includes a more complete bibliographical reference of M. N. Srinivas. Srinivas biographical account was published in the *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 25. n. 1-2, under the title "Itineraries of an Indian social anthropologist". Critiques of Srinivas's work can be found in the issue of *Contributions to Indian Sociology* devoted to the examination of his book *The Remembered Village*. See also T. N. Madan's report, "M. N. Srinivas's earlier work and the remembered village: an introduction", *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (NS), vol. 12, n. 1, 1978. In this article Madan mentions that the initial "M" in Srinivas's stands for Mysore, his birthplace.

J. P. S Uberoi's main works, on which I base my argument, are listed here by order of publication: *Politics of the Kula Ring*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1962; "Science and *Swaraj*", *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (NS) n. 2, 1968, pp, 119-28; "New outlines of structural sociology: 1945-70" in *Contributions* (NS) vol. 8, 1974, pp. 135-52; *Science and culture*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1978; *The other mind of Europe: Goethe as scientists*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1984. Uberoi's comment "I had lost myself…" is taken from *Science and culture*, page 12. One of Uberoi's most important structuralist analysis was published under the titles of "On being unshown" and "Five symbols of Sikhism". A new version is forthcoming in T. N. Madan, ed. *Religion in India*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1991.

The warning Naipaul gives about Gandhism is to be found in *India. A wounded civilization*, New York, Vintage Books, 1978. For an excellent study on the

assassination of Gandhi, see Ashis Nandy, "Final encounter: the politics of the assassination of Gandhi" in Ashis Nandy, *At the edge of psychology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1980.

The comparison between Louis Dumont and Tocqueville was made by Nur Yalman in an article published in 1969 in *Man* (vol. 4, n. 1) under the title: "De Tocqueville in India: an essay on the caste system".

III

The articles by T. N. Madan illustrate admirably the dilemmas Indians face when caught between secular and religious propositions. One of them, "Secularism in its place" was presented at the seminar of the Association of Asian Studies, in Boston, USA, on the 10th April 1987 (and published in the *Journal of Asian Studies*, vo. 46, n. 2, 1987). The second, "The question of Hinduism" was published in the International Social Science Journal, vol. XXIX, pp. 261-78 and reproduced in T. N. Madan, *Non-renunciation. Themes and interpretations of Hindu Culture*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987.

The quotation form Gandhi, published in *Young India* on the 5th March 1925, was taken for his autobiographical reflections, edited and compiled by Krishna Kripalani under the title *All men are brothers*, New York, Continuum, 1980.

The references to contemporary Indian authors mentioned in this section are: Veena Das, *Structure and Cognition. Aspects of Hindu caste and ritual*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977; T. N. Madan, *Non-renunciation…*, op. cit.; Surendra Munshi, "Considerations on concept formation in Marx and Weber" and Sudipta Kaviraj, "Construction of otherness in Marx and Weber". The two last papers were presented at the previously mentioned conference on Marx and Weber.

In order to discuss the theme of an "alternative universalism" in this section, I used Ashis Nandy's book *The Intimate Enemy…*, op. cit. The references to Naipaul are from *India…*, op. cit.

IV

This comment of Louis Dumont's is on page 102 of the chapter "Nationalism and communalism" in *Religion, Politics and History in India*, Paris, Mouton, 1970. Other references pertinent to the subject are to be found in Louis Dumont's "La communauté anthropologique et l'ideologie", *L'Homme*, vol. 18, n. 3-4, 1978, pp. 83-110; *Homo Hierarchicus* (3rd edition), Chicago University Press, 1980; *O individualismo. Uma perspective antropológica da ideologia Moderna*, Rio de Janeiro, Rocco, 1985.

Brazilian sociologist Antonio Candido's observation is from an interview he granted me in 1978, when I was preparing for my doctoral thesis; Dr. Aziz's speech is on the last page of *A passage to India*. T. N. Madan's article was published in *The Prospects for Plural Societies*, a collection of essays edited by David Maybury-Lewis, Washington, American Ethnological Society, 1984. T. N. Madan's contribution is entitled "Coping with ethnic diversity: a South Asian perspective The viewpoints of Ashis Nandy and V.

S. Naipaul are to be found in *The Intimate Enemy…*, op. cit., and *India…*, op. cit., respectively.

V

For a discussion of the development of anthropology in Brazil and its relationship with nation-building ideology to which I refer in the text, see Mariza G. S. Peirano, *The anthropology of anthropology: the Brazilian case*, unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1981. Ernest Becker's *The Lost Science of Man*, New York, George Braziller, 1971 has an interesting discussion on the principles that governed the beginnings of sociology in France and in the United States. For the development of anthropology in India there is an informative article by Satish Saberwal, "Uncertain transplants: anthropology and sociology in India", published in *Ethos* 1983, pp. 36-49. (My presentation at the "Sociological colloquium" at the University of Delhi was given on the 16th October 1987).

VI

The references to Ashis Nandy are, again, from his book *The intimate enemy…*, op. cit. Otávio Velho published "Through Althusserian spectacles: recent social anthropology in Brazil" in *Ethos*, vol. 46, 1983, pp. 133-49. The references to Lévi-Strauss and Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda are form *Tristes Tropiques*, New York, Kangaroo Books, 1977, and *Raízes do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, José Olímpio, 1955, respectively.

Paper n. 3

Anthropological debates:

the India – Europe dialogue

"We have, then, this problem of 'communication' — or gap in communication — among those who are contributors to the sociology of India.

[…] The establishment of as common ground for discussion, therefore, remains as important a task now as it has been in the past and as difficult as Dumont says he found it."

T. N. Madan, 1982c: 417

It was not through consensus, but rather through controversy, that anthropology, like so many other disciplines, developed its tradition: Émile Durkheim vs. Gabriel Tarde, then Radcliffe-Brown vs. Frazer, Malinowski vs. Radcliffe-Brown, Lévi-Strauss against everyone, Geertz against Lévi-Strauss, and so on. These episodes of difficulty in understanding and communication became well known and were incorporated into the history of the discipline. In the process of learning about them, the student of anthropology becomes aware that, though one of the protagonists is more successful than the other, this fact does not mean that the ideas of his opponent have been overcome but, more often than not, that they have been assimilated into the "tradition" of the discipline.

Apart from these, other confrontations have added flavor to anthropology. The famous debate between Daisy Bates and Radcliffe-Brown is a case in point, in which Bates accused Radcliffe-Brown of mistreatment and abandonment in the field in Australia, besides unduly appropriating data that she had collected. In the early 1950's, Evans-Pritchard's views on the relationship between anthropology and history were responsible for much debate in the discipline, including everybody who was anybody, even Radcliffe-Brown and Kroeber. In the 1960's, the "Correspondence section" of *Man* carried on several theoretical discussions, to which the editor seemed to delight in making up colorful titles. Of the several topics than ran in more than one issue, "Virgin birth" was the longest and most controversial, showing Edmund Leach at his best on the issue of the lack of the concept of paternity among Malinowski's Trobriand Islanders.[9]

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[9] The original article was written by Edmund Leach and was published in *Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, in 1966. The answer came in form of letters to *Man*: Melford Spiro in 1968; Erik Schwimmer, Mary Douglas and Peter Wilson in 1969, and Melford Spiro again in 1973.

These brief illustrations show us that, though irrelevant, anthropologists are more aggressive that the stereotype of the romantic, temporizing and relativistic social scientist that the academic world generally projects. If there are disputes, it is because there are positions at stake: theoretical, institutional or other. It is curious to note, then, that over the last decade the rivalries have been substituted by the intentions of a consensus within the discipline. Clifford Geertz and Louis Dumont are two cases in point and their views are exemplary, given their high standing in contemporary anthropological circles and their different approaches to the problem. For Dumont, the dialogue among social scientists has always been a concern, but in 1978 he suggested that the community of specialists should share a single project for the discipline. This project, inspired by Marcel Mauss, assumes that the values of the anthropological community differ from the predominant ideology of the modern world in one important aspect: instead of individualistic values, anthropologists should share universalistic values (those which allow the researcher to envisage comparison) which encompasses holistic values (those which are capable of coping with the object of study properly) (Dumont, 1978). It is interesting to note here that it was Dumont who, on another occasion, denounced the implications of the concept of "community" in Western thought (Dumont, 1970, chapter 4), but who, when dealing with the discipline, sees the idea of an "anthropological community" as something conceivable or even desirable.

Geertz seems to be more sceptical: he himself does not mind prolonging the debate within anthropology, and recently presented Evans-Pritchard as the colonial archetype and Ruth Benedict as an outstanding figure just for having made the discipline popular (Geertz, 1988; Peirano, 1989). If anthropologists were once heroes, today for Geertz they are mere mortals, full of weaknesses, doubts and anxieties. However, he still sees hope for the destiny of anthropology as the forum for inter-communication. He feels that anthropology can enlarge the possibility of intelligible discourse between people quite different form one another in interest, outlook, wealth, and power.

In this quest for mutual understanding between people and social scientists, very often the points of view or the frustrations come up in personal reports or in autobiographies. Not long ago Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos put forward this topic in the form of a personal account (Santos, 1988), which brings to mind Joseph Wortis's confessional record, written in 1934, of how he, then a young psychiatrist, discussed this topic with

Sigmund Freud. The conversation would have occurred during a session of analysis, and was recorded in Wortis's diary:

> "It is disconcerting to see so much animosity among scientists, and I do not look forward to having similar experiences", I said.
>
> "It is unavoidable, said Freud, "and one had best prepare oneself for it."
>
> "One would think", I said, "that differences of opinion should not prevent a friendly relation."
>
> "One ought to expect it, but it is unfortunately not so", said Freud. "But it is not the scientific differences that are so important; it is usually some other kind of animosity, jealousy or revenge that gives impulse to enmity. The scientific differences come later" (Wortis, 1975: 163)

More than fifty years after this conversation, we still pursue the ideal of shared coherence, of collective disciplinary efforts, of an easier relationship, but which might seem naive to those who happen to know other controversies.

The theme of this paper is a specific debate within anthropology. It is of interest for two main reasons: first, for its length of time. Perhaps no other recorded discussion has more than thirty years of existence. Secondly, the debate is significant for having involved anthropologists of traditional well-known schools, as well as "native" (or former "indigenous") traditions, including French, English, India, German, Norwegian, Swiss, and New-Zealand social scientists. The debate is "For a sociology of India", published since 1957 in *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, which makes up one of the richest ethnographies in the annals of anthropology. The contents of this large collection of articles, all published under the same title,[10] come as a surprise to us Brazilians, who generally avoid confrontations. But it is precisely this fact that raises a third point of interest: today, when the heed for discussion among peers is stressed by many (Cardoso de Oliveira, 1989), this debate takes on an importance beyond its ethnographic interest,

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[10] These were the articles to which I had Access: Dumont and Pocock, 1957; Bailey, F. G., 1959; Dumont an Pocock , 1960; Saran, A. K., 1962; Madan, T. N., 1966; Dumont, L., 1966; Madan, T. N., 1967; Uberoi, J. P. S., 1968; Kantowsky, D., 1969; Singh, Y., 1970; Ahmed, I., 1972; Selwyn, I., 1973; Uberoi, J. S., 1974; Sharma, K. N., 1975; Madan, T. N., 1976; McLeod, W. H., 1978; Mukherjee, R., 1979; Bhaduri, A., 1980; Saberwal, S., 1982; Madan, T. N., 1982e; Burghart, R., 1983; Saberwal, S., 1983; Kantowsky, D., 1984; Vebugopal, C. N., 1986.

and can perhaps throw light onto the extent to which an understanding among social scientists in possible.

Following these concerns, I divide this paper into three parts: in the first, I present the arguments of the series "For a sociology of India" as ethnographical data, since *Contributions* is seldom known among us; in the second, I comment on the difficulties entailed in debates in general and in this case in particular; and lastly, I ponder on the question of the inevitable difficulties in academic dialogues, reflecting the Indian case in the Brazilian one.

The debate

Despite its great prestige in Europe and the United States, *Contributions to Indian Sociology* is practically unknown in Brazil. Currently edited in India and distributed by Sage India and its affiliates in the United States and England, it started out as a joint venture of Louis Dumont and David Pocock, thus involving respectively two institutions in its publication, the École de Hautes Études and Oxford University. (Initially it was published by Mouton, Paris). Perhaps for the same reasons why we cannot find such important journals as *Africa* and *Oceania* in our libraries, neither do we find *Contributions*. India, Africa, and Oceania figure only remotely on our intellectual horizons.[11]

The term "sociology" as used in the title of the journal was of durkheimian inspiration — the editors made no distinction between anthropology and sociology; anthropology was seen as a branch of general sociology. Dumont and Pocock, at the same time, made a peculiar pair: when they founded *Contributions*, Dumont had just returned as a lecturer at Oxford, where he had absorbed the influence of Evans-Pritchard, while Pocock, influenced by Evans-Pritchard and British philosophers, was attuned to the French heritage of Dumont. Both of them considered themselves to be intellectual heirs of Marcel Mauss.

"For a sociology of India" was born with the journal and was the title of the first article, in 1957, when the contributions were not signed. At the time, *Contributions* received

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[11] There is no record of *Contributions to Indian Sociology* in any library in Brazil. *Oceania* and *Africa* can be found in some universities, specially in the state of São Paulo, but the collections are never complete.

several criticisms for being a vehicle for publicizing only an idiosyncratic view of the study of India, since the articles were all written by Dumont and/or Pocock. Other scholars of India perhaps saw behind this apparently humble and handcrafted approach a certain arrogance, and reacted against the ideas put forward by the editors. It was only three years after its inauguration that the journal began to regularly publish articles by other authors.

Dumont and Pocock were soon disappointed about the controversy generated by the founding of the journal, and before its tenth year of publication, they decided to close it down, considering it an unsuccessful enterprise. Despite this gloomy outlook, in 1966 the journal's prestige was already remarkable, and with the approval of the original editors, it left Europe to be reborn in India with a new numbering and the subtitle "New Series". An editorial board made up of anthropologists of various nationalities was set up to replace the Dumont-Pocock editorship, but Dumont and Pocock were retained as consultant and editor respectively. However, Dumont did not publish in *Contributions* again until 1972, and Pocock, not until 1976.

Starting in 1967, the year when it was taken over by the Institute of Economic Growth of the University of Delhi, the title "For a sociology of India" no longer referred to specific articles; it became instead a regular feature of the journal. The "New Series" left behind an emotional "Farewell" by Dumont and Pocock (n. 9, December 1966), and warned on its first issue in India that "unlike its predecessor, the New Series does not offer a single approach to the sociological study of Indian societies, but provides a forum for the presentation and discussion of different points of view". Various authors felt inspired by this new proposal, and the journal was soon publishing an average of eight articles per issue, replacing the two or three of the former incarnation. In 1975, another change was introduced: T. N. Madan, who had been in fact the man editor since 1967 (though officially only the managing editor), now was formally chosen as the main editor from the board that had succeeded Dumont and Pocock. The journal was from then on published bi-annually, the feature "For a sociology of India" now closing the second issue of each year. The term "sociology" of the title was maintained, and made sense now because sociology and anthropology were combined as social sciences

dedicated to the understanding of Indian society. (Known as *anthropologists* abroad, social scientists refer to themselves as *sociologists* when in India).[12]

"For a sociology of India" has passed through several phases over its thirty years of existence. To read back over the articles of this series is to watch its passage from an eminently European view to a more cosmopolitan project, though Indian.

The beginning of the debate

Initially there was no debate bur rather a thematic article, written by Dumont and published jointly with Pocock.[13] In retrospect, one perceives that they were attempting to open up a space for the discussion of India in an academic milieu dominated by the study of "primitives", be they African, Melanesian or North-American tribal societies. In this first article, Dumont and Pocock stated that India was specific in that it should be viewed as a civilization and, as such, as a totality. Keeping distance from small-scale studies, the authors sought to study India through an examination of its ideas and values, using a combination of ethnographic methods and classical Indology, in a tradition clearly inherited form Mauss and Durkheim (Dumont and Pocock, 1957).

This proposition contained yet another development: by approaching India as a civilization, Dumont and Pocock felt free to use it as a comparison with the West, Dumont's lifelong project. In spite of India's enormous ethnographic diversity, Dumont and Pocock opted to focus on caste as an ideological value, which would allow them to conceive of India as a whole. By combining conscious and unconscious elements, or as they put it, by looking at India *from within* and *from without*, it would be possible to put together a configuration such that it would lead them to make comparisons with other societies, and eventually to arrive at "an adequate idea of humanity". A comparison of the elements "from within" and "from without" could, for example, show that the hierarchy of the caste system in India was equivalent to Western ideals of individuality in terms of explicit ideology. However, it was hierarchical India that produced the sanyasi, and the individualistic West, racism.

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[12] See Saberwal, 1983, and Srinivas, 1952b.

[13] The first version of the paper was given as the opening class on 8 November 1955 at the Chair of Sociology in India at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (6th section), in Paris, by Louis Dumont (Dumont, 1955).

The first published response to this article came in 1959 in the form of a challenge from the English anthropologist F. G. Bailey, who simply turned Dumont's and Pocock's proposition around by asking in the title of is paper (Bailey, 1959) "For a sociology of India?". In this article, Bailey raised serious objections: in the first place, he denied that a "sociology of values," as proposed by Dumont and Pocock, was really a sociology at all. From Bailey's point of view, the work of Dumont and Pocock amounted to, at best, a kind of "culturology". Secondly, Bailey accused the authors of conceiving India as a whole only because they were incapable of seeing beyond Hinduism, therefore overlooking the other religions of India. Lastly, Dumont and Pocock were condemned for having left economic and political relations out of their frame of analysis. It was for this reason too that Bailey strongly criticized the importance they had ascribed to the values of caste, to which he proposed the study of villages. His argument was based on the fact that castes do not deny villages, while it is in the villages that the true sociology of India should be focused.[14] Suggesting a comparison with other cases which he considered to be similar, such as the south of the United States and South Africa, Bailey regretted the lack of clarity on the part of the authors, and their unfortunate tendency to base their arguments on assertions rather then evidences.

In the face of this challenge, Dumont and Pocock reaffirmed their commitment to comparative procedures but with one difference: they were more ambitious than their critic. Dumont and Pocock proposed to explain similarities *and* differences for the purpose of contributing to the theoretical growth of the discipline (Dumont and Pocock, 1960). This growth consisted of the questioning of pre-established concepts and of a possible change in the content of sociological concepts as a result of their application in different societies. Thus, political and economic factors, to which Bailey attributed such importance, might have another significance in Indian ideology. In a rather veiled manner the two authors were already defending an idea that was to become one of the central preoccupations of Dumont's future work: the questioning of sociological concepts as being the result of Western thought.

The first four years of the journal's existence are then characterized by a dialogue that takes place between European participants. French and British anthropologists are the authorities on India, which is a privileged object of study, an ethnographic locus which

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[14] Castes vs. villages became a particular theme for a debate between Louis Dumont and M. N. Srinivas (see Paper n. 1 of this publication).

the editors wish to see included in the universe of academic anthropology. Indian anthropologists are invited to the debate, but only after Dumont and Pocock had determined in advance the rules of the game and the role they should be ascribed in the scene as a whole. From Dumont's and Pocock's point of view, Indian sociology had not yet attained a clear perception of itself. This was due to the difficulties that Indian social scientists encountered in trying to sort out and accept the often incompatible differences between the role of the sociologist and that of the reformer (Dumont, 1970: 18).

Seen through contemporary eyes, the proposition of the editors, Bailey's reaction, and Dumont's and Pocock's reply to Bailey, all appear to be quite expected. On the French side (which includes Pocock) we have the well-known emphasis on values and social representations, while on the British side we have the "empiricism" of economic and political facts; from the one side, the view of the caste system as an ideological manifestation of religion and, from the other, the tangible reality of the villages. We see Dumont and Pocock seeking to combine the views *from within* and *from without*, while Bailey casts doubt on whether the former view is even possible.

This European discussion about India might have taken a different direction in 1962, when the Hindu philosopher/sociologist A. K. Saran wrote, in an Indian journal published by the University of Lucknow, a commentary on the then current issue of *Contributions*. It is symptomatic that Saran's argument in *The Eastern Anthropologist* only came to the attention of the European contributors when his former student T. N. Madan published his first "For a sociology of India" in n. 9 of the original series and introduced Saran's ideas. But this was not until 1966.

Transition

In retrospect, the period between 1962 and 1967 can be seen as a time of transition for the journal and for the debate, which moved from the hands of Europeans into the hands of Indians. This process started with the polarization that Saran's article initiated. With a profound knowledge of European classics — like all good Indian scholars —, described as being a "severe critic of positivism" and as a "Hindu social philosopher" (Madan, 1975, 1977), Saran's discourse breaks the balance of communication that had been reached between the different contenders, and puts into question whether an outsider can shed light on native thought (even when this outsider is someone like Louis

Dumont). The arguments that Saran introduced were so different from those that had been put before that the previous disagreements between Dumont and Bailey now seemed parochial, if not insignificant.

What Saran said was that in a traditional society like India there could be no dichotomy between an "internal" and an "external" point of view simply because traditional consciousness is unitary. The only point of view from without is the one of another society: "social reality *qua* social has no outside" (Saran, 1962: 68). For Saran, Dumont remained a positivist like the majority of Western scholars, chained to the categories of contemporary Western civilization (1962: 61).

One can but guess how such criticism affected Louis Dumont. But Saran went further still: with rhetorical skill, he stated that the ideas expressed in *Contributions* were erroneous because the central problem of traditional Indian society was not social, but arose from the meeting of the Divine and the Human. Thus the question could not be reduced to the priority of the internal or external point of view — which, in this context, seemed trivial — simply because a Transcendental Principle illuminated them both. Like Durkheim, Dumont does not accept the Divine, and his individual "is human, his values are humanistic and his leadership is concerned with worldly glory and welfare" (:63). Conversely, in India the dignity of being human stems from the fact that only humanism among all other beings can achieve enlightenment. Saran reminds us that in order to study society it is essential to include the other element of the cosmos, among them the animals and the gods.

Openly questioning the secularism of western sociology, Saran also disagreed with Dumont as to the dichotomy of the man-in-the-world vs. the renouncer, arguing that the renouncer does not abandon the caste system to take on the role of the individual, but rather to free himself of all individuality. Another criticism of Dumont's proposal came in the form of Saran's categorical statement that the concept of Dharma did not correspond to moral action, Artha is not instrumental action, and neither is Kama expressive action. Indeed, Saran said that the distinction between expressive action and instrumental action "is totally irrelevant" in the Indian contest (1962: 60).

The dilemma of the intellectual as a scientist and the intellectual as a metaphysic, as suggested by Saran, has no place in Western academic culture; perhaps this explains

why, to this day, Saran prefers Weber to Durkheim: while Weber would have recognized that the spheres of science and the sacred cannot be fused, for Durkheim Divinity was nothing more than the mystification of Society (Saran, 1987). In India, where secularized science is a challenge even to the scientists themselves, one can then understand T. N. Madan's position when, in the 1960's, he introduced the ideas of Saran in *Contributions*, and made apparent his ambiguous feelings toward Dumont and his former professor. Following the steps of his Hindu teacher, Madan stated that a purely scientific approach was inadequate for the study of human society, since human society represents neither the realm of nature nor that of human creation, but both. As to the position of Bailey, Madan saw a method ultimately traceable to Bacon, i.e., a method indifferent to the subject matter of inquiry (Madan, 1966).

This was very much the result of Saran's influences. One year later, however, his influence seemed to have become less dominating and Madan came closer to Dumont's position when he conceded that if there was a point of view from without, them it was necessary to distinguish it from that of the natural scientist; that objectivity in the social sciences involved different criteria from those used in natural sciences; and that comparison was weakened when one sought only similarities (Madan, 1967a). To these points, Madan added certain ideas that contained seeds of independence: he stated that, if there cannot be many sociologies, it is nonetheless important to recognize that sociological knowledge must take into account the social context in which it is generated. He also stated that the problem afflicting Indian sociology was that it had not made a significant contribution to the refinement of sociological concepts.

During this period, Dumont published an article outside the feature "For a sociology of India" in which we recognize a direct answer to Saran and an indirect address to Madan's position. In this article, published in 1966 (and reprinted in Dumont, 1970), Dumont reaffirmed his initial ideas, and showed how he resented the criticism to which he had been subjected: he considered Saran's view with regard to himself to be "condescending and offensive" (1970: 159), and condemned the insinuation that he detected in Saran's writings that cultures are impenetrable. But Dumont also showed that he had not read his critic in the original, since he reproduced a mistake that Madan

had made when airing Saran's views in *Contributions*.[15] Dumont also warned that "only those who are both passionately imbued with the unity of mankind and absolutely devoted to the specificity of any of its particular social forms will be in a position to make a fundamental contribution to sociology" (1970: 165), a warning to Saran and perhaps a recommendation to Madan.

This period thus shows the tension and ambiguity which Madan faced: he links himself to Dumont, but seems to maintain his loyalty to his former teacher, and only with the passage of time is he able to develop his own point of view. It is Madan, however, who in the long run bridges the gap between the radical positions of both Saran and Dumont. On the other hand, the frustrations that we perceive in Dumont's articles apparently arise solely from an intellectual dispute. If we follow the suggestions put forward by Freud before, however, we can speculate on some deeper causes of this conflict, especially as it occurred just at the moment when *Contributions* was changing hands. An "opponent" could be a solution for feelings of disappointment, defeat and failure. Be that as it may, it is a fact that, although acting far from the main stage and publishing in India, A. K. Saran became the "significant other" for the principal characters of the period.

In Indian hands

Beginning in 1967, the main aim of the recently-arrived *Contributions* appeared to be to cast off the major European links. This can be surmised form the content of the articles by Indian social scientists published in the "For a sociology of India" feature. At the same time, after maintaining silence during the European period, now they felt free to show their internal differences.

In attempting to portray the situation of sociology in India in 1967, T. N. Madan had said that the discipline was nothing more than yet another item received from the West, like so many other imports. This self-criticism was stimulating: Uberoi took advantage of this opportunity, and helped the journal to take root in Indian soil. In "Science and Swaraj", Uberoi takes on the role of the challenger: he criticizes the Westerners and chastises the Indians (Uberoi, 1968). Uberoi condemns the former for their false cosmopolitism and false humanitarism, and states that the perverse effects of the

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[15] Madan modified Saran's statement "social reality *qua* social has no outside" to "social reality *qua* reality has no outside." Dumont used Madan's version.

internationalization of science are the same, whether they appear in the guise of the resentments of the colonial era, or in the new propositions of brotherhood, harmony and sweet reasonableness of the post-colonial period. With regard to Indians, Uberoi advocated a *Swarajist* attitude of self-determination, of nationalization of the problems, and of an awareness of the poverty the country, as a way of liberating themselves form the pseudo-problem of the lack of originality.[16] By considering the lack of originality the major problem of sociology in India, one only obfuscated the issue and, at best, found that the solution would be "to run with borrowed money to attend the next conference to learn how to be original" (1968: 122).

After this article, "For a sociology of India" abandoned the individual tone of its former debates and became more of a forum for Indian contributions, interspersed with occasional foreign articles. In the period from 1968 to 1981 (the year in which *Contributions* dedicated one issue to Dumont on his 70th birthday), "For a sociology of India" published articles which proposed different points of view and which seemed that the authors believed that, by a logical process, one point of view would correct another. This aspect is especially visible amongst Indian sociologists, now that for the first time "religious" differences among them become apparent.

During this period, seven articles in the feature were written by Indians (Singh, 1970; Ahmad, 1972; Uberoi, 1974; Shharma, 1975; Madan, 1976; Mukherjee, 1979; Bhaduri, 1980); one was written by an English sociologist (Selwin, 1983), one by a German (Kantowsky, 1969) and one by a historian from New Zealand (McLeod, 1978). The quality of the work was considerably uneven during this period, and the points of view differed significantly. To give a brief summary: Kantowsky (1969) warned western scientists to make clear the relevance of their theory and practice when working in developing countries; Singh (1970) made a distinction between the theoretical propositions of general sociology and those of national sociology, and found the latter to have less theoretical power. Ahmad, in 1972, called attention to the fact that both Indians and foreigners, when studying India, concentrated mostly on Hinduism. In this well-known article, Ahmad reminds sociologists that to forger Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains and Muslims like himself, was not the best path to a sociology of India. Selwin (1974) wrote a positive appreciation of the theory developed by Murray Leaf,

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[16] For my interpretation of the swajarist path of Uberoi's career, see Paper n. 2.

and in 1974 Uberoi once again wrote in this feature, proposing the incorporation of the sociology developed in Europe over the last thirty years. In a tone quite different to his previous article, Uberoi then approved of European authors, with the exception of Louis Dumont, who was criticized for having identified Hinduism with the caste system and this in turn with the logic of hierarchy. Next, it was Sharma's turn to discuss the term *varna*, and show that the presence of the two levels of reality (*varna* and *iati*), which has been acknowledged by fieldwork studies, was not unknown by scholars working within the Sanskritic universe of discourse (Sharma, 1975). There followed an article by Madan, which sought to show how Hinduism had been studied by David Pocock not as a "religion" but rather as "an area of belief and practice", postulating a homology between culture and society (Madan, 1976). In 1977, Sharma once again discussed a Hindu topic ― the question of conversion ―, and McLeod, in 1978, examined the problem of terminology and how best to describe the Sikhs in the anthropological literature. Denying that "sect" or "nation" were appropriate concepts, he proposed that the native term *panth* would cause the least harm in ethnographic description. These short essays were followed by the long "Trends in Indian Sociology" by R. Mukherjee (1979), which divided the history of Indian sociology in five phases. Lastly, to end this period, an article by the economist Bhaduri (1980) showed how sociological work, and specially field studies, could be useful for establishing economic policies for India. T. N. Madan, who was by this time the editor of *Contributions*, wrote a conciliatory introduction to Bharduri's paper, though the very subtitle "What the sociologist could do for the economist" clearly shows the hegemony that economics exerted over the human sciences in India. In short, this period was characterized by contributions of different sorts, by showing that Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims perceived different priorities ― even though there was no direct confrontation between them.

Maturity?

When Madan published his third "For a sociology of India" in 1982, it seemed that, after twenty-five years of the journal's publication, it was time for peace and reconciliation. As if in recognition of the independence of the journal, in the last years *Contributions* had published two special issues: one in honour of M. N. Srinivas's latest book, *The Remembered Village*, in 1978; and another in 1981 to celebrate Dumont's 70th birthday. (The first special issue had been published in 1972, devoted to *Homo*

Hierarchichus). The differences between Dumont and Srinivas could apparently be assimilated now as historical facts.[17]

The number dedicated to Dumont was made a book, exactly the same as the journal volume (except for the preface and index). It was then that Dumont received the public recognition for having acted over the last decades as the main catalyst for anthropological works in India, both among his followers and among his critics. Dumont was credited with having contributed to a radical change in the perception of the caste system which, in the 50's and 60's, under the influence of the British, had stressed social relations, but now, thanks to his influence, could not negate ideological values. For Madan, however, the difficulty of communication between specialists still persisted, and in the characteristic Hindu style of one who never gives up the battle, suggested that evasion or exclusion would not solve the problem: the former attitude would lead to solipsism and the latter to the opposition of one viewpoint as a critique of another without any change of the position (Madan, 1982c).

Despite this pessimistic diagnosis, recent years leave the reader with a different impression: from 1983 to 1986, the articles published in "For a sociology of India" seem to breathe the air of serene maturity. During this period, of the four articles published, two were written by Indian sociologists (Saberwal, 1983 and Venugopal, 1986), one was an English contribution (Burghat, 1983), and one was German (Kantowsky, 1984).

There is a new difference that has developed between the European and the India contributors: now the Europeans make a point of spelling out their involvement in the debate, and refer back to authors and themes that have been treated before. Burghart, for example, proposes an alternative to Dumont's perception of Indian totality, suggesting that an "intracultural" approach could produce a sociology of the different Indias (in the plural), which Dumont did not achieve. Kantowsky, for his part, chooses Madan and Uberoi as interlocutors in his proposed attempt to analyze the extent to which Weber was influenced by his German origin. Seeking convergence with the Hindu tradition which he studied, Kantowsky suggests that Weber did not dare to write a book on the religion of India because he had recognized the difficulty of making the Indian

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[17] On the other hand, Srinivas's volume contained critical and some negative articles (such as Pocock, 1978, the tile of which is "The remembered village: a failure"), while in the volume dedicated to Dumont esteem and acknowledgment were dominant.

ahistorical logic (which admits the pair "both/and") correspond to Western historical thinking (based on the "either/or" logic).

Among Indian anthropologists, the difference now was that their most recent contributions made no attempt to continue the past debate, but in a different way, started developing a new topic, namely, the reevaluation of the discipline in India. Saberwal, for instance, discusses the Indian academic world in general, of which anthropology is an art; the more than fifty departments which offer master's degree programs and those that offer doctorates; the most important publications; the fact that it is in Delhi, and especially around the active Delhi Sociological Association that the largest number of specialists congregate. Critical of intellectual training in India — fieldwork is a soft experience, as the researcher can work in his own language and in his region of origin — when the time of becoming a professional arrives, again ties of caste and kinship are used to student's advantage. The result of this is a passive attitude and the lack of competitiveness among social scientists. In the case of Venugopal, he is critical in a different direction: he goes back to the past to review G. S. Ghurye's ideology with regard to Hinduism. Venugopal argues that for Ghurye (the link between the British tradition of Rivers and the work of his student M. N. Srinivas), Hindu civilization was sustained basically by the puritanical habits of the Brahmans.

To sum up, the situation we find in "For a sociology of India" over the last few years is most revealing. Unlike the first years, there is an absence of combative personalized debate. The Europeans are either critical of previous *European* viewpoints, or they feature as followers of Indian anthropologists, in a somewhat modified version of Madan's appreciation. Indian sociologists seem to live in a more peaceful attitude. After having rebelled and then later assimilated the contributions of Dumont and Srinivas (explicitly or not), today they are guided by a critical but constructive self-evaluation: volume 21 of *Contributions*, published in 1987, confirms this view: the journal pays homage to two South-Asian anthropologists of international reputation — Stanley Tambiah and Gananath Obeyesekere — who teach at Harvard and Princeton University, respectively.

Difficult dialogues

Thus the history of the discipline repeats itself: rebellion and assimilation, always through difficult dialogues. "For a sociology of India" is a portrait, or perhaps the script, for one such dialogue. Here colonialism, difference of personalities, social contexts, ethnical principles, and different historical moments, are among the factors at issue. The specific reasons for the difficulty of this dialogue are, however, no easier to identify than were those which preceded it in the history of anthropology. Aside form those deep private motives to which Sigmund Freud referred to and to which we have no access, it is however possible to raise a few points.

Let us go back to the beginning and to Geertz's wish that anthropology should eventually be transformed into an intercommunicable discourse to comment that apparently this was also Madan's hope, when he proposed that the discipline should perform the task of a "mutual interpretation f cultures" (Madan, 1982a). However, it was the same Geertz with whom we started that one day recognized that

> "Understanding the form and pressure of […] native's inner lives is more like grasping a proverb, catching an allusion, seeing a joke, reading a poem […] than it is like achieving communion" (Geertz, 1983:70).

Perhaps this communion which does not take place between the anthropologist and his natives is also impossible within the international academic community; or perhaps intercommunicability does not necessarily mean communion. Maybe the act of comparing in which anthropologists dwell is incompatible with dialogue: comparison always implies a hierarchy (in Dumont's sense) and in this context the ideal of communion does not take place (Chaves, 1989). One could also raise the hypothesis that, rather than a dialogue, "For a sociology of India" constituted a symbolic forum for the intentions of the participants in a performative manner: by expressing the wish and need for communication, this in turn made possible the achievement of the desired result.

We know that Louis Dumont had harbored different hopes. In 1979, this was how he looked back on his enterprise:

> "[…] the journal that I produced in collaboration with David Pocock from 1957 onwards, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, announced that its contents were literally intended as "contributions" to a presumably common endeavor. It was in consonance with that orientation that we did not sign the articles and took joint responsibility for them. But it turned out very soon that such detailed

criticism […] would simply not be received by most of the specialists who had, each one of them, his own stance and did not want to modify it and who, with very few exceptions, abstained from participating in the discussion" (Galey, 1982:19).

It seems that, for Dumont, *Contributions* existed only in its first few years of life. It is significant that he does not show signs of knowing about the process by which the journal produced rich and fruitful results:

"In some quarters, the first three numbers of *Contributions* were taken almost as a kind of defamatory publication! It was thus impossible to establish collectively a groundwork and we had to retreat to a less critical, more constructive and 'personal' formula. From then on we began to sign our articles" (Galey, 1982: 19).

Dumont appears as a deeply disappointed, and as an author who regard himself as a scientist but also as a craftsman:

"This is the rub: the conditions in which our craft is practiced are such that one is compelled to retreat from the collective orientations, that is that of science, to the more personal orientations of the philosopher, writer or artist, to admit that the products of the craft are 'not cumulative', that the scientific community hardly exists at all, or at any rate to recoil upon oneself and choose one's subject matter accordingly" (Galey, 1982: 20).

To Dumont's reader this tone of resentment is familiar, as is also his habit of feeling somehow betrayed by those who criticize him.[18] Faced with the prestige of the journal, however, there seems to be an incongruence between the sociology that Dumont practices and his refusal to accept that the individual and independent work of the scientist adds up, under any circumstances, to a collective history: this was certainly what he must have learned form Mauss on the subject of the prayer, and also from Evans-Pritchard, from whom he heard that anthropology is more an art than a science.

When we examine the changes that anthropology has gone through in India, we must bear in mind that we are using *Contributions* as an exemplary case, and "For a sociology of India" as a privileged debate, leaving aside other such traditional publications as *Man in India* (founded in 1921), and more recent publications such as

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[18] See the preface to the 3rd edition of *Homo hierarchicus* (1980), in which Dumont answers all his critics since the publication of the first edition of the book in 1966. Dumont spares Madan, "whose good faith […] is here beyond question" (1980:XXII), an attitude which he does not extend to others.

The Eastern Anthropologist (founded in 1947) and *Indian Anthropologist* (founded in 1971). In this context, *Contributions* is singular in that it was born in Europe and then transplanted to India, bringing with it the challenge of establishing on the Indian sub-continent a cosmopolitan discourse that would be intelligible across the borders of continents or civilizations.

But if *Contributions* is singular, it is not less representative. Throughout its history, during which the debate on whether one should combine points of *view from within* or *from without* was one which raised great interest on the part of Indian sociologists, we perceive what intellectual colonialism does not usually reveal itself with such clarity: Saran defended the approach from within; Bailey, from without; and Dumont wanted to combine the two.[19] It was this perspective that Madan adopted, stressing that anthropological literatures could compensate for the lack of direct research in a different society (Madan, 1975).

Thus we see that to achieve a stage of comfortable cosmopolitanism, it is first necessary to accept the antagonistic positions and dichotomies. In this context, the engagement in a dialogue was the unavoidable and not always easy path to counterpoise the opposing viewpoints, bringing with it the additional advantage of recognizing the contenders as equals. It is interesting to note that Indian sociologists themselves accepted this polarization, and that it was this polarization which provided the basic and creative motivation which allowed them to provide better answers to the questions asked of them by the West. The West pre-defined the questions, and the Indians excelled themselves at questioning the questions themselves, and at offering different answers. The result was, paradoxically, a sort of "Indian cosmopolitism".

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[19] Khare uses a structuralist frame of reference to explain the combinations of the two viewpoints:

The insider's view from "inside"………... Saran, 1962.
The outsider's view from "inside"……… Dumont, 1966.
The outsider's view from "outside" ……. Baley, 1959.
The insider's view form "outside" ……...Srinivas, 1952a.

I have not focused on Srinivas's articles, since it is not part of the discussion "For a sociology of India"; see Khare, 1976.

The opening of the dialogue was not achieved easily. From challengers, Indian sociologists moderated their stances over time: the *swajarist* Uberoi of 1968 became a potential structuralist in 1974; the critic Madan of 1966 recognized the mobilizing role of Dumont in 1982. The example of Saran is revealing, since his ideas were introduced in the journal by his former student Madan, and received an answer from an annoyed Dumont who had not read the original. This episode brings to light the old issue of power structure within the academic world, which does not alter by the fact that English is the common language of all participants. But another issue is also clarified: it was Madan's position that, in the middle term, made it possible for the dialogue to proceed towards the cosmopolitism in which there is room for all. Actually, during the history of the journal, Madan played the strong editorial role which made possible the construction and continuation of the debate. Surprisingly, Saran's position was the most comfortable: as a radical traditionalist, his extreme views excused him of taking part in any communicative endeavor, despite the role as the respected and indispensable opponent.

The cosmopolitan tone that we find in the journal from the 1980's on highlights the idea that *Contributions* can be seen as a symbol of what was occurring in anthropology in India in general. In the "For a sociology of India" feature, it was now the Europeans who made a point of contribute to the debate; outside the journal, the work of Indian sociologists bears the stamp of new relevance. In the zeal to communicate, it seems that Indian sociologists were fortunate in being spared of the choice, which Habermas suggests, between the precedence of dialogue over production: in India the two were coetaneous. Increasingly one recognizes the development of a distinctive style in the studies developed by Indian social scientists as, for instance, those dealing with Hindu tradition, which are quite different from studies on the same subject carried out by foreign researchers (see Das, 1982; Madan, 1987); in studies on the West which no Westerner could have written (Uberoi, 19878, 1983); in the socio-psychological analysises that have no parallel in the West (Kakar, 1982; Nandy, 1983); in the studies "form without" that India produces on European classics (Saran, 1987; Kaviraj, 1987).[20]

The same phenomenon is apparent in the breadth of scope of what individual scientists produce: T. N. Madan, for example, writes about the founders of anthropology in India

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[20] Not all authors mentioned here call themselves anthropologists. This designation is my own, and in part reflects the hope to see anthropology as a discipline that harbors different aspects of analysis: from another point of view, ii reveals the inadequacy of our academic labels.

(Madan, 1982, 1982b), links himself to Dumont in the enterprise of editing *Contributions* in India, writes about Hinduism and the ethic of secularism among Indian intellectuals (Madan, 1966, 1967b, 1987), analyses from a classical perspective the culture of the Pandits of Kashmir (Madan, 1965), innovates by adding an interpretative aspect to Dumont's views without eliminating the Hindu influence (Madan, 1987), and debates the role of field studies in anthropology, rejecting the argument that insiders cannot have a comparative anthropological viewpoint (Madan, 1975).

Though respected and honored by specialists, Indian anthropology does not, of course, command the same prestige as the European and North-American variants. It is significant, however, that nowadays Indian anthropologists are invited abroad not just because of the ethnographic interest that India has always had, but also for their theoretical contributions and for the specific approach with which they tackles new or traditional themes. Conversely, when foreign anthropologists visit India, they are not merely expected to bring the latest trend ─ which will certainly be viewed with caution ─ but are expected to listen to what Indians have to say. This is so because through debates, controversies and dialogues with the world outside, Indian anthropology has found its own path, which makes it both the heir to classical Indian thinking as much as a branch of a sociology of European origins.

Epilogue

Having observed the advances of Indian anthropology, our doubts increase as to whether we Brazilians, who speak a Latin language in a world dominated by English, who have no privileged interlocutors nor stimulating great debates,[21] who maintain a tendency to "cordiality" in our personal, relations, where discussion does not exist and events are too many, and who appear oblivious to what is carried on in *Oceania*, *Africa* or *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, will ever succeed in establishing a satisfying dialogue with the world at large.

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[21] See Pontes (1989) for an analysis of the foreign social scientists who have worked in Brazil. In terms of our discussion, it seems that neither "Brazilianists" nor the teachers of the 1930's generation challenges us on a theoretical ground, perhaps the only one we would accept as legitimate. See, however, the recent debate between Simon Schwartzman (19888, 1989) and Richard Morse (1988, 1989), to which Otavio Velho (1989) added his contribution.

This is a delicate subject. I shall briefly point to three aspects derived from the mirror that India raises. The first of them puts us in a good light: we, who define ourselves as politically committed scientists, by comparing our situation with that of Indian sociologists, are immediately struck by the fact that a rarely broken silence seems to blanket the existence of castes within the academic community there. Caste struggles, caste privileges, quotas for the lower castes, caste affinities, all these are part of daily experience which are rarely mentioned,[22] standing in stark contrast to the cosmopolitan imprint which Indians project their work. Theoretical questions — such as the best point of view —; methodological questions — such as the discussion of field research in the researcher's region of origin —; existential questions — such as how intellectuals reconcile a religious culture with the secularism of modern science — find no parallel in what is (not) said about the caste system within the academic community. This situation is curious, though perhaps it can be explained by the fact that the discussion of these questions would reveal the parochial and exotic side of science in India, which Indians prefer either to overlook or deny.

But Indians are not alone in preferring to ignore supposed weaknesses. The second aspect inverts the first and puts us Brazilians on the spot. The example of Indian sociologists leads us to believe that, in an academic world conceived in universalistic terms, the gap between the dominance of theoretical discourse and the experience of local politics is perhaps the fate and destiny of countries in subordinate positions in the world arena. In our case, the parochial elements crops up, strangely, to manifest itself in the idea that we are part of a homogeneous West, and that our work is written to be read internationally, without any restraints or difficulties, in an apparent refusal to even raise the question of our role in the international academic world. We open dialogues with renowned authors which receive no answers; we reanalyze classical works, as if our own work were of world renown, and we ignore the fact that, at the moment we leave behind the frontiers of the country, what here was a theoretical discussion promptly becomes merely regional ethnography[23]. We also choose to ignore the fact that we are

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[22] The exceptions merely confirm the rule: see Saberwal, 1983; Srinivas, 1973; and Madan, 1972.

[23] The conditions under which Florestan Fernandes was hired in Canada in the 1960's are a good example of this phenomenon: one of our greatest theoreticians of the 1950's and 1960's, the founder of the "Paulista school of sociology" (who later produced the theory of dependence), Florestan Fernandes was hired as a specialist in Latin America.

never the discoverers of new perspectives — at most we have foreseen what is to follow[24] —, or still worse, we insist in inviting fashionable names of the discipline with the hope that they will grace us with their presence and add their brilliance to our congresses. Though most of these invitations are summarily refused, those which are accepted make us content because we see an illustrious foreigner expressing surprise: finding amongst us a thriving, if lamentably unknown, social science community.

Of course, these two sketches do not exhaust all that could be said about our intellectual world because, in both the Indian and the Brazilian case, the dialogue to which I have been referring includes a third part. So I wind up with a third sketch to close the triangle, adding one more dimension to our troubled consciousness. The question is as follows: why, in this latter part of the century, do young North-American and European social scientists (contrary to the great names of the field) seek out "peripheral" countries to visit and if possible, to publish in? Why, after publishing their works in English and French, do they yearn for a translation into Italian, Portuguese, or Spanish? This phenomenon seems to be more wide-spread than the latest issues of *Contributions* reveal, and everything indicates that it has already reached Brazil. Could it be that a new cosmopolitan consciousness has been achieved? Or have the North-American and European sources of inspirations began to dry up? Why are we suddenly perceived to be a critical mass of interesting social scientists from whom it is worth receiving an appraisal, if our work is not even known abroad? Has an international dialogue become more feasible, or does the legitimation of the "periphery" serve the interests of the visitors more than it does those of the hosts?

These are but a few initial questions. If we are in a position to understand a little about what goes on in the academic world outside, then perhaps it will be possible for communication to become more realistic and, one hopes, more effective, although probably not less difficult. Gone are the days when, as in the example of "Virgin Birth", British anthropologists sat at home engaged in a discussion for all the world to watch. The thirty years of "For a sociology of India" may give us some clues to help us in our reflections on the subject.

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[24] The exception here is the same "theory of dependence", which was also consumed in the United States with a local color added (See Cardoso, 1977).

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